



# **Hofstra University Office of the Provost**

**Outcomes Assessment using  
Learning Goals and Objectives:  
Excerpt from the Handbook**



# Learning Goals

- Learning goals are broad outcomes expected from an academic program
- They are the broad knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that students should possess upon completion of the program
- They should focus on student behavior rather than teacher behavior, and describe the learning outcome, not the learning process

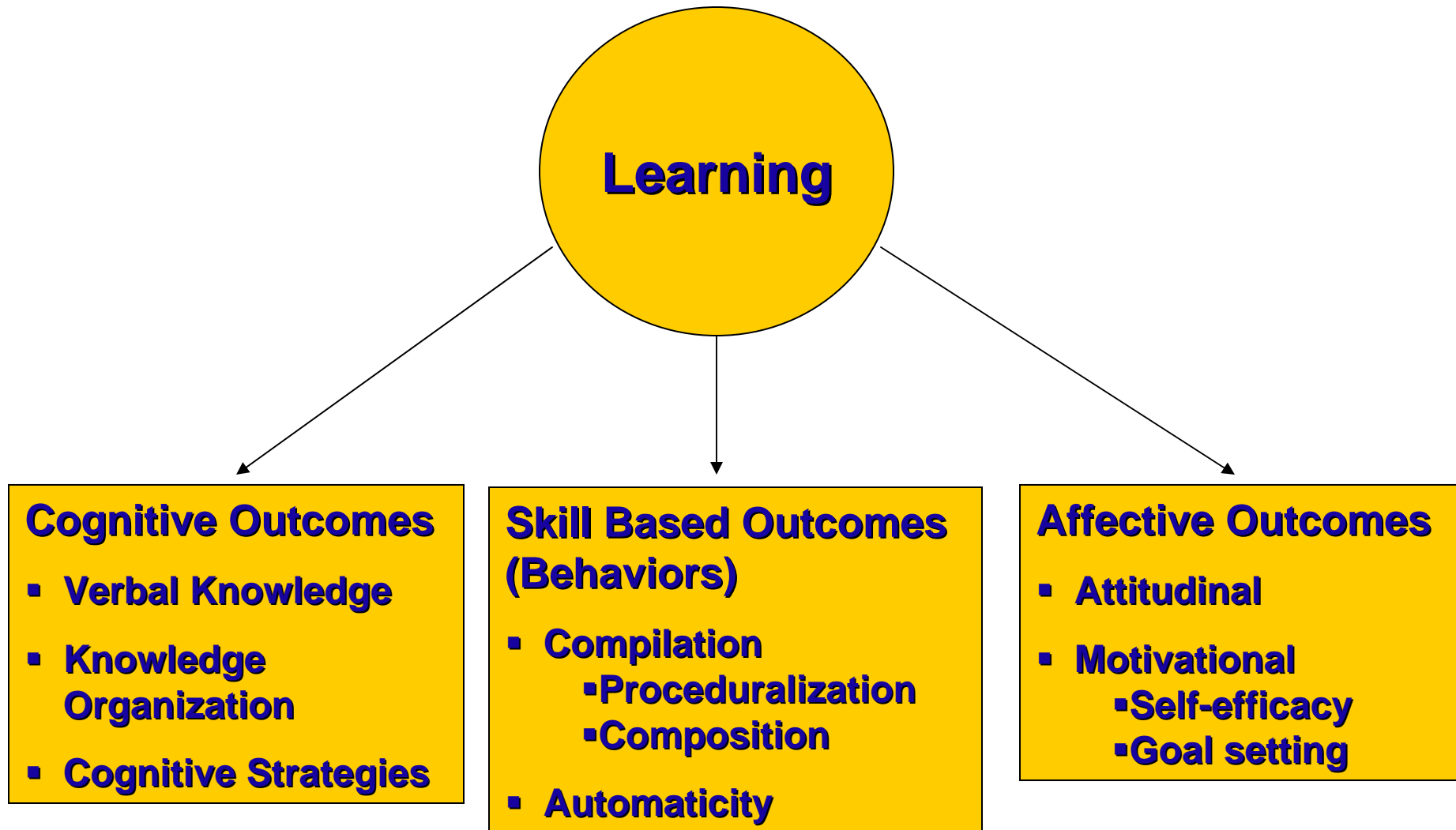
# Learning Objectives



- Once a set of learning goals has been established, learning objectives need to be identified
- Learning objectives describe what students must do to demonstrate competence in a given area
- Learning objectives translate learning goals into descriptions of performance



