



## 2. SMART criteria: a rubric for evaluating learning objectives

	Effective	Sufficient	Developing	Ineffective
<p><b>Specific:</b> Clear, concise, says exactly what the student will be able to do in student-centered language</p>	Uses effective action verbs to describe what student will do	Uses action verbs to describe what student will do	Uses nonfunctional verbs to describe what student will do	Does not use verbs to describe what student will do
	Clear, concise student-centered language	Concise, but not completely clear or in student-centered language	Difficult to understand because of wordiness or jargon	Unclear because of wordiness or excessive jargon
	Focuses on a focused, specific outcome	Focuses on one outcome	Outcome is too general or vague	Outcome has too many goals or goals that are too broad
<p><b>Measurable:</b> Data is observable during the program, can be observed in multiple ways, performance can be measured</p> <p>Definition: "during the program" means before the student graduates from Simpson</p>	Measurable data can be collected to be used to rate student performance at multiple levels	Data can be collected but only indicates completion instead of performance level	Data can be collected but not clear if it indicates whether the outcome was attained or not	No measurable data can be collected
	Outcome can be measured both directly and indirectly	Outcome can only be measured directly and in only one way	Outcome can only be measured indirectly	Outcome cannot be measured
	Data is easily scalable.	Data is scalable.	Data is difficult to scale.	Data is not scalable, e.g., yes/no.
<p><b>Attainable and Actionable:</b> students can attain the outcome; assessment of the outcome has potential to move the program forward</p> <p>Definition: <b>Action plan</b> means a plan for change in the program to improve student learning</p>	Students have the ability to attain the goal	Students are most likely able to attain the goal	It will be difficult for many student to attain the goal	The goal cannot be achieved
	Measurements will provide meaningful information that can be used to develop a feasible action plan	Measurements will provide information that can be used to develop an action plan	Measurements are unlikely to have meaning to the program or it will be difficult to develop a feasible action plan from the information	Measurements will be meaningless for program improvement
<p><b>Relevant:</b> has meaning for stakeholders</p> <p>Definitions: The <b>program</b> is the unit being assessed and could be a major, a curriculum, an office (such as the library), etc. <b>Overall</b> means considering all the learning objectives for the program. <b>Internal stakeholders</b> include students, faculty, staff, administration and trustees. <b>External stakeholders</b> include parents, our various communities, alumni, accreditation agencies and disciplinary organizations.</p>	Outcome is specific to the goals of the program	Outcome is related to the goals of the program	Outcome is loosely related to the goals of the program	Outcome is not related to the mission of the program
	Outcome is matches the expectations of internal stakeholders	Outcome is related to the expectations of internal stakeholders	Outcome loosely fits the expectations of internal stakeholders.	The outcome is not relevant to internal stakeholders.
	Outcome is matches the expectations of external stakeholders	Outcome is related to the expectations of external stakeholders	Outcome loosely fits the expectations of external stakeholders	The outcome is not relevant to external stakeholders
	Overall, there is balance between performance-level outcomes and knowledge-level outcomes	Overall, there is a little imbalance between performance-level and knowledge-level outcomes	Overall, there is much larger emphasis on one of performance-level or knowledge-level outcomes	Overall, the outcomes focus on only one of performance-level or knowledge-level outcomes
<p><b>Time-bound:</b> outcome can be attained by the end of the program</p> <p>Definition: <b>Overall</b> means considering all the learning objectives for the program.</p>	Students have time to attain the outcome in the usual time to graduation	A few students will not have time to attain the outcome in the usual time to graduation	Many students will not have time to attain the outcome in the usual time to graduation	No students have time to attain the outcome in the usual time to graduation
	Overall, the outcomes for this program are realistic for the time given	Overall, the outcomes for this program are realistic for the time given for most students	Overall, the outcomes for this program are difficult to finish in the time given for most students	Overall, the outcomes for this program cannot be finished in the time given

Rubric was written by Dr. M. E. Waggoner, Director of Academic Assessment, Simpson College.

S.M.A.R.T. criteria for learning objectives are adapted from Meyer, Paul J (2003). "What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?"

Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals". *Attitude Is Everything: If You Want to Succeed Above and Beyond*. Meyer Resource Group, Incorporated,

### 3. Action Verbs and Nonfunctional Verbs

**Action Verbs:** This is not a comprehensive list. The categories were chosen to avoid repetition and are not aligned with a specific taxonomy. Some verbs may be interpreted in several ways and fit under multiple categories.

