


# DEVELOPING COURSE-BASED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ALIGNING ASSIGNMENTS

American University of Armenia  
*November 9, 2015*



This workshop aims to help faculty develop student learning outcomes and align assignments with outcomes. The focus will be on **course-based student learning outcomes**. We will:

- briefly review the difference between and alignment of program student learning outcomes and course-based student learning outcomes
- review Bloom's Taxonomy (attached) as one of the guides to help create concise, doable, and measurable student learning outcomes
- guide faculty through aligning assignments with student learning outcomes

At the end of the workshop, faculty will be able to:

- **Distinguish** between course-based and program student learning outcomes
- **Develop** course-based student learning outcomes which align with program student learning outcomes and program goals and which are concise, doable, and measurable
- **Align** assignments with student learning outcomes
- **Explain** how SLOs contribute to program assessment, review, and improvement

# Agenda

- Quick Review
  - ▣ Course Development
  - ▣ What is a Student Learning Outcome?
  - ▣ Program Student Learning Outcome. Course-Based Student Learning Outcome. What is the Difference?
- Developing SLOs
  - ▣ Course-based Student Learning Outcomes - CSLOs
  - ▣ Alignment of PSLOs and CSLOs
- Aligning Assignments to SLOs



Students will be able to ...

... do what through your course?

If you can answer that, you can develop a course-based student learning outcome (an SLO).

# Remember: Developing a Course is a Process

- Review AUA **Mission Statement**
- Review **Program Goals** and Program **Student Learning Outcomes**
- Review **Course Description**
- Review **Curriculum Map**
- Benchmark
- Discuss with **faculty**
- Review University **Policy** on Course Syllabus Format and **Template**
- Draft **Course-Based Student Learning Outcomes** –  
that **align** with Program Student Learning Outcomes
- Draft an **outline** – Topics and content to be covered by week
- Draft **Assignments and Assessment Methods** –  
that align with Student Learning Outcomes
- Draft Syllabus
- Review Final Draft with Program Chair / Dean

# Start with the Mission

## AUA Mission

*As an institution of higher learning, the American University of Armenia provides **teaching, research, and service** programs that **prepare students and enable faculty and researchers to address the needs of Armenia and the surrounding region for sustainable development,** in a setting that values and develops **academic excellence, free inquiry, integrity, scholarship, leadership, and service to society.***

# Goals and Outcomes: Differences



**Goals** generally describe an intended purpose.

**Outcomes** describe the learning that learners will achieve (through a course or program).

# Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes



Quick Review.

What are the **program goals** for your program?

What are the **program student learning outcomes**?

An example: [BA in English and Communications](#)  
[Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes](#)





How does your course build learning toward Program Student Learning Outcomes?

Hint: Review your curriculum Map

An example: [BA in English & Communications Curriculum Map](#)

# Ask yourself ....

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*What skills and knowledge is a course intended to develop?*

*What types of assignments will allow students to demonstrate accomplishment of a desired student learning outcome?*

*What skills and knowledge does an assignment help develop?*

*What student learning outcomes does an assignment address?*

# Student Learning Outcomes

## Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

describe

what students **will be able to do** at the end of

the **program** - program student learning outcomes

or

a specific **course** - course-base student learning outcomes

# Course-Based Student Learning Outcomes

What **will students be able to do** *as a result of/ at the end of a course?*

What **skills** will students build?

What **knowledge** will students develop?

How will students **demonstrate** this learning?

What **assessment** is best used to demonstrate growth?

**Think: What do you want your students to learn, know, do or understand?**

# Curriculum Map

A curriculum map identifies **how each course fits into the rest of the program**, what outcomes a course should address and at what level, and the sequence of courses.

***Excerpt from General Education Program Curriculum Map – Subject to Change***

- 4.1 Produce and deliver written and oral presentations, and communicate with specialists and non-specialists using appropriate media and technology.
- 4.2 Think critically and creatively, conceptualizing real-world problems from different perspectives.
- 4.3 Work productively in diverse teams and solve problems collaboratively.
- 5.1 Use common software and information technology to pursue inquiry relevant to their academic and professional fields, and personal interests.
- 5.2 Weigh evidence and arguments, and appreciate and engage in diverse modes of inquiry characteristic of historical, cultural, political, economic, and quantitative disciplines.
- 5.3 Properly document and synthesize existing scholarship and data, keep current with developments, conduct independent research, and discover and learn new material on their own.