# Learning Objectives





# Assessment Plan

- The most effective type of assessment plan is known as “formative assessment.”
- Used to improve programs
- It evaluates learning objectives at different stages throughout the process of student achievement of learning goals.
- The advantage of this method is that improvements can be made while a student is still in his or her program
- This overall process can be viewed as a continuous assessment loop



# Assessment Loop (Step 1)

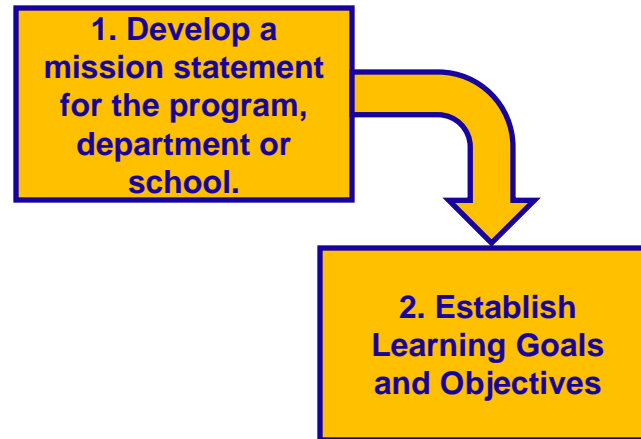
- The mission statement is a broad statement of philosophy, role, scope, etc
- It provides a general sense of identity for an academic program
- It states what the program does and who they do it for

**1. Develop a mission statement for the program, department or school.**



# Assessment Loop (Step 2)

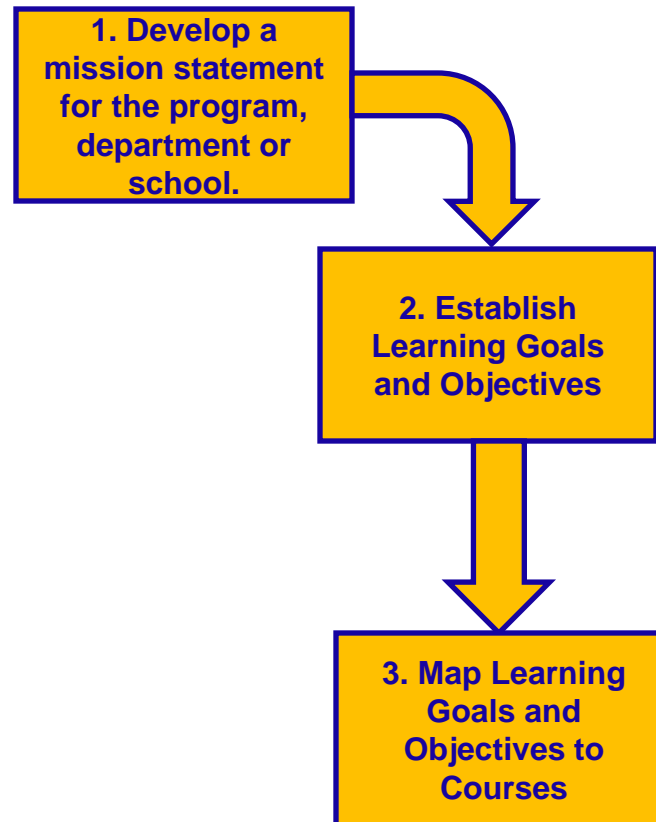
- The learning goals and objectives must be faculty driven
- Faculty should develop between five to fifteen major learning goals that include both general knowledge and content-specific learning goals
- Learning objectives should address content, application of knowledge, context and performance criteria





# Assessment Loop (Step 3)

- Once the learning goals and objectives are established, they should be linked to the individual courses offered in the curriculum
- This is known as “mapping” and its purpose is to ensure that all learning goals and objectives are covered in the curriculum
- At least one learning goal and objective should be linked to each course





# Assessment Loop (Step 4)

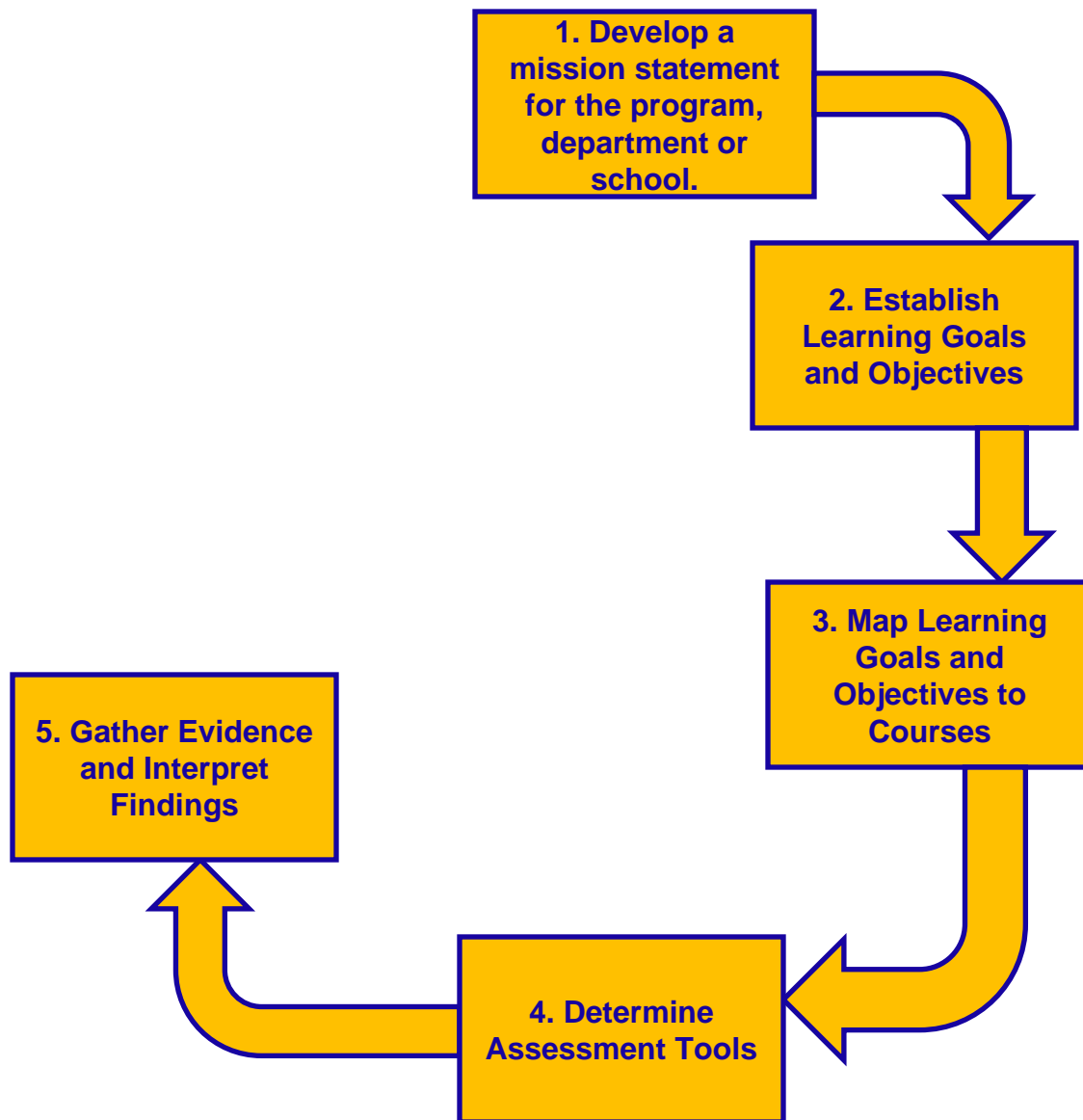
- Direct assessment techniques of students' work usually give the best indication of student learning
- Some examples of direct assessment include test questions, analysis of written assignments that relate to a specific learning objective, review of oral presentations and Licensure Examinations.





# Assessment Loop (Step 5)

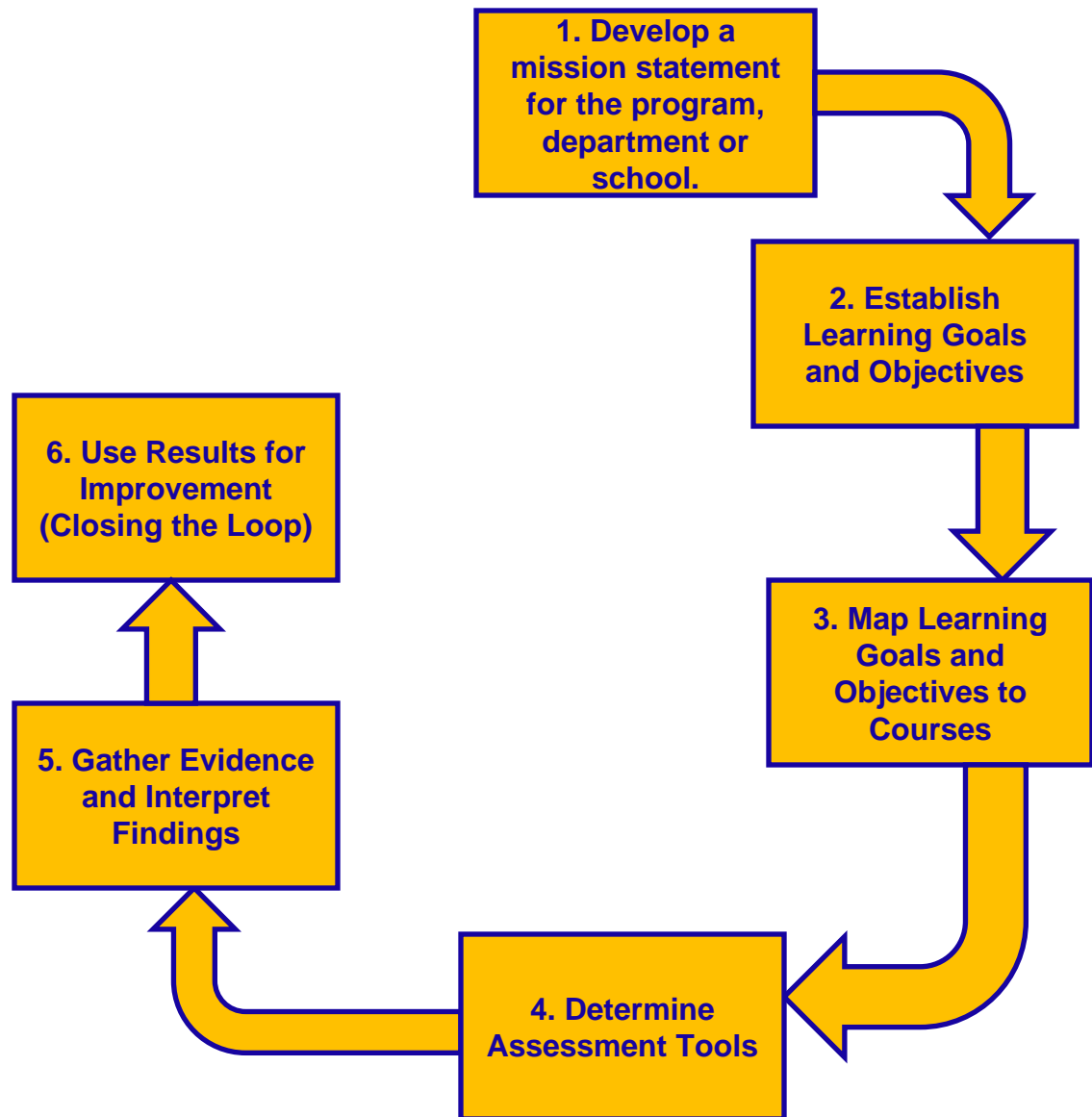
- When assessing a large group, it is necessary to gather a sample that is representative of the entire group
- Interpretation of assessment does not need to be a complicated process
- Faculty should determine the desired outcome and method of analysis