Recollection and Organization			Comprehension and Evaluation		
Arrange	Find	Recall	Analyze	Contrast	Paraphrase
Chart	Give examples	Recite	Appraise	Criticize	Prioritize
Classify	Identify	Recognize	Argue	Debate	Restate
Collect	Illustrate	Record	Assess	Defend	Summarize
Correlate	Label	Report	Break down	Discuss	Support
Define	List	Reproduce	Categorize	Evaluate	Relate
Describe	Locate	Select	Cite	Explain	Rewrite
Diagram	Match	Separate	Conclude	Generalize	Separate
Differentiate	Name	Sequence	Convert	Interpret	Translate
Discriminate	Order	State	Characterize	Judge	
Distinguish	Outline	Subdivide	Compare	Justify	
Enumerate	Quote				
Use and Development			Creation and Expression		
Administer	Discover	Integrate	Act	Dramatize	Prepare
Apply	Employ	Manipulate	Assemble	Draw	Produce
Calculate	Establish	Predict	Change	Express	Rearrange
Choose	Estimate	Provide	Combine	Formulate	Reconstruct
Compute	Experiment	Solve	Compose	Generate	Reorganize
Conclude	Extend	Synthesize	Construct	Illustrate	Revise
Control	Imitate	Test	Create	Instruct	Set up
Deduce	Implement	Transfer	Demonstrate	Model	Show
Determine	Infer	Use	Design	Modify	Sketch
		Utilize	Develop	Paint	Tell
			Devise	Plan	Write

**Nonfunctional Verbs:** These actions are not observable and do not lead to a specific product. This is not a comprehensive list.

acknowledge  
 appreciate  
 articulate an understanding  
 aware of  
 believe  
 capable of  
 comprehend

conscious of  
 demonstrate an understanding  
 enjoy  
 experience  
 explore  
 familiar with  
 have knowledge of

know  
 learn  
 memorize  
 question  
 show interest in  
 understand

## 4. Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning

- 1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.**  
Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for improvement of programs and student learning. Thus, it begins with an understanding of the learning we want the students to attain. What we assess and how we assess must both be driven by educational values. We should not assess just what is easy to assess, but rather assess what will give us the means for improvement of programs that foster what we value most.
- 2. Assessment works best when we understand that learning is multidimensional and integrated.** Learning includes not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it includes their values, attitudes, and habits of mind. Assessment reflects this complexity when it uses diverse methods including those that require students to apply what they have learned in authentic experiences.
- 3. Assessment works best when there are clear, explicitly stated purposes.**  
Clear, shared, implementable goals are essential for assessment that is focused and effective. Assessment pushes a campus toward clarity of educational values and identifies how and where the outcomes are or should be taught and learned.
- 4. Assessment requires focus on outcomes and the experiences designed to achieve those outcomes.**  
To improve student performance, we need to pay attention to curricula, teaching methods, educational support systems and the effort required of students to reach expected performances levels. Assessment should lead to improvement of the entire learning/teaching process.
- 5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.**  
Isolated, "one-shot" assessment is better than none, but assessment is most powerful when it includes a linked series of activities over time. However it is done, the point is to monitor progress toward intended outcomes in a spirit of continuous improvement including the evaluation and refinement of the assessment process itself.
- 6. Assessment works best by involving representatives from across the community.**  
As student learning is a shared campus-wide responsibility, so should assessment be. Faculty play essential roles, but participation of student life educators, librarians, administrators, staff and students is necessary. Assessment may also involve individuals from beyond the campus (alumni, trustees, employers, graduate school representatives) whose experience can help develop appropriate learning outcomes and measures.
- 7. Assessment is effective when it measures outcomes relevant to the stakeholders.**  
Assessment must be connected to issues or questions that people care about. The stakeholders must see the methods and data as credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. The value of assessment lies not in simply writing a report, but rather the questions and answers it produces that allows decision-makers to guide continuous improvement.
- 8. Assessment works best when it is part of community that values change for improvement.**  
Assessment's greatest contribution happens on campuses where there is community buy-in for existing structures that improve the quality of teaching and learning. On such campuses, improving the quality of education is central to the institution's planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions and assessment is an integral part of decision making.
- 9. Assessment is the means to meet our responsibilities to students and to the public.**  
Our stakeholders are our students, their parents, the faculty, administration and staff, the board of trustees, the communities we interact with, our alumni and our students' future employers. We are responsible to our stakeholders to tell them what our goals are and how well our students are meeting those goals. That responsibility goes reporting of information to using that information for improvement.

Condensed and adapted from *Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning* by Alexander W. Astin, Trudy W. Banta, K. Patricia Cross, Peter T. Ewell, Pat Hutchings, American Association for Higher Education; Theodore J. Marchese, Kay M. McClenney, Marcia Mentkowski, Margaret A. Miller, E. Thomas Moran, Barbara D. Wright. The original was developed under the auspices of the AAHE Assessment Forum and sponsored by the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE).