Writing Learning/ Program Outcomes

Department of Student Life Studies

Texas A&M University

Today's Intended Outcomes
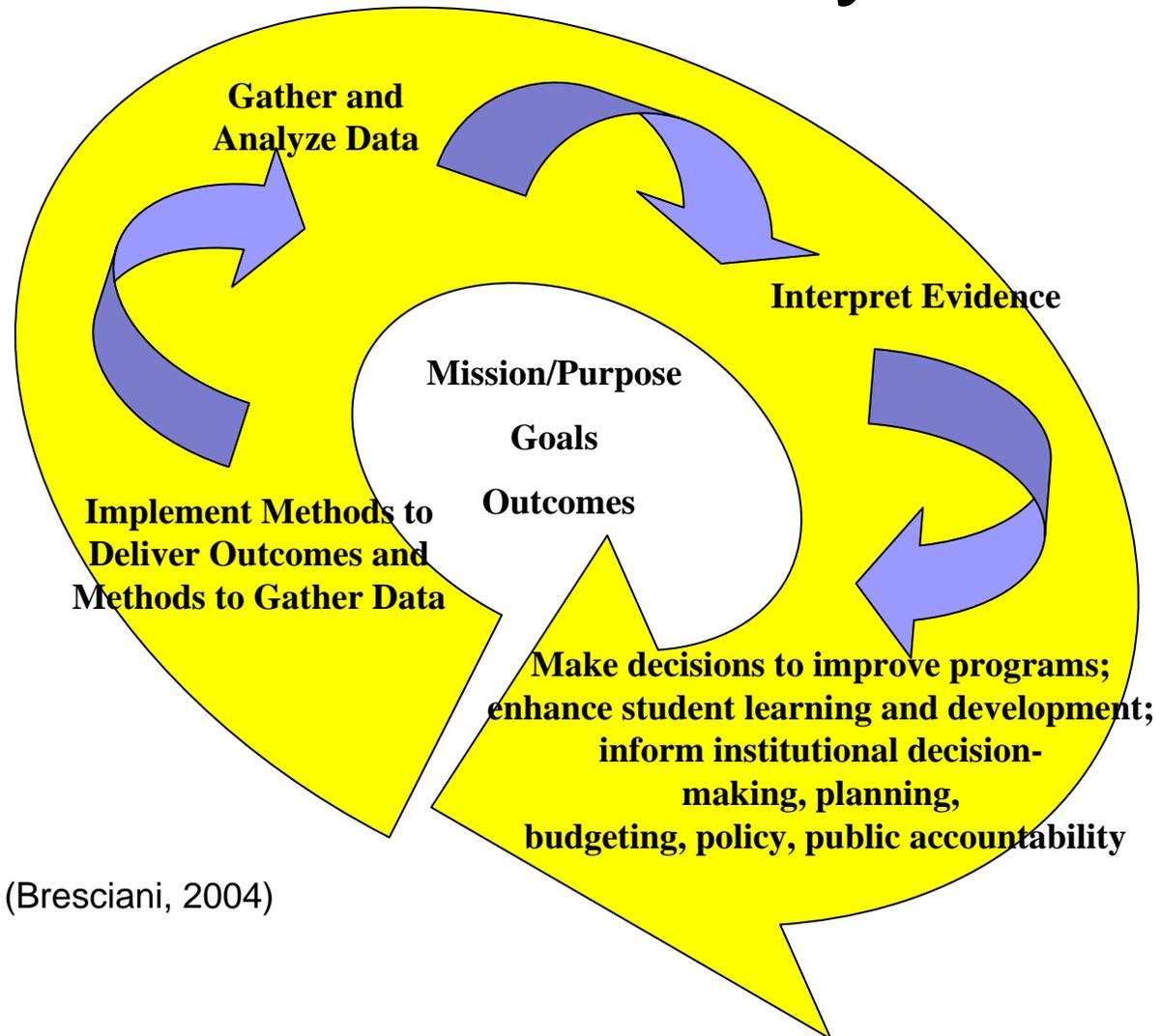
- You will be able to:
  - □ <u>Define</u> student learning and program outcomes
  - □ <u>Distinguish</u> between program outcomes and student learning outcomes
  - □ <u>Write</u> student learning outcomes
  - □ <u>Write</u> program outcomes
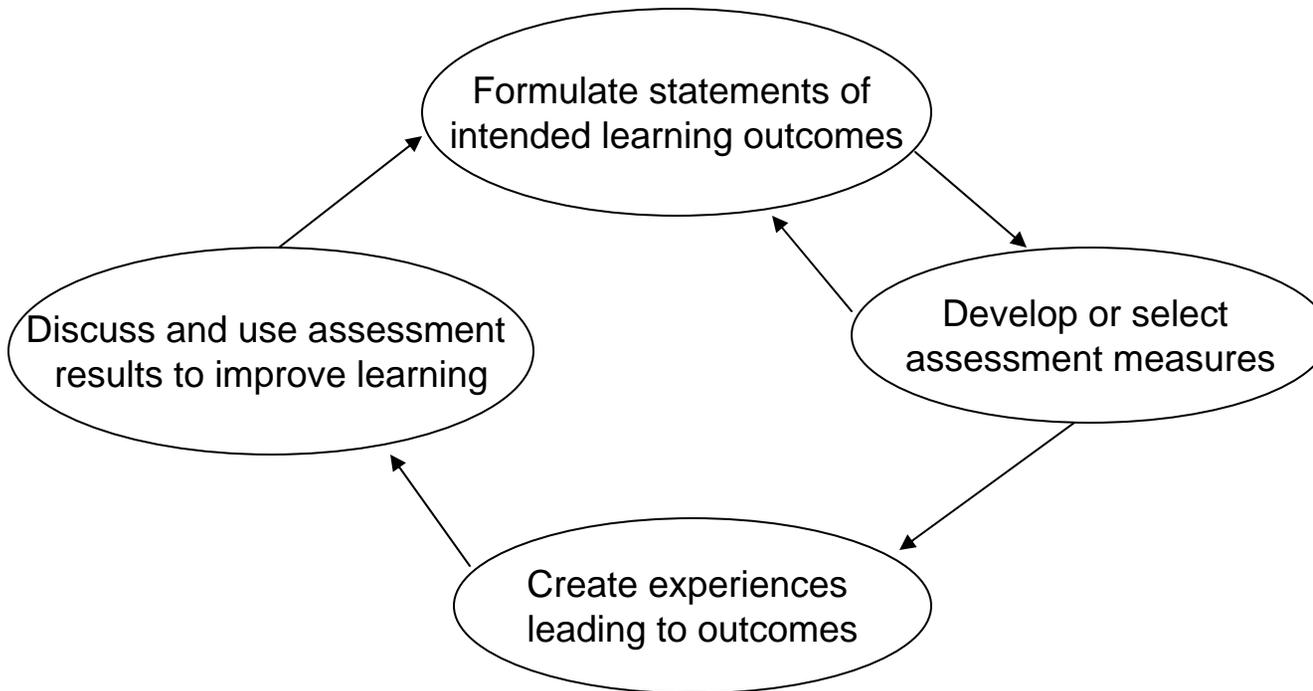 - □ <u>Distinguish</u> between direct and indirect assessment methods