# Assessment Loop (Step 6)

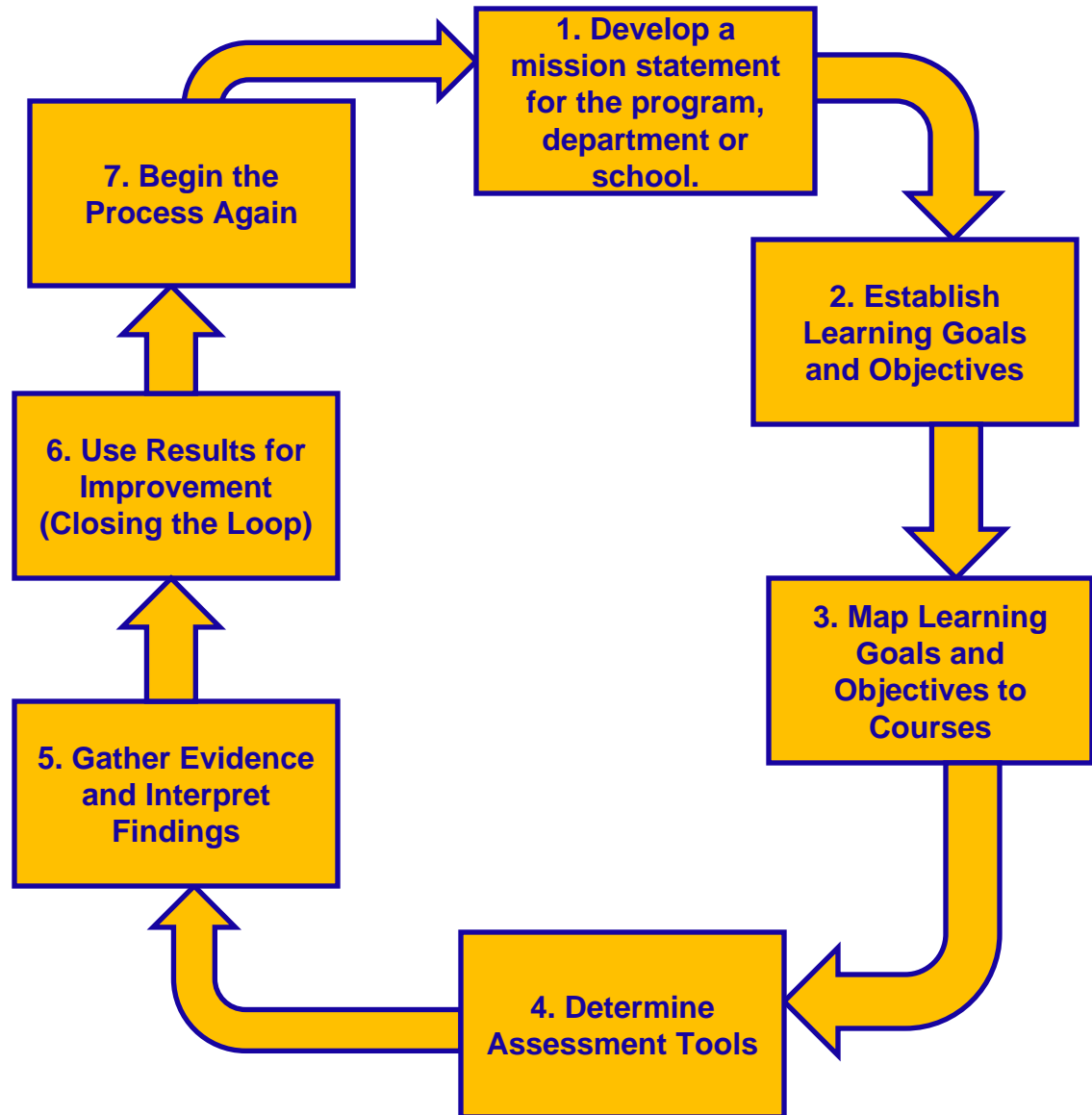
- This is considered to be the most important part of the process because if the results are not used for improvement, then the process is of limited use
- Procedures should be in place to facilitate and encourage change
- Recommended improvements should be monitored to ensure implementation