	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.3</b>
Freshman English 1	B	B	B	B	B	B
Freshman English 2	I	I	I	B	I	B
Armenian Lang / Lit 1	I	I	I		I	
Armenian History 2	I	I			A	I
Intro to Philosophy	B	I	I		I	
Modern American History	I	I	B	I	I	B
Health and Nutrition	I	I			I	B
Intro to Environmental Studies	I	I			I	B

# Course-Based Student Learning Outcomes



Student Learning Outcomes should be:

**Concise,  
Doable, and  
Assessable (Measurable)**

# Student Learning Outcomes

What is the **language** of a student learning outcome?

“Student should be able to”

**ACTION VERB**

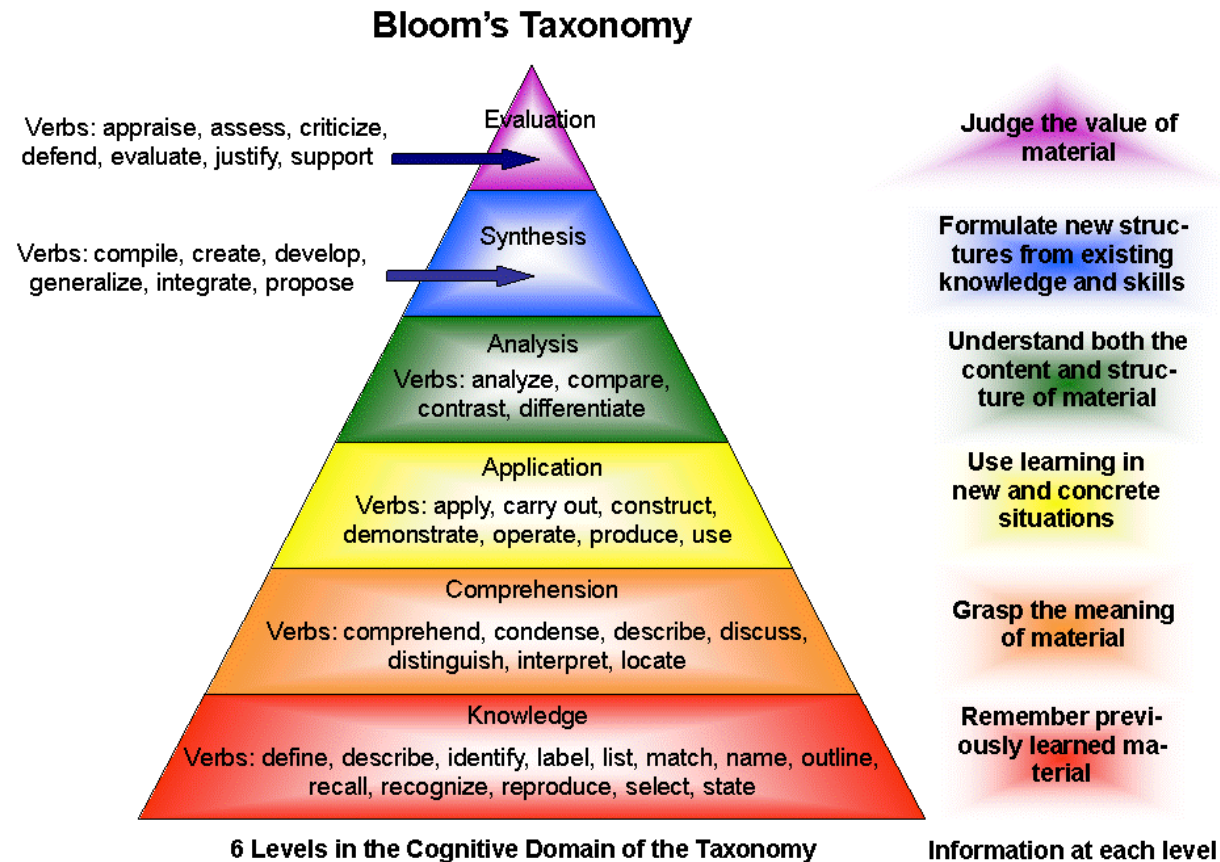
***something***

*Remember: Concise, Doable, Assessable*

*Focus on student behavior.*

# Student Learning Outcomes

## Bloom's Taxonomy





## Verbs to Avoid

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- Understand
- Appreciate
- Know about
- Become familiar with
- Learn about
- Become aware of

**Why would we want to avoid these verbs?**

# Which Outcome?



- ❑ Students will be able to do research.
- ❑ Students will be able to write a research paper.
- ❑ Students will be able to write a research paper in the appropriate scientific style.