Basics

- What are we trying to do?

- How well do we do it?

- How do we know that?

- How can we improve what we are doing?

Assessment Process/Cycle

Gather and Analyze Data

Interpret Evidence

Mission/Purpose

Goals

Outcomes

Implement Methods to Deliver Outcomes and Methods to Gather Data

Make decisions to improve programs; enhance student learning and development; inform institutional decision-making, planning, budgeting, policy, public accountability

(Bresciani, 2004)

Assessment Process/Cycle

Formulate statements of intended learning outcomes

Develop or select assessment measures

Create experiences leading to outcomes

Discuss and use assessment results to improve learning

(Huba & Freed, 2000)

The Heart of the Cycle: Outcomes

- What do you expect students to know and/or be able to do by the end of their experience in your program or activity?
- What do you expect your program or activity to accomplish?
- What do you do in your programs or activities to promote the kind of learning that the institution seeks for its students? That the Department or Division articulates for students?
- Which students benefit from which co-curricular experiences?

More Questions

- What co-curricular processes are responsible for the intended outcomes that the organization, the department and the Division articulates in their mission statements? What evidence do you have that supports your assertions?

- How can you help students to make connections between classroom learning and experiences outside the classroom?

Advantages of Using Outcomes Language

- Make it clear to students who participate in your programs and activities what they can expect to gain

- Make it clear to others what the program will accomplish and, where appropriate, what students will learn

- Help staff select appropriate strategies to reach the outcomes
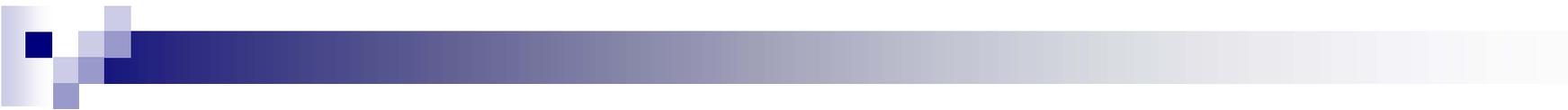
Advantages of Using Outcomes Language, continued

- Move beyond student satisfaction and the use of services as the sole means of describing student affairs effectiveness
- Assist in developing and using appropriate assessment methods
- Apply the results of your assessment to improvement and/or change

What are learning outcomes?

