Gaawaabaabiganikaag
Gabegikendaasowigamig
White Earth Tribal & Community College

Assessment Plan

Accredited by
Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

Updated December 2014
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The WETCC Assessment Plan is designed to guide faculty, administration, and staff in assessment work at the institutional, program, course, and community levels. The assessment process serves to improve student learning through a systematic, continuous process of data collection and analysis. These results guide planning, decision making, and action. Through the assessment process, the College can generate information to be used at all levels of institutional decision-making expected by external constituents such as funding agents and the Higher Learning Commission. Integrating assessment into the planning and review process for all programs and departments assures effectiveness and integration with WETCC initiatives, including both the College Strategic Plan.

The WETCC Assessment Plan (2014-2019) is designed as a college-wide assessment tool to facilitate assessment of institutional effectiveness related to student success. A successful WETCC student acquires and demonstrates knowledge, skills, and abilities infused with the Anishinaabe Cultural Values that strengthen their personal identity. The expectation is that their educational goals, they have discovered a sense of community (Anishinaabeg nitam), where they find purpose (Mikigaade wendjising) in their life’s journey, giving them leadership skills (Ogimaawin) to utilize in the roles they have defined, by taking a holistic perspective (Aapiji naagadawendam miinawaa inoo’igan) to their own educational journey, and ultimately helping them to live the good life (Bimaadiziwin).

Assessment is an evolutionary process; therefore, the assessment plan provides the structure and defines individual roles/responsibilities for our assessment work. Based on the Continuous Improvement Cycle, this plan clearly defined tasks and the cycle of assessment activities are designed to insure consistent institutional progress. This approach provides the structure for gathering and analyzing data, interpreting the results, and then using these in all institutional decision making processes.
The Continuous Improvement Model illustrated below is utilized as a tool for assessment and the WETCC Student Learner Outcomes guide that process. These are defined for the institutional, academic program, course, and the community levels. Each outcome includes indicators for 4 levels of achievement strategies for data gathering and the analysis, reporting, and a planning/implementation process closing the evaluation loop.

**Continuous Improvement Cycle**

- **Plan**
  - Identify and define what we want to achieve and how it will be achieved

- **Act**
  - Implement specific strategies and actions for achieving our plans.

- **Review**
  - Monitor progress against plans and evaluate outcomes.

- **Improve**
  - Identify changes and adjust objectives and strategies as appropriate.

There are three types of data that are used in the assessment of student learning at WETCC: Institutional data, direct indicators of student performance, and indirect indicators (student perception). Each mode of data collection can be useful in assessing specific outcomes at any of the levels.
Assessment and evaluation are meaningless if results are not communicated with stakeholders. Stakeholders include: WETCC students, faculty, administration, staff, the Council of Trustees, the Tribe, and the community. Therefore, this plan includes process for regularly reporting of assessment work.
EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

It is essential for faculty, administration, and staff to understand the external perspective of the “what” and “why” as it relates to assessment of student learning. This can be accomplished through the following process:

1. Learner outcomes are articulated for each level (Institutional, program, course, and community).
2. Strategies are defined to achieve these outcomes.
3. An assessment process is defined for the degree to which these outcomes are being achieved.
4. Results are used to improve courses, programs and student services, and in all other aspects of the College as they pertain to student learning.

The College demonstrates its commitment to quality by setting clear goals for student achievement, regularly measuring student performance against those goals, reporting the results, and continually adjusting planning and activities based on these results.
Gaawaabaabiganikaag Gabegikendaasowigamig

I. MISSION

The mission of the White Earth Tribal and Community College, an Anishinaabe controlled liberal arts institution of higher education, is dedicated to educational excellence through provision of a culturally relevant curriculum in partnership with students, staff, community, and industry.

II. VISION

Gaawaabaabiganikaag Gabegikendaasowigamig Waasa Inaabidaa Gibimiwidoomin gidinwewininaan nigaanekeya.

“We are carrying along into the future the way that we were given”

The White Earth Tribal and Community College vision is to provide the greater White Earth Tribal community quality, innovative, and adaptive educational programs and services, based upon Anishinaabe culture, values, language, and heritage that empower learning, enrich one’s life, and shape one’s future. This vision supports the College’s mission as it works to bring the necessary resources together to help students lead successful, independent, socially responsible, and personally fulfilling lives.

III. VALUES

Debwewin
The literal translation of this word is the sound of your heart. Each of us holds the truth in his/her heart and when we live the value of debwewin, we express that truth in everything we do.

- To speak the most honestly one can, according to his/her perceptions
- To be loyal in all our relationships, avoiding hypocrisy

Zoongide’win
The literal translation of the word is strong heart. When we have a strong heart, we are able
to face challenges with courage and integrity. A person living the value of zoongide’win acknowledges his/her own weaknesses and faces them with a strong heart.

- To face difficult situations with bravery
- To acknowledge one’s personal weaknesses and develop the strength to combat them
- To demonstrate the ability to take initiative and to speak forthrightly

**Gwayakwaadiziwin**

The literal translation of this word is to be correct or straight in everything that we do. If an individual lives the value of gwayakwaadiziwin, he/she must do what is right for the group and hold himself/herself and others to high standards of integrity.

- To maintain truthfulness, sincerity, and fairness in all one’s actions
- To possess the ability to manage confidential information
- To communicate with others and transmit information fairly and truthfully

**Manaaji’idiwin**

When we live the value of manaaji’idiwin we give respect to each other. In the Anishinaabe worldview, everything has a spirit and therefore deserves respect. This concept is included in this word.

- To accept cultural, religious, and gender differences
- To maintain high standards of conduct at all times
- To safeguard the dignity, individuality, and rights of others

**Zaagi’idiwin**

If we act out of love for each other and ourselves in everything we do, we are living the value of zaagi’idiwin.

- To work cooperatively and harmoniously with others
- To show kindness and compassion
- To demonstrate acceptance and the empowerment of others
- To offer hope, encouragement and inspiration

**Nibwaakaawin**

The literal translation of this word is an abundance of wisdom. When we live the value of
nibwaakaawin, we seek to learn all that we can in a respectful manner and take the time to reflect upon our teachings.

- To take time to reflect on all our experiences
- To acknowledge the opportunity to learn from others
- To persist in acquiring knowledge and improving skills
- To strive for the accomplishment of goals and dreams
- To practice ethical behavior at all time
- To seek guidance from elders and qualified advisors

**Dabasendizowin**

When we live the values of debewin, zoongide’win, manaaji’idiwin, gwayakwaadiziwin, zaagi’idiwin, and nibwaakaawin, we can hold ourselves in low regard as this word indicates, without having low self-esteem. We understand that we are humble beings and conduct ourselves accordingly.

- To be modest in one’s actions
- To demonstrate sensitivity to others
- To be respectful of the thought and ideas of others
- To recognize one’s strengths and weaknesses and acknowledge the capacity for self-growth and change
- To recognize oneself as a sacred and equal part of the Creation

The College’s commitment to all constituents supporting respect and diversity can be found in the College’s mission and values statements. The College’s commitment is to promote and respect the diversity and individuality among all people and maintain a safe, respectful, and courteous environment and a welcoming learning community.

**IV. GOALS**

The following established goals are consistent with the WETCC Mission, Vision, 7 Anishinaabe Values, and the Learner Outcomes.

a. Offer academic degree programs that reflect Anishinaabe culture, history, and language.
b. Create educational opportunities that are accessible to the Native community, tribal members, and the broader community.
c. To provide activities that respect tribal traditions and culture.
d. To develop quality educational programs that give students a scholastic foundation to pursue a higher academic degree or to achieve their career objectives.
e. Maintain a focused learning environment in a safe and secure campus.

V. THE GENERAL EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC) exists to provide education and training opportunities for the people on and around the White Earth Indian Reservation.

In order to meet the diverse needs of these people the general education curriculum must accomplish a number of goals. These goals are to

A. Prepare students to matriculate to baccalaureate institutions.
B. Encourage the development of the following skills to at least the level of a college sophomore:
   a. Critical and creative thinking
   b. Problem solving
   c. Communication
   d. Ability to incorporate Anishinaabe culture into the modern context

VI. CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Anishinaabeg people of Northwestern Minnesota live a community-based culture whose traditional activities are seasonally determined. Education is a life-long process wherein all students become teachers as they move through the life cycle. The educational process begins with encouraged observation, starting very early in life (depending upon the activity), moving to an extended apprenticeship where questions and modeling are valued. Families reinforce learning through storytelling and illustrative query.

When the federal government assumed educational authority over Native children, the utilization of boarding schools not only removed children from their families but succeeded
in removing families from the educational process resulting in the significant decimation of language and culture. The trauma of the boarding school era has nurtured a negative intergenerational resistance to education as evidenced in today’s demographics regarding high drop-out rates, and low high school graduation, and college matriculation which have contributed to perpetuating reservation poverty.

On October 7, 1997, the White Earth Tribal Council chose to address these issues when they established the White Earth Tribal and Community College as a not-for-profit tribally controlled educational institution of higher learning. For the first time in the history of the White Earth Indian Reservation, Anishinaabe students could attend a post-secondary school where their culture was validated, their language revered, and their employment skills developed to allow them to fully participate in contemporary society. Designed as a place where students could study and learn together in a culturally relevant academic environment, the College is home to over a growing number of both College students and Adult Basic Education students.

VII. SERVICE AREA

The White Earth Tribal and Community College is a 2-year liberal arts college located in Mahnomen, Minnesota and primarily serves the Becker, Mahnomen, and Clearwater counties of northwestern Minnesota. Mahnomen County, where the college is located, has a population of 2,125 between the ages of 20 and 54 (U.S. Census 2000).

Three surrounding counties have a total population of 30,000 individuals in the same age bracket (U.S. Census, 2002). The College serves a unique unmet need by bringing equal opportunity for higher education to a large geographically isolated community. The College is also developing distance learning capacity to expand both student access and the diversity of education opportunities.

The White Earth Reservation has an enrolled Native population of over 19,500 with 9,000 living on the reservation (Indian Health Services, 2004). Major employers in this region include the Shooting Star Casino, the White Earth Tribal Council, Indian Health Service, the College, and independent farmers and harvesters of traditional foods.
THE WETCC LEARNER PEDAGOGY

Student retention is a significant challenge at WETCC as it is for many other institutions of higher learning. Hence, we have to effectively evaluate the unique circumstances faced by our students and develop instructional pedagogies that address not only institutional retention goals, but more importantly, create a culturally relevant curriculum that takes a holistic view of the WETCC learner.

Other risk factors that WETCC student face include: historical trauma, a local high unemployment rate, low income jobs, high suicide rate, drug abuse, alcoholism, transportation issues, and inconsistent sources of daycare. Additionally, there is a continued challenge of single-parent households and/or those individuals that are raising children from extended families or have foster children. Low-income jobs and extended family concerns weigh heavy on the minds of our student, impeding the learning process.

WETCC students struggle to assimilate into conventional educational structures where they are inundated with information that is not culturally relevant. Because there is minimal stigma associated with educational failure, our students may choose to walk away in such situations. Typical Western education institutions expect all to accommodate themselves to the system and consider Native student to be culturally deprived. It is critical for WETCC to meet the students where they are and provide a curriculum that motivates them to succeed, while giving them all the tools to achieve that success. Thus, we must focus on learning pedagogies that best serve our students.

The WETCC student is typically a non-traditional student which refers to those individuals that do not fit the “traditional” student profile: a high school graduate that enrolls full-time in college immediately after high school graduation, with financial support provided primarily or completely by their parents. Non-traditional students are often older when they enroll, may have dependents or children of their own, be single parents, and/or already be active in the workforce. These characteristics can all be linked to a higher likelihood that the student will leave higher education without obtaining a
degree. The more risk factors a student has, the less likely it is that he/she will successfully complete their education. The WETCC student is considered to be high risk.

WETCC learners want to pass on to their children the wisdom and strength of the Ojibwe culture as part of their college education. As students grow in knowledge of their community and culture they develop wisdom, increased respect, patience, and understanding while encouraged to embrace the 7 Anishinaabe Values upon which the College was founded. These values have become the cultural framework for building curriculum and guiding instructional practices incorporating the traditional ways of knowing.

One of the major strengths of WETCC students is their determination and adaptability. Most of our students have life experiences that would have discouraged many from even attempting college. However, they have reached a point in their lives where they know that they must make a positive change in order to survive in today’s world, and this gives them the strength to overcome incredible obstacles. Their incredible strength and determination, coupled with family support are a catalyst for college success.

Relationship building is critical to the success of our learner. WETCC needs the learning process to mirror an extended family structure. We strive to infuse our culture throughout the curriculum and this engages the student with a sense of belonging. Our primary goal is to create a comfortable learning zone where students feel honored and respected.

The College has developed a diversified pedagogy that embraces the indigenous way of knowing focused on study of and reconnecting with the natural world. There is also a focus on the Ojibwe language. All this fosters respect for the land, the people, and the natural resources, which is the foundation for Ojibwe culture. The Ojibwe language is where students turn for philosophy, history, medicines, stories and spirituality that are all a part of the University for Cultural Survival. Thus WETCC embraces those skills that native people have valued and utilized for generations with the goal of discovering the dependable way things worked in their culture. Knowledge is deeply rooted in place and tied to culture including beliefs, values, and practices,
which were often passed on orally through the generations. In the Ojibwe culture, community is emphasized and the focus is on the process of learning rather than the outcome, emphasizing a holistic way of understanding.

Students at WETCC do not respond well to traditional Western methods of instruction. Rather they retain more information when it is presented with a more hands-on, demonstrative approach. Often instructor will incorporate stories and analogies that can then be connected to culturally meaningful activities in a student’s life. Students are encouraged to develop inner authority by making observations, proposing hypothesis, and inferring probable outcomes while integrating new information into their own worldview. This approach is highly effective for all students in their increasingly multicultural and complex world. Indigenous knowledge, based on community responsibility and connectedness, alters the way that one looks at the world and their relationship in it, creating a broader scope of understanding.

The WETCC faculty, administration, and staff are focused on both our students and the communities that we serve. We recognize that there are many opportunities for us to collaborate our efforts with community organizations, k-12 schools, and local programs to better support our community of learners. Understanding the needs of our students helps us to identify access points that offer opportunities to help WETCC students to achieve academic success.

Most incoming students assess at the developmental level on the Accuplacer Placement Test. This means that nearly 85% of our student population will need to take a minimum of one developmental reading, writing, or math course as a part of their educational plan. Many students struggle with the standardized testing formats and are not always accurately placed. Another factor in lower test scores is that most WETCC students have attained a GED (General Education Degree) rather than High School Diplomas and simply do not possess the skills necessary for college level courses. Our challenge is to build this skillset as efficiently and quickly as possible. This is particularly important because many students find the developmental tract is extremely frustrating as these courses are non-credit based and not a part of their overall GPA. In addition, a two-year degree program often takes as much as three years to complete.
The most effective way to combat this issue is to intervene before the middle school level. Such efforts require strong partnerships with local schools and consistent funding to be successful. This is no small challenge. According to the National Indian Education Association (NIEA), Native American students tend to be the “most disadvantaged in the country.” They start school behind and often stay behind. The Native graduation rate is only 69%, and is considerably lower than the national average of 83% for white students. The performance gap between Native students and white students is the widest in the country based on standardized test scores, graduation rates, and college enrollments. Unfortunately, the same issues that the adult learners faces at WETCC are mirrored are also those faced by those in pre K-12. However, like students at the college level, a student that feels connected and invested students will do better.

Access points earlier in the educational journey could potentially offer additional opportunities to infuse Ojibwe culture into education. The scientific method of observing, hypothesizing, experimenting and concluding offers a hands-on approach where every lesson has the opportunity for cultural infusion. As cultural awareness grows, so does the sense of community for learners of all ages, and ultimately, retention on all levels is increased.
According to the Higher Learning Commissions Site Visit Report from December 2012, the evaluation team reported that WETCC’s approach to assessment did not adequately meet the criteria necessary for full accreditation. In their report on pg. 18 section 3a, they state: “The development of the assessment of student learning plan is neither inclusive nor integrated into the infrastructure of the College to ensure coherent assessment of student learning throughout the institution.” The HLC team identified the urgency to provide all degree programs with “Identified Program Learner Outcomes” as the process of “differentiating learner outcomes across course, program, general education, and institutional levels” had not been completed. This section also stressed the need for assessment to be “conducted routinely at multiple levels, such as course, program, and institutional. Thus limited evidence of student learning has been collected.” Therefore, “with limited data generated” it is incredibly difficult to report for “accountability” with regards to advantageous changes in instruction and curriculum.

The WETCC Assessment Plan for Student Learning Outcomes has the following purpose:

1. To meet the Higher Learning Commission and states level accreditation requirements;
2. To ensure that faculty has control over the student outcomes assessment process.
3. To collect data which serves as evidence of student learning;
4. To evaluate data to improve program and course effectiveness;
5. To annually review Program and Course objectives for clarity, consistency, and relevance.

An essential component of any assessment plan is to state clearly what students are learning and how the College knows they have learned it. Accrediting bodies require that faculty is clear and direct about what they want students to learn, and those expectations are communicated in the form of learning goals and objectives. Therefore, goals and objectives are the core of the assessment plan.
WETCC faculty identified four general education learning goals (critical and creative thinking, problem solving, communication, and the ability to incorporate Anishinaabe culture into modern global context). In addition, to the general education learning goals, faculty members developed the WETCC Learner Outcomes which are woven into both program and course outcomes and objectives.

The WETCC Learner Outcomes, based on Higher Education norms and Anishinaabe teachings, incorporate the following that provide a framework for programming, curriculum, and course assignments:

1. **Okwiinogamigwewin nitam** (The Community First)
   a. Exercise critical/creative thinking
   b. Demonstrate civic/social responsibility
2. **Mikigaadeg wendjising** (Finding Purpose)
   a. Identify and develop gifts/talents
   b. Identify and develop interests/goals
3. **Ogimaawin** (Leadership)
   a. Value diversity by listening and communicating respectfully.
   b. Take responsibility.
4. **Aapiji naagadawendam zhawenim ongow onaa akiing** (Holistic in a Way that Honors all Things)
   a. Committed to the development of the whole person.
   b. Honor interrelatedness of all things.
5. **Mino Bimaadiziwin** (The Good Life)
   a. Demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities grounded in Anishinaabe history.
   b. Take measurable steps toward a productive and fulfilling life grounded in the Anishinaabe Way.

The *WETCC Learner Outcome Rubric* shown below illustrates a variety of skill levels ranging from a benchmark of 1 to a capstone of 4. Learner’s skill levels increase through their educational journey with the goal of attaining the capstone level upon successful graduation.
Using the WETCC Learner Outcomes and the Rubric as a foundation, faculty members can then identify learning goals relevant to their program or discipline with measurable goals and/or objectives for the courses they teach. Thus all outcomes, goals, and objectives align and support the college Mission and vision of the College.

This plan asks faculty to develop strategies to assess the quality of learning at WETCC from three levels: general education, discipline/program, and course objectives. At every level, the plan encourages faculty to ask questions about student learning. The first level asks about the quality of learning within courses, focusing on performance objectives, classroom assessment, and instruction. The second asks questions about the quality of learning within program or emphasis areas. The third asks questions about the quality of student learning in terms of general education goals.

Faculty assess students regularly and determine what criteria students need to meet. When a significant number of students fail to meet these criteria faculty determines why, and makes necessary changes. These changes may be instructional or they may

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<tr>
<th>Performance Dimensions</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Capstone 4</th>
<th>Milestones 3</th>
<th>In Progress 2</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
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<tr>
<td>Okiwionamigewewin nitam (Community)</td>
<td>Exercise critical/creative thinking</td>
<td>Application of thinking skills in a variety of civic and social contexts</td>
<td>Mastery of thinking skills and civic engagement</td>
<td>Building critical/creative thinking skills and sense of responsibility</td>
<td>Awareness of civic and social needs in their community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikigaadegek wendjising (Finding Purpose)</td>
<td>Identify and develop gifts/talents</td>
<td>Application of those in a variety of contexts</td>
<td>Mastery of these</td>
<td>Refine gifts, talents, interest, and goals</td>
<td>Limited awareness of individual gifts, talents, interests, and goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogimaawin (Leadership)</td>
<td>Value diversity by listening and communicating respectfully</td>
<td>Ability to actively listen to other perspectives. Seeks to understand other perspectives without judgment. Driving the agenda on some cause or issue</td>
<td>Actively committed to a cause or issue</td>
<td>Occasional engagement with a cause or issue.</td>
<td>Not engaged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azipji naanagadawendim ongow omaaking (Holistic Perspective)</td>
<td>Committed to the development of the whole person</td>
<td>Readily integrate knowledge and tools from various disciplines in any context</td>
<td>Integrating knowledge and tools from various disciplines to challenges outside the classroom</td>
<td>Integrating knowledge and tools from various disciplines</td>
<td>Cannot make connections between different disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mino-Bimadiziwin (The Good Life)</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities grounded in Anishinaabe history</td>
<td>Integrate and implement worldview in a variety of contexts</td>
<td>Refining worldview</td>
<td>Developing their own worldview based on the Anishinaabe history and Way</td>
<td>Aware of Anishinaabe history and Way</td>
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necessitate support from the college. This assessment plan is designed to make this process more transparent and data driven. Rather than imposing specific assessment strategies on faculty, it provides them with a framework that encourages and supports initiatives that improve the learning of their students. The plan is faculty-driven where the goal is transformative improving instruction and curriculum.
The WETCC mission, vision, values, and institutional commitments all are interwoven with the Anishinaabe culture which provides the context for institutional assessment, planning, data analysis, and data reporting that is required at every level to maintain educational excellence. The value of academic assessment data is that it creates connection points where clearly defined learner outcomes that originate in classrooms are linked to program and institutional student learning goals.

It is critical to establish that the WETCC Learner Outcomes which are driven by the College’s mission, vision, and values are interwoven through every level of institutional assessment. Every individual within the organization is responsible for some facet of student learning.
On the course level, the primary focus is the articulation of what instructors intend for their students to learn. There are a number of terms that are used to describe that focus such as: goals, objectives, and learner outcomes. In the past, these terms have sometimes been used interchangeably; however, distinguishing them from one another can help instructors better understand course level assessment.

**Goals**—Often general statements of intentions, for example, “The student will understand the fundamental concepts of the writing process.” These goals are often included in the course syllabus.

**Objectives**—Specific statements of what students will achieve in the process of meeting course goals. For example: “At the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate writing processes of invention, revision, organization, drafting through multiple drafts, editing, and adjusting for rhetorical context (purpose, audience).”

**Learning Outcome**—Used to indicate the knowledge, skills, or values that result from instruction and the **experiences** the students will undergo as a result of taking the course. They serve to guide assessment measures chosen by the instructor. For example, “The student will demonstrate and use invention strategies that help writers develop ideas, formulate a thesis, and adjust organization and details for the audience’s needs.”

Objectives are the intended results of instruction and outcomes are the actual achieved results of instruction as determined by **assessment methods**.

**Suggestions for instructors**—

1. When writing learner outcomes you must answer the questions, “As a result of taking this course, what do I want my students to be able to do, say, think or feel that they were unable to do before the experience of taking the course?”
2. Remember that your learner outcomes will guide how you assess student learning and you must think in terms of evidence. What evidence can you provide that illustrates that skill was attained? Verbs like “learn” and “understand” are general and do not indicate the form of evidence necessary to determine the level of student learning compared to verbs like “describe, explain, and list” which suggest clear means of assessment.

3. Bloom’s Taxonomy can be used as a tool to help instructors to write measurable goals and outcomes.
   a. Bloom’s Taxonomy is a systematic way of describing how a learner’s performance develops from simple to complex levels in their affective, psychomotor and cognitive domain learning.
   b. In their cognitive domain, there are six stages, namely: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation. Traditional education tends to base the student learning in this domain.

4. To determine the level of expertise required for each measurable student outcome, first decide which of these three broad categories (knowledge-based, skills-based, and
affective) the corresponding course goal belongs to.

5. Then, using the Bloom's Taxonomy chart, look over the descriptions of the various levels of expertise.

6. Determine which description most closely matches that measurable student outcome.

Bloom's Taxonomy is a convenient way to describe the level at which students to understand and use concepts, to demonstrate particular skills, and to have their values, attitudes, and interests affected. Therefore, is critical to determine the levels of student expertise that students are expected to achieve because this helps to determine which classroom assessment techniques are most appropriate for the course. Though the most common form of classroom assessment used in introductory college courses—multiple choice tests—might be quite adequate for assessing knowledge and comprehension (levels 1 and 2), this type of assessment often fails to assess student knowledge at the higher levels of synthesis and evaluation (levels 5 and 6). Additionally, multiple-choice tests rarely provide information about achievement of skills-based goals. Similarly, a traditional course evaluation does not prove useful information about changes in student values, attitudes, and interests.

Common evaluation techniques used for assigning grades often do not provide instructors with feedback that is useful for determining if students are attaining course goals. Often this can be linked to the following: no formalized goals to begin with, not writing goals into outcomes that are measurable, and not utilizing assessment techniques that are capable of measuring expected student outcomes given the levels of expertise required to achieve them.

Note that Bloom's Taxonomy need not be applied exclusively after course goals have been defined. Bloom's Taxonomy and the words associated with its different categories can help in the goals-defining process itself. Thus, Bloom's Taxonomy can be used to first state and then refine course goals. Finally, Bloom's Taxonomy can be used to identify which classroom assessment techniques are most appropriate for measuring these goals.

Course embedded direct measures of learning provide instructors modes in which to build out their course learner outcomes, to create benchmarks, and also connect to those learner outcomes to programming. Utilization of rubrics as a tool gives an evaluative scoring tool that lays out for learners the expectations for specific assignments. Rubrics like the one below transform
informal professional judgment into numerical ratings on a scale. WETCC will continue to develop additional tools that are the most effective for outcome assessment and are criteria-based or reflect performance-level.

### Bloom’s Taxonomy Action Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Synthesis</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bloom’s Definition</strong></td>
<td>Remember previously learned information.</td>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the facts.</td>
<td>Apply knowledge to actual situations.</td>
<td>Break down objects or ideas into simpler parts and find evidence to support generalizations.</td>
<td>Compile component ideas into a new whole or propose alternative solutions.</td>
<td>Make and defend judgments based on internal evidence or external criteria.</td>
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Bloom's Taxonomy is a useful resource in developing measurable course learner outcomes; however, it is also critical that instructors determine how their students will be assessed at the course level. Instructors are encouraged to utilize both direct and indirect measures of assessment, which are then embedded into the curriculum, for example: quizzes and exams, paper, projects, presentation, and portfolios can all provide direct measures of assessment evidence. At this level of assessment instructors assign grades providing feedback to students about their progress and success. Examples of both direct and indirect measures of assessment are listed in the following tables.
Closing the continuous improvement loop is the justification and reward for all the investment of thought and time expended in the assessment process: how can the course be improved by what has been found through the analysis? As one faculty member has said, “Assessment helps us figure out whether our students are learning what we think they’re learning.” A very important factor in this final phase of assessment is that of sustainability:

- Has the process produced the kind of data necessary for critical decisions to be made?
- Has the instructor developed a process that is useful and beneficial to all involved—the instructor and institution as well as the students?
- Can and will the process be practically replicated and sustained over time?

At the course level, it is most practical to think of the assessment process as a means to an end (informing pedagogical practice) and not an end in itself (to satisfy others’ expectations). Examples of results possible at this stage include revising course content in terms of depth vs. breadth, realignment between goals and teaching methods, employment of more appropriate assessment methods, or effective incorporation of technologies.
Course-Level Assessment Design—

Process Overview:

**Planning**

- Conduct assessment training.
- For each course, Faculty develops 3-5 Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).
- For each course, Faculty identifies how to assess the SLOs.
- For each course, Faculty identifies performance standards for each outcome.

**Part 1 – Throughout the Semester**

- Implement assessments during class as scheduled.

**Part 2 – End of the Semester**

- Record assessment results, *analyze* results, and *develop* action plans.

**Part 3 – Throughout Subsequent Semesters**

- Implement action plans and assessments during class.

**Part 4 – End of Each Semester**

- Record progress of action plans.
- Make necessary changes to curriculum, assessments, teaching strategies, etc.

**Ongoing Process**

The process will record the assessment results, propose changes, and the results of those changes. This process is iterative allowing for continuous course improvement while also allowing for the implementation of changes in direction or focus. The final step of this process will be an annual assessment workshop where faculty members will share their course-level assessment results. The resulting dialogue will allow for the collaboration of best practices and foster the sharing of ideas among colleagues.
Process Flow

1. **Determine SLO, assessments, and targets**
2. **Collect data using direct and indirect measures of data collection**
3. **Review results, determine action plans, and submit a report**
4. **Report annual progress**
5. **Modify course syllabus as necessary**
Program assessment focuses on what and how an academic program is contributing to the learning, growth, and development of students as a group. A quality assessment plan reflects specific program goals, measureable student learning outcomes, and a well-articulated plan for timely implementation, strategic data collection, and analysis. Findings should then be used to inform, confirm, and support program level change and facilitate continuous program level improvement.

Assessment helps programs:
- Assess student achievement of program learner outcomes;
- Determine what students are able to do and how those determinations are made;
- Identify learner gaps;
- Inform teaching pedagogy by aligning best practices with learner’s needs;
- Make informed decisions about program curriculum, course action, and revision.

Program assessment takes into account not only the academic components of the department/program but also support services such as advising. It is an opportunity for faculty to engage in an ongoing conversation about how their courses relate holistically to the program goals.

Like course-level assessment, program-level assessment is an iterative or repetitive process that provides faculty with a framework to examine present and future educational offerings. The process itself is similar to that of course-level assessment—identifying program learning goals, aligning goals with the curriculum, gathering evidence of student learning, interpreting the evidence, and using the evidence for improvement. A key distinction between the two processes is that program-level assessment requires the collective engagement of faculty during all steps in the process.
Program-Level Assessment Design—

Process Overview:

*Planning*

- Determine the responsible faculty member for each WETCC program.
- Identify those individuals responsible for the assessment process.
- Develop and articulate the program's mission, goals, and outcomes.
- During the planning phase, outcome targets and the assessment methods to measure the outcomes are selected.
- For each program, Faculty develops 5-7 Program Learning Goals and Objectives.
  - Program Learner Goals—
    - Program goals focus on the general outcomes for graduates relevant to the program itself. For example:
      - Students should develop a critical understanding of . . .
      - Students who complete this program should see the importance of ethical communication with others;
      - Students will develop an understanding of important methods and concepts in the sciences;
      - Students will obtain a mastery of higher-order objectives such as problem solving in relation to their discipline.
    - It is generally a good idea to identify between three and five instructional goals for your program.
  - Program Objectives
    - Program objectives transform the general program goals into specific student performance and behaviors that demonstrate student learning and skills.
    - The following questions should be answered:
      - For each of the goals, what are the specific
behaviors, skills, and/or abilities that would determine that this goal was achieved?

- What evidence or behavior illustrates that achievement?
- What evidence tells you that students have met those goals?

Utilization of Bloom’s Taxonomy Action Verbs and the Task Oriented Construction Wheel Based on Bloom’s Taxonomy are both helpful tools in the development process.

**Part 1 – Throughout the Semester**
- Implement assessments during class as scheduled.

**Part 2 – End of the Semester**
- Record assessment results, analyze results, and develop action plans.

**Part 3 – Throughout Subsequent Semesters**
- Implement action plans and assessments during class.

**Part 4 – End of Each Semester**
- Record progress of action plans.
- Make necessary changes to program goals, objectives, curriculum, assessments, teaching strategies, etc.

**Ongoing Process**

The process will record the assessment results, propose changes, and the results of those changes. This process is iterative allowing for continuous course improvement while also allowing for the implementation of changes in direction or focus. The final step of this process will be an annual assessment workshop where faculty members will share their program-level assessment results. The resulting dialogue will allow for the collaboration of best practices and foster the sharing of ideas among colleagues.
OVERALL LEARNER OUTCOMES

The WETCC Student Portfolio—

Since current student numbers at WETCC are relatively low, statistical analysis of achievement is of limited value. Portfolios of student learning are a manageable system at this time. Each student’s portfolio will contain the following items:

- Results of their math and reading placement tests;
- A copy of their first paper from College Writing I;
- A copy of their final paper from College Writing II;
- A copy of portions of their journal project from Ojibwe I;
- A copy of their projects from a science course;
- An exit interview with the College counselor;
- Follow up surveys one year after graduation to determine student perceptions of the value of their education relative to their current situation.

This set of materials provides both direct and indirect measures of student assessment and multiple measures of each WETCC Learner Outcome. The WETCC Learner Outcome Rubric will be utilized as an evaluative tool to determine levels of achievement, strengths of the coursework, and identify weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.

The 4 assignments are normal parts of the courses, but that have been designed to address the educational goals of the college. In particular they will each require demonstration of the following skills:

- Okwiinogamigwewin nitam (The Community First)
  - Exercise critical/creative thinking
  - Demonstrate civic/social responsibility
- Mikigaadeg wendjising (Finding Purpose)
  - Identify and develop gifts/talents
  - Identify and develop interests/goals
- Ogimaawin (Leadership)
  - Value diversity by listening and communicating respectfully.
  - Take responsibility.
- Aapiji naagadawendam zhawenim ongow omaa akiing (Holistic in a Way that Honors all Things)
  - Committed to the development of the whole person.
  - Honor interrelatedness of all things.
• Mino Bimaadiziwin (The Good Life)
  o Demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities grounded in Anishinaabe history.
  o Take measurable steps toward a productive and fulfilling life grounded in the Anishinaabe Way.

The faculty will determine which learner outcomes each assignment addresses and develop benchmarks for outcome. A committee of the faculty will assess the portfolios annually against these benchmarks. Each item will be scored as a 1-4 scale from the Learner Outcome Rubric. These scores will be analyzed for any underlying patterns of success and/or concern. The results of this analysis will be used to fine tune the curriculum and address any weaknesses found. A report will be drafted to the President and Council of Trustees each year summarizing the analysis of the assessment data and the recommendations of the faculty stemming from that analysis. This report will also provide documentation of the assessment plan for outside reviewers or other interested parties.

Such a system will be flexible in that any changes in the goals or mission of the college can be reflected in similar changes in the learner outcome benchmarks used to assess learning. It will provide data for ongoing improvements in teaching and learning at the college. It will provide rapid feedback if problems should arise so corrective measures can be taken. Finally, it will not be unduly burdensome on the faculty. This is an important point since the faculty already have a multitude of responsibilities and additional workloads must have a clear high benefit relative to the effort needed.

**Portfolios**

A portfolio is a collection of student work, usually representing student work over a period of time, such as from an introductory course through the completion of their final course.

Portfolios enable faculty:

• To assess complex tasks and objectives utilizing many different examples of student work, including interdisciplinary learning and capabilities;
• To assess more rigorous and higher order thinking skills such as
application, synthesis and evaluation;
  • To assess student work over a specified time;
  • To examine the process including drafting, revision, and final submission of student projects;
  • To place responsibility for demonstrating competence or mastery upon the student;
  • To help students reflect on learning and their own educational journey, and in the process, to understand what they have and have not yet learned;
  • To provide students with documentation for job applications or applications for continued education.

Faculty needs to determine:

  • How those assignments collected in the portfolio contributed to higher-order learning.
  • What the student learned from the process of generating the work.
  • How the work fits into a larger framework of life-long learning, which goes beyond simple completion of graded assignments.
  • Why the work was valuable in the student’s overall cognitive development?

Curriculum Map

An additional element of assessment is a curriculum map. Mapping provides a graphical representation of where, and briefly, how each learner outcome is addressed in the curriculum. For example:

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Legend:  
- I = Introduced  
- P = Practiced  
- R = Reinforced  
- A= Assessed
I. **Introduction**—

The purpose of program review is to allow faculty to analyze the quality of academic programs with the goal of developing an evidence-based understanding of learner effectiveness that will assist in the decision-making process. Program reviews are a critical component of the continuous improvement loop because they help to identify areas of growth and development. It is an opportunity to determine how we are preparing students to engage in their communities, which degree programs are innovative and current, and the state of well being, productivity, and the adequacy of academic support and institutional resources for faculty. The review process is an opportunity to learn and to share those discoveries across the College system.

II. **Process**—

At WETCC the review process involves two forms of review:

1. An annual update and report
2. A 3 year comprehensive program review

III. **The Annual Report**—

The annual report is written by program faculty and reflects the ongoing assessment of student learning relative to program goals. Its focus is on what students are learning and how that determination is made. The annual reports are more formative that summative and shaping program adjustments are based on learning. The annual report also provides an update with regards to programming, and/or campus or community plans for which the program is involved. The annual report is an internal campus document submitted to the Academic Dean. It will be shared with the WETCC Leadership team.

IV. **Implementation of 3-Year Comprehensive Program Review**—

White Earth Tribal and Community College (WETCC) will provide oversight for the
program review process through the establishment of a three-year review cycle for all programming. In the inaugural years (2014-2017), all programs will participate in the program review process. This review process will consist of internal and external alignment of programs and of review and correction of all program academic data. After 2017, one-third of all programs will participate in review each year. The Faculty Senate will review each report, provide timely feedback through the review cycle, and support implementation of program improvement goals.

The Academic Dean in collaboration with the faculty in charge of programming will establish a review team composed of faculty senate, students, an external community member, and the Academic Dean.

In the program’s self-study, the program’s faculty is responsible for assessing the program strengths, weaknesses, and to make recommendations for program improvement. The WETCC Program Review Form must be a part of the evaluative process.

The purpose of the review process is to improve the quality and effectiveness of academic programs across the College system.

Upon conclusion of the review, the program self-study, the team report, and their responses will compiled and a summary report will be presented to the WETCC Leadership team.
WETCC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW
A. INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT
   Introduce your program. Provide historical information to set the context.

B. RELATIONSHIP TO WETCC MISSION AND STRATEGIC PLAN
   Describe current and future curricular plans and their alignment with the College’s Mission and Strategic Plan.

C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
   Describe the program and its purpose. What are the requirements for successful completion? Be sure to utilize the Academic Catalog’s description. Briefly describe any program or field changes over the past 3 years and any curriculum revisions that were made in response to these or other changes.

D. ACTIONS SINCE THE LAST REVIEW: PREVIOUS PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PLAN
   Discuss the previous Program Assessment Plan.

E. SUMMARY OF PROGRAM OVERVIEW
   Include a summary of curricular changes and implementation findings and actions.

II. PROGRAM DATA REVIEW
A. STUDENT PROFILES AND ENROLLMENT TRENDS
   Discuss program trends utilizing student profiles. Note the following: degrees conferred, retention and graduation rates including time to complete, course grade distribution, course enrollment history, and comparison’s with other WETCC enrollment trends.

   Provide and evaluation of the program’s success in recruitment, retention, and graduation of students as a whole. Complete data evaluation by including demographic characteristics (e.g. gender, transfer, first generation college student). Describe actions taken or planned to ensure student success. Include Alumni Survey data if available.

B. FACULTY PROFILE
   Review and discuss full and part-time faculty expertise and academic credentials needed for delivering the programs curriculum. Include résumé or curriculum
vitae for all program faculty.

C. BENCHMARKING

Discuss your program in comparison to similar programs from other institutions. Include a list of peer institutions utilized for data collection. Also include any other benchmarking that has been completed through additional external sources.

D. MARKET FORCES

Discuss shifting trends, market forces, and future opportunities that might impact program demand and number of students enrolled in the program. Consider engaging alumni, community members, and/or focus groups to determine current and future needs.

E. SUMMARY FOR PROGRAM DATA REVIEW

Provide a summary in this section. Be sure to include data trends, identify areas of strength, opportunities for improvement, and discuss in detail the next steps in program assessment.

III. COMMITMENT TO STUDENT LEARNING

A. FACULTY

1. ADVISING/MENTORING
   
   Evaluate the effectiveness of student advising, mentoring, and involvement with students as they fulfill program requirements.

2. TEACHING
   
   Evaluate collective faculty expertise for covering the breadth of the program’s curriculum. Describe the teaching philosophies and instructional methods utilized within the program and evaluate their success in achievement of program learner outcomes and student learning.

3. SCHOLARSHIP, RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY
   
   Evaluate the effectiveness of collective faculty engagement on balance across scholarship, research, and/or creative activity and the level of support for these scholarly activities. Evaluate program support for faculty professional development, especially for new, and/or part-time faculty. Include faculty participation in development opportunities linked to teaching, learning, and/or assessment, external and internal funding awarded to faculty, and any awards or honors.

B. ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENT LEARNING

1. PROGRAM LEARNER OUTCOMES
   
   List the Program Learner Outcomes. Indicate any changes made to your
program learner outcomes since the last review and the rationale, and approval date for those changes.

2. STUDENT ASSESSMENT/ACHIEVEMENT

Summarize the following:
• Describe how methods of achievement for each program learner outcome were assessed using direct/indirect methods.
• Discuss the strategies for collecting, analyzing, and determining findings.
• Summarize actions taken based on assessment of student learning.

3. GENERAL EDUCATION

Evaluate the program’s effectiveness in providing service to the General Education program. Provide a review of all general education courses offered by the program, including a paragraph for each area of general education determined by the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC). Attach up-to-date samples of all syllabi for each general education course offered by the program.

Describe how the General Education program aligns and complements the program’s student learning outcomes. Then indicate how the program transfers into four-year colleges. What measures of assessment are utilized to make that determination? Identify any areas for further development or other recommendations for the General Education program.

C. SUMMARY FOR COMMITMENT TO STUDENT LEARNING

Provide a summary of this section. Indicate data trends, identify areas of strength, opportunities for improvement and discuss the next steps in program assessment.

IV. RESOURCES

A. FACILITIES

Discuss and describe the quality and the efficiency of your physical facilities and equipment.

B. FISCAL RESOURCES

Describe the overall fiscal operations of the program with regard to its purpose, size, and scope.

C. TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Discuss and describe the quality and sufficiency of technical resources and support.
D. LIBRARY RESOURCES
   Discuss and describe the quality and sufficiency of library holdings and resources.

E. SUMMARY FOR RESOURCES
   Provide a summary of this section.

V. INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

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<td>ELIMINATE PROGRAM</td>
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</table>

Faculty Senate Approval Date________________________
Assessment Requirements—Institution level

All assessment plans must include direct, indirect, and non-measure methods of assessment. Suggested strategies from the HLC (Higher Learning Commission) for assessing student learning include the following:

- Pre/Post Tests (Direct)
- Examples of student performance collected as class assignments (Direct)
- Portfolios (Direct)
- Oral Exams (Direct)
- Essay questions blind scored by faculty (Direct)
- Classroom research
- Survey of students and/or graduates (Indirect)
- Exit interviews (Indirect)
- Alumni follow up study (Indirect)
- Retention and transfer studies (Indirect)
- Graduation rates (Indirect)
- Job placement data (Indirect)
- Course evaluation surveys (Indirect)
- Faculty publications and recognition (Non-measure)
- Enrollment trends (Non-measure)
- Grades and GPA data (Non-measure)

It is important to note that no one measure of student learning can be used alone and it is critical that there is a balance if student learning is going assessed.
General education is at the core of the academic curriculum for all degree-seeking students, thus it is critical that all faculty teach skills and knowledge that aligns with the general education goals. Students who know what is expected them in terms of learning have a solid framework and are more successful. Faculty who have a clear idea of what they want their student to learn are able to align coursework to these outcomes. Outcome assessment allows us to systematically examine alignment between student learning, instructional and institutional expectations, and instructional activities. Every course should utilize the WETCC Learner Outcomes as a foundation for student learning. This defines what a student who passes the course should take away from it.
LIBRARY—

Curriculum can be given to the librarian for her to choose resources that support course, program development.

LIBRARY

1. Know the collection, determine which areas are thin and need updated
2. Changing curriculum (keep up)
3. Instructor information
4. On the look out for those documents
5. Students come in with requests on occasion
6. Assess and Evaluate current resources
7. Gather information, reading reviews of books and publications or trends.
8. Determine what needed
9. Those materials are matched to budgetary
10. Prioritize critical elements
11. Good bait for pleasure reading or practical things for WETCC homelife
12. Get students in the library and use it is always the goal
   a. Tools that might get student using the library
   b. Newsletter is being developed for current offerings
13. Open house to give information to the community regarding what is available at the library
14. Community can use books → community

IT—
STUDENT SERVICES, BUSINESS OFFICE, ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRATION PROCESS FOR ASSESSMENT

CHAPTERS FOR NOW ALPHABETICALLY,

1. BUSINESS (LANDA)
   a. HR
   b. BOOKSTORE
2. COMMUNITY
3. EXTENSION (STEVE)
4. FACILITIES (DEB)
   a. MAINTENANCE
   b. PLANNING
   c. PROCESS THAT INDICATE THE LONGTERM VISION OF THE CAMPUS
   d. UTILIZATION OF FACILITIES
5. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (VERN)
6. LIBRARY (CLAUDIA)
7. STUDENT SERVICES (ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRATION) (KAREN)
PROCESS FOR CAMPUS WIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSESSMENT
Assessment—

The systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning (*Essentials for Tribal Colleges*, 2010).

An ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. (Angelo, 1995)

Assessment as Learning—

The concept that student should learn something every time they are assessed (*Essentials for Tribal Colleges*, 2010).

Benchmarking—

An actual measurement of group performance against an established standard at defined points along the path toward the standard. Subsequent measurements of group performance use the benchmarks to measure progress toward achievement (*New Horizons for Learning*).

Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Objectives—

Six levels arranged in order of increasing complexity (1=low, 6=high):

Knowledge: Recalling or remembering information without necessarily understanding it. Includes behaviors such as describing, listing, identifying, and labeling.

Comprehension: Understanding learned material and includes behaviors such as explaining, discussing, and interpreting.

Application: The ability to put ideas and concepts to work in solving problems. It includes behaviors such as demonstrating, showing, and making use of information.

Analysis: Breaking down information into its component parts to see interrelationships and ideas. Related behaviors include differentiating, comparing, and categorizing.

Synthesis: The ability to put parts together to form something original. It involves using creativity to compose or design something new.
Evaluation: Judging the value of evidence based on definite criteria. Behaviors related to evaluation include: concluding, criticizing, prioritizing, and recommending (Bloom, 1956).

**Classroom Assessment**

The systematic and on-going study of what and how students are learning in a particular classroom; often designed for individual faculty who wish to improve their teaching of a specific course. Classroom assessment differs from tests and other forms of student assessment in that it is aimed at course improvement, rather than at assigning grades (National Teaching & Learning Forum).

**Curriculum Mapping**

An effective tool for determining where in the curriculum each of the college learner outcomes is being assessed and reinforced. By listing course requirements for each program, this simple matrix outlines the level to which students are expected to master each of the college outcomes in each of the required courses. The curriculum map provides an efficient and useful way to identify gaps in the program where institutional outcomes may be neglected. Curriculum maps are also used to track program outcomes (Assessment Essentials for Tribal Colleges, 2010).

**Direct Assessment**

Gathers evidence about student learning based on student performance that demonstrates the learning itself. Can be value added, related to standards, qualitative or quantitative, embedded or not, using local or external criteria. Examples are written assignments, classroom assignments, presentations, test results, projects, logs, portfolios, and direct observations. (Leskes, 2002)

**Embedded Assessment**

A means of gathering information about student learning that is built into and a natural part of the teaching-learning process. Often uses for assessment purposes classroom assignments that are evaluated to assign students a grade. Can assess individual student performance or aggregate the information to provide information about the course or program; can be formative or summative, quantitative or qualitative. Example: as part of a course, expecting each senior to complete a research paper that is graded for content and style, but is also assessed for advanced ability to locate and evaluate Web-based information (as part of a college-wide outcome to demonstrate information literacy). (Leskes, 2002)

**Evaluation**
The use of assessment findings (evidence/data) to judge program effectiveness; used as a basis for making decisions about program changes or improvement (Allen, Noel, Rienzi & McMillin, 2002).

**Formative Assessment**—

Refers to a wide variety of methods that teachers use to conduct in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson, unit, or course. Formative assessments help teachers identify concepts that students are struggling to understand, skills they are having difficulty acquiring, or learning standards they have not yet achieved so that adjustments can be made to lessons, instructional techniques, and academic support.

The general goal of formative assessment is to collect detailed information that can be used to improve instruction and student learning while it’s happening. What makes an assessment “formative” is not the design of a test, technique, or self-evaluation, per se, but the way it is used—i.e., to inform in-process teaching and learning modifications (Education Reform, 2014).

**Indirect Assessment**—

Acquiring evidence about how students feel about learning and their learning environment rather than actual demonstrations of outcome achievement. Examples include surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and reflective essays (Eder, 137).

**Learning Outcomes**—

Operational statements describing specific student behaviors that evidence the acquisition of desired knowledge, skills, abilities, capacities, attitudes or dispositions. Learning outcomes can be usefully thought of as behavioral criteria for determining whether students are achieving the educational objectives of a program, and, ultimately, whether overall program goals are being successfully met. Outcomes are sometimes treated as synonymous with objectives, though objectives are usually more general statements of what students are expected to achieve in an academic program (Allen, Noel, Rienzi & McMillin, 2002).

**Portfolio**—

A systematic and organized collection of a student's work that exhibits to others the direct evidence of a student's efforts, achievements, and progress over a period of time. The collection should involve the student in selection of its contents, and should include information about the performance criteria, the rubric or criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection or evaluation. It should include representative work,
providing a documentation of the learner's performance and a basis for evaluation of the student's progress. Portfolios may include a variety of demonstrations of learning and have been gathered in the form of a physical collection of materials, videos, CD-ROMs, reflective journals, etc. (New Horizons for Learning).

**Qualitative Assessment**—

Collects data that does not lend itself to quantitative methods but rather to interpretive criteria (Leskes, 2002).

**Rubric**—

Specific sets of criteria that clearly define for both student and teacher what a range of acceptable and unacceptable performance looks like. Criteria define descriptors of ability at each level of performance and assign values to each level. Levels referred to are proficiency levels that describe a continuum from excellent to unacceptable product (System for Adult Basic Education Support, n.d.).

**Summative Assessment**—

The gathering of information at the conclusion of a course, program, or undergraduate career to improve learning or to meet accountability demands. When used for improvement, impacts the next cohort of students taking the course or program. Example: examining student final exams in a course to see if certain specific areas of the curriculum were understood less well than others. (Leskes, 2002)