What should I  
**teach?**

What should my  
students **be able to**  
**do** with what they  
**learn?**

# Course-based Student Learning Outcomes



**An activity**

# Student Learning Outcomes

## Effective Course-based Student Learning Objectives:

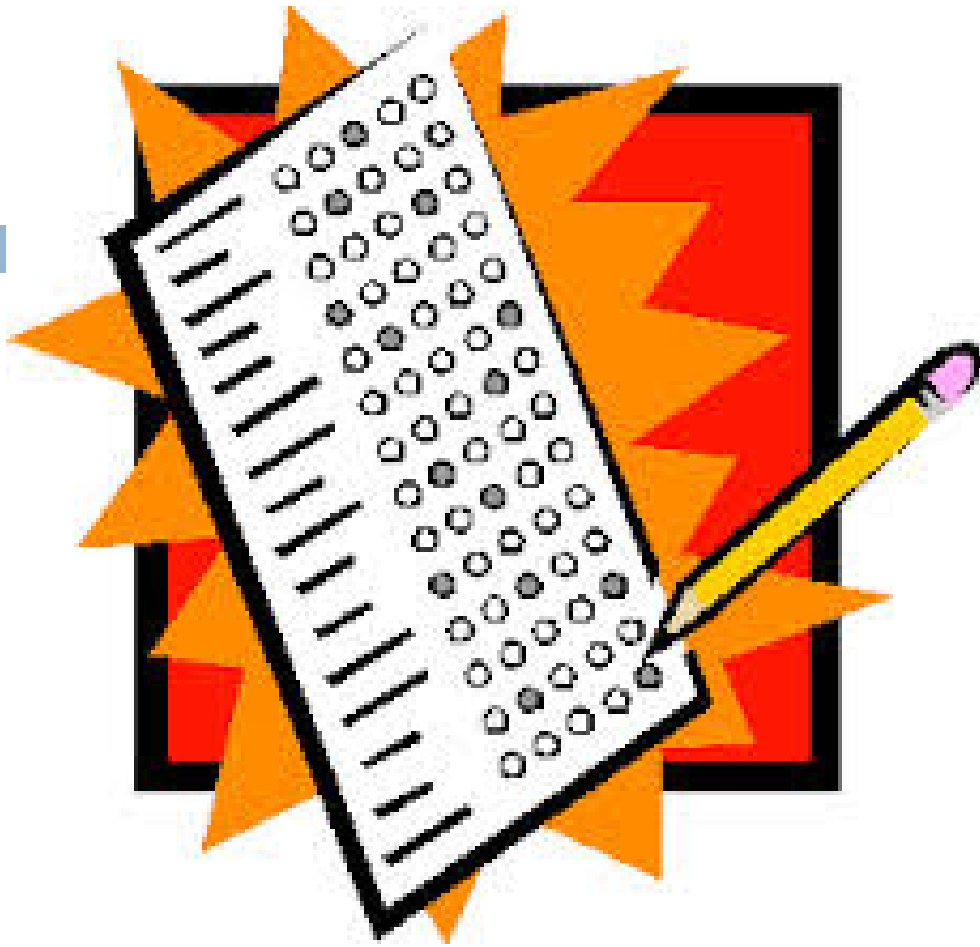
- ▣ **Describe** what students **will learn** in the course
- ▣ Are **aligned** with program goals and program objectives
- ▣ Use **action verbs** that specify definitive, observable behavior
- ▣ Are **assessable** through one or more indicators
- ▣ Are **doable, realistic** and **achievable**
- ▣ Use **concise** language