Learning outcomes are what *students* are expected to *demonstrate* in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes upon completion of a program, course, or activity.
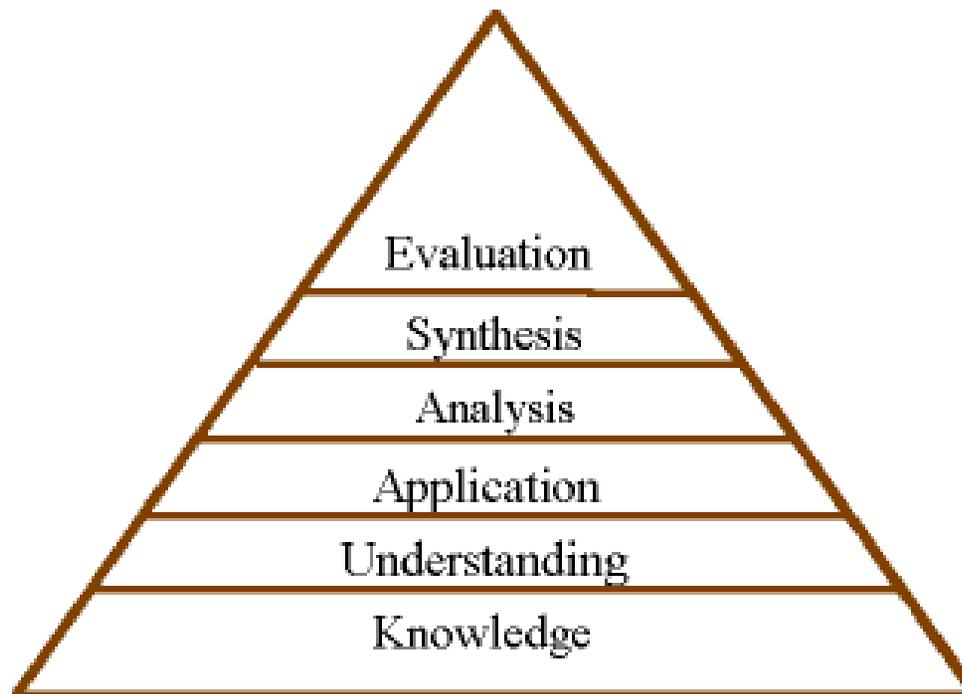
What are program or process outcomes?

Program or process outcomes are what a program or process is to do, achieve or accomplish.

Bloom's Taxonomy (1956)

A structure for developing learning outcomes

Evaluation
Synthesis
Analysis
Application
Understanding
Knowledge

Learning Outcomes?

- Students will like the meal.

- Students will rate the speaker positively.

- Students will create their own personal leadership philosophy based on three models taught in Lead 101 the fall semester.

- After the service project, students will be able to articulate the root causes of homelessness in Bryan/College Station.
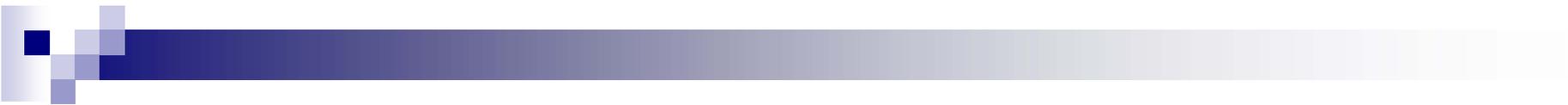
Program/Process Outcomes?

- Students will like the conference banquet.

- The professional development sub-committee will offer two dining etiquette programs in the fall semester for the graduating seniors in Alpha Beta Gamma.

- By August 1, the department website will have all necessary forms and instructions for students to register for Lead 101.

Practice Writing Outcomes

- Identify the mission/purpose of the program
- "Students will <be able to> ..." or "The program will..."
- Action verbs focusing on behavior
- Simple language
- Meaningful
- Measurable

Assessing Learning Outcomes

- Multiple methods are best
- Indirect:
  - Participant surveys/focus groups
  - Participation rates
  - Budgets
- Direct:
  - Tests
  - Observation rated by rubrics
  - Portfolio

Assessing Outcomes?

- **Dinner at McDonalds** (Excellent, Above Average, Average, Below Average, Poor)

- **Speaker: Sponge Bob Square Pants** (Excellent, Above Average, Average, Below Average, Poor)

- What did you most enjoy?

- List three things you will apply in your leadership role.

Assessing Outcomes? (cont.)

- I developed a personal leadership philosophy (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)
  - Better: Have students turn in their philosophy statement and assess using a previously developed rubric

- As a result of today's service project, I can articulate the root causes of homelessness in Bryan/College Station (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)
  - Better: Describe the root causes of homelessness…

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  - □ <u>Distinguish</u> between direct and indirect assessment methods

Future Intended Outcomes

- Practice, practice, practice!
- Teach student leaders how to write in outcomes language
- Develop assessments that use learning outcomes as the basis

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