Learning Outcomes Assessment
**Notice 1.1**
Documenting Assessment Findings and Closing the Loop

Purpose: This notice provides clarifying information with guidelines for reporting assessment findings and documenting the use of assessment findings which is also known as "closing the loop." Follow this link to a brief tutorial.

Assessment findings are used to inform two types of closing the loop action: 1) actions to improve student learning and success and 2) actions to improve the assessment process.

Context: Assessing student learning outcomes is a cyclical process of setting expectations for student learning, providing learning opportunities, collecting and analyzing evidence of learning, and using the findings to inform action for the betterment of student learning and student success.
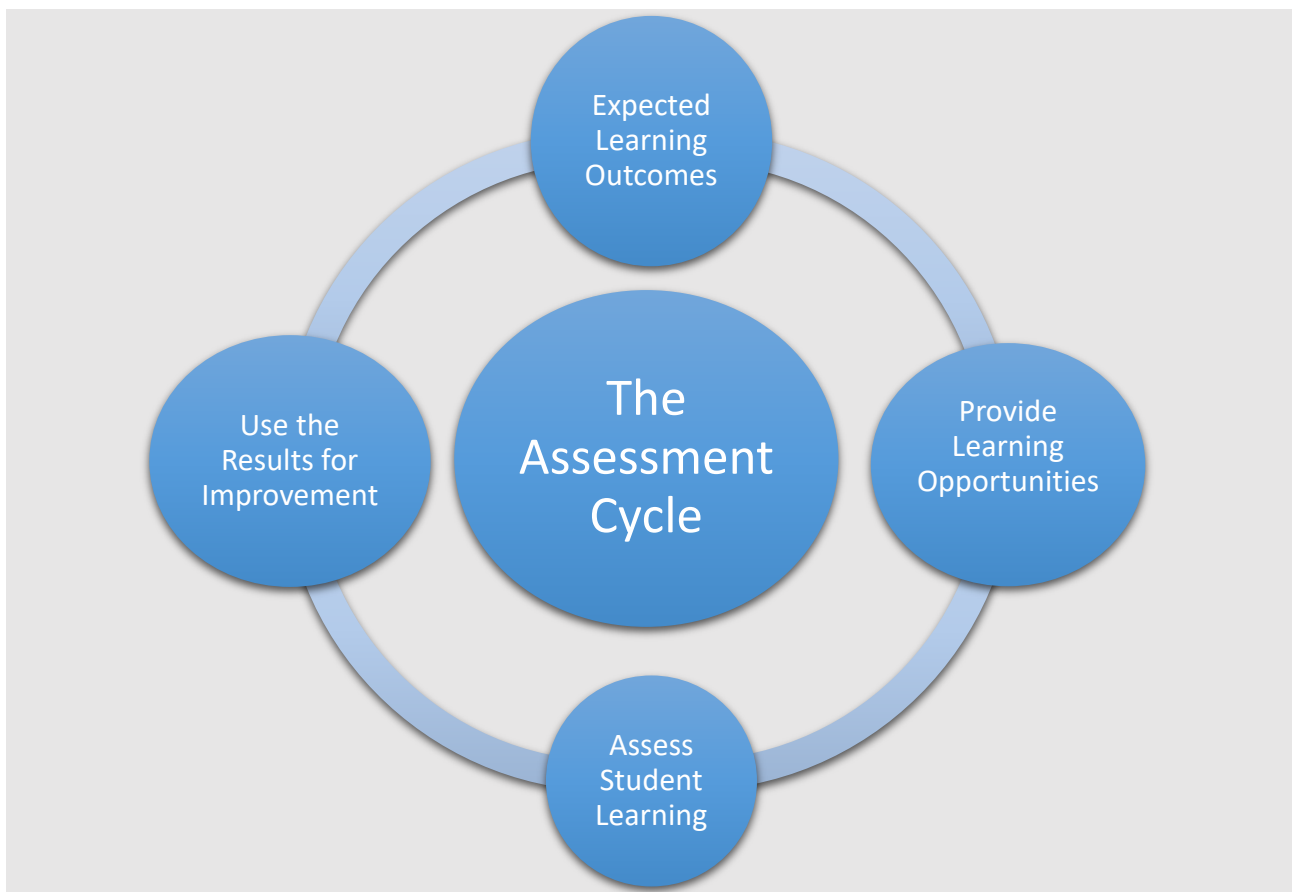
What does "Closing the Loop" mean?

This is a broad term referring to using assessment findings to inform actions for the betterment of student learning and/or the improvement of the assessment process. The process of closing the loop typically includes three stages:

1. Analyze the assessment findings to highlight strengths and uncover weaknesses in student learning. Also, analyze the assessment process to identify strengths and weaknesses.
2. Discuss using the information to improve student learning and/or the assessment process.
3. Make a decision and put it into action.

What is an Action Plan?

Assessment scholar Barbara Walvoord, Ph.D. writes that "the goal of assessment is information-based decision making. To put it another way, the end of assessment is action." She identifies three common actions resulting from assessment:

1. changes to curriculum, requirements, programmatic structures, or other aspects of the students course of study
2. changes to policies, funding, and planning that support learning
3. faculty development [1]

An action plan identifies an objective, the outcome if the objective is met, who is responsible, who needs to be informed, and a timeline of steps and milestones.

What needs to be documented in Taskstream?

Assessment Findings – this requirement has three elements

1. Findings for each assessment.
2. An overall recommendation regarding areas that show the greatest problems with learning. Suggestion: The recommendation can be presented for discussion to the faculty by an assessment committee, or the faculty can collectively prepare recommendations as a product of discussing the findings.
3. An overall reflection on how well the assessment process went this cycle and recommendation for areas for improvement.

Closing the Loop Action Plan – this requirement has one of the following options

1. If faculty recommend no action, provide a documenting statement.
2. If faculty recommend action, document with an action plan report in AMS. Note: Status reports on action plans will be reviewed and documented during the following reporting cycle.

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[1] Walvoord, Barbara. *Assessment Clear and Simple*: *a practical guide for institutions, departments, and general education.* (2nd ed.) San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010.