*Remember: Concise, Doable, Assessable*


# Course Based Student Learning Outcomes – Mapping to Program Goals and Program SLOs

## Freshman English 1 – *Subject to Change*

Program Goals	Program Student Learning Outcomes	Course-Based Student Learning Outcomes
<p><b>Program Goal 4:</b> <i>Develop articulate, conscientious leaders and problem solvers who are committed to contributing to their fields and society.</i></p>	<p>4.1 Produce and deliver written and oral presentations, and communicate with specialists and non-specialists using appropriate media and technology. (B)</p>	<p>a. Recognize and adhere to AUA’s standards for academic excellence and integrity.            b. Express ideas and opinions orally and in writing with increased confidence, fluency, and accuracy.            c. Produce writing including well-structured paragraphs, letters, and short narrative essays (1-3 pages) using the different stages of the writing process, including choosing a topic, brainstorming, outlining, drafting, soliciting feedback, revising, and editing.</p>
	<p>4.2 Think critically and creatively, conceptualizing real-world problems from different perspectives. (B)</p>	<p>d. Identify perspectives and values of author, speaker, or oneself and intended audience(s).</p>
	<p>4.3 Work productively in diverse teams and solve problems collaboratively. (B)</p>	<p>e. Contribute to class discussions by actively and respectfully listening and sharing ideas and opinions.            f. Reflect upon one’s own work and contribution to the class and identify action steps for improvement.            g. Provide constructive feedback on written work and class participation.</p>
<p><b>Program Goal 5:</b> <i>Provide students with a broad foundation of knowledge and skills and cultivate a commitment to life-long learning.</i></p>	<p>5.1 Use common software and information technology to pursue inquiry relevant to their academic and professional fields, and personal interests. (B)</p>	<p>h. Identify and utilize library and library resources to find information relevant to coursework.</p>
	<p>5.2 Weigh evidence and arguments, and appreciate and engage in diverse modes of inquiry characteristic of historical, cultural, political, economic, and quantitative disciplines. (B)</p>	<p>i. Summarize and evaluate opinions and arguments made by a range of speakers and identify which ones are well-reasoned and well-supported.</p>
	<p>5.3 Properly document and synthesize existing scholarship and data, keep current with developments, conduct independent research, and discover and learn new material on their own. (B)</p>	<p>j. Identify and utilize university resources including the library, Center for Academic Excellence, and writing lab that support academic and personal discovery, development, and autonomy (e.g. build vocabulary, study skills, note-taking, writing enrichment, information retrieval).            k. Paraphrase, quote, cite and synthesize information and arguments from different sources.</p>



This is probably NOT the best way to assess students in a Public Speaking course.



*What activities and assignments provide an opportunity for students to learn and demonstrate accomplishment of a desired student learning outcome?*

*Asking and answering this question will help align student learning outcomes with activities and assignments.*



# Assignments and Assessment

Are the assessment methods **aligned** with student learning outcomes?

Are the assessment methods **varied**? (Do students have ample ways to learn and demonstrate learning?)

Are the assignments **weighted** appropriately?

As you think about the above also think about:

What assessment tools will be used (**rubrics**)?

Do you provide **formative** and **summative** assessment to students?  
How often?

Is there an opportunity for students to provide feedback to the instructor?

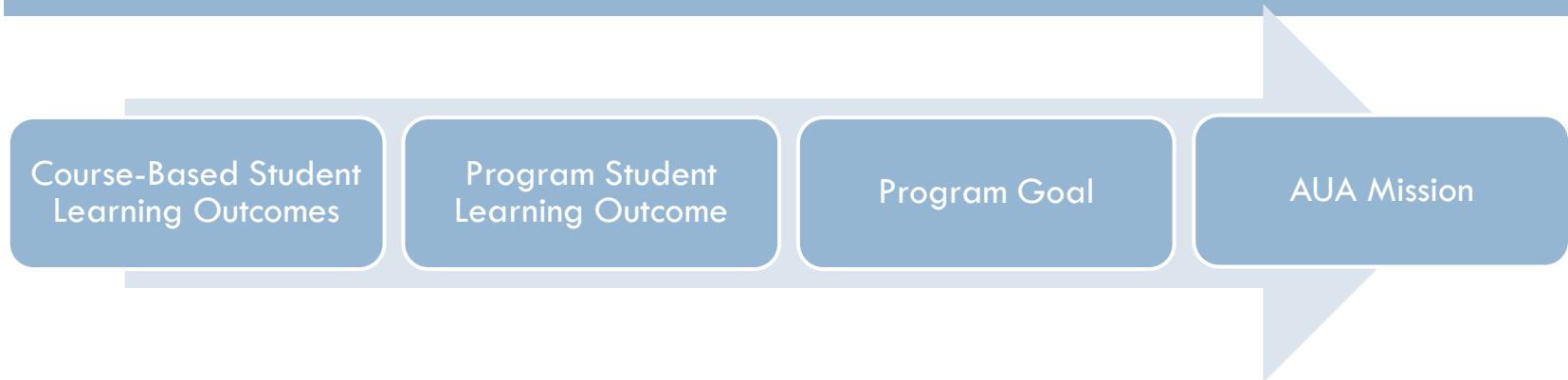


## An activity

(Graded and ungraded) Assignments should provide an opportunity for students to *demonstrate* accomplishment of this outcome.



# Summary



- Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) describe what students will be able to do at the end of the program or a specific course.
- SLOs are concise, doable, and assessable.
  - “**Student should be able to**”
    - ACTION VERB** (see Bloom’s Taxonomy)
    - something***
- Assignments and assessment should be aligned with course-base student learning outcomes

# Where can you turn for resources and support?



Colleagues

Program Chair

Dean

Office of Assessment/IRO/Accreditation

- \* Online resources, especially: [iro.aua.am/faculty-workshops/](http://iro.aua.am/faculty-workshops/)
- \* One on one (or group) support