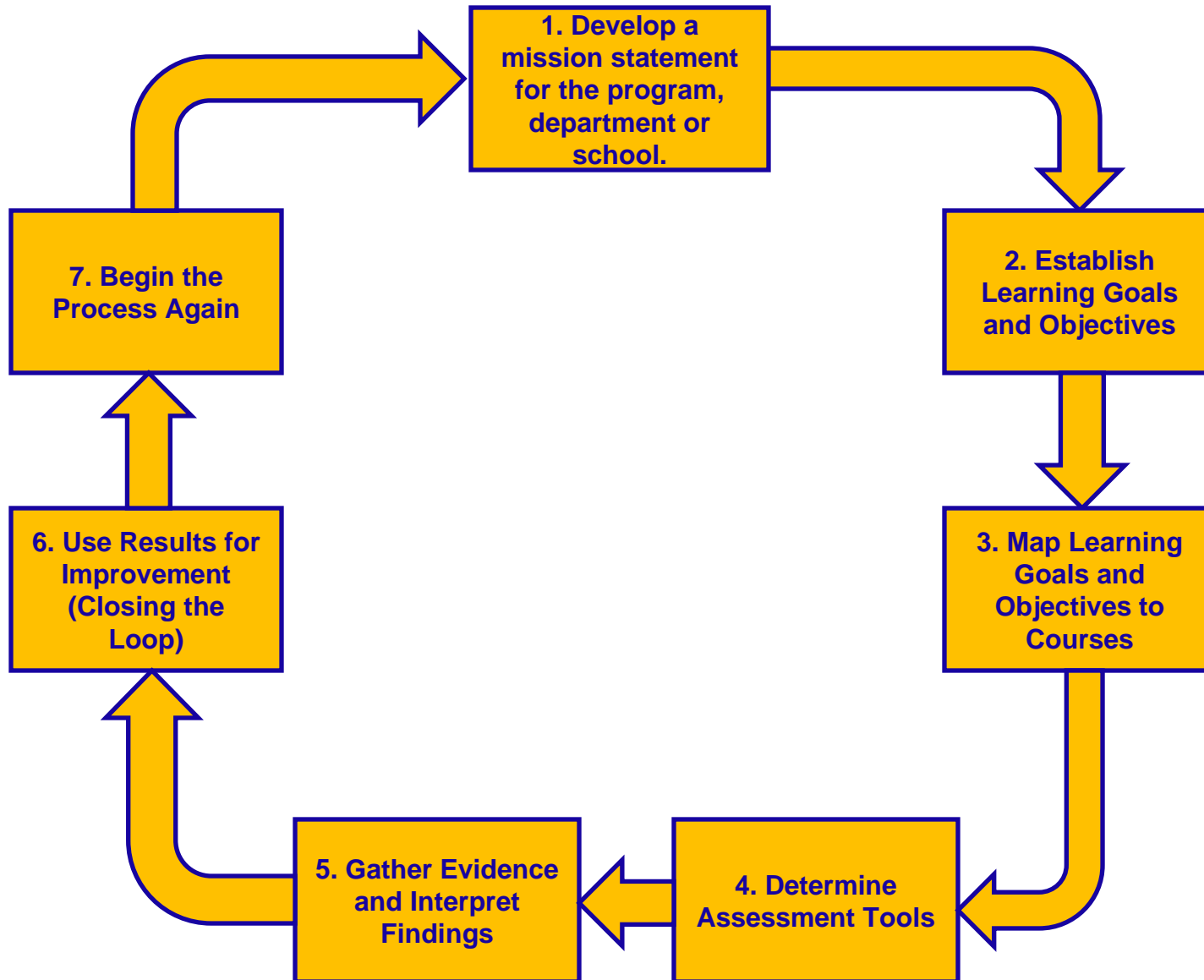
# Step 7: Closing the Loop!

- Assessment is a continuous process and is NEVER complete
- Once improvements have been made and sufficient time has elapsed in order for the changes to take place, reassessment should be performed in order to ascertain achievement of a learning goal





# Closing the Loop





# Example: Department of Biology

<b>Step 1: Mission Statement</b>	<b>Step 2: Learning Goal and Objectives</b>	<b>Step 3: Map to Course(s)</b>	<b>Step 4: Assessment Tool(s)</b>	<b>Step 5: Interpret Findings</b>	<b>Step 6: Use Results (Closing the Loop)</b>
<p><i>Scholarship in diverse areas of life and science</i></p> <p><i>Provide a comprehensive, high-quality education in biology</i></p> <p><i>Provide students with the knowledge base and practical skills needed to be highly competitive for the best opportunities available following graduation, including learning professional and graduate school programs</i></p>	<p>Students will retain a broad base of knowledge in the discipline of Biology in order to prepare for a wide variety of post graduate opportunities; including jobs in academia or industry, medical, dental or other professional schools, or graduate schools in various disciplines of biology or education</p>	<p>All courses for BIO majors</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Examine syllabi and in core courses</li><li>2. Pre-requisite test data from BIO 012 and 013 and BIO 135 and 137</li><li>3. Major Fields Test-data comparison with national scores</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Syllabi from BIO core courses indicate broad coverage of topics in Biology.</li><li>2. Data from prerequisite tests from BIO 12, 13, 135 and 137 indicate students retain about 70% of knowledge. Significant variability in scores.</li><li>3. Major Fields test indicates that students at or above national averages in genetics, cell biology, evolution, ecology. Lowest scores in subject areas of organismal biology</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. No changes needed at this time. Continue to monitor if faculty changes.</li><li>2. Increase the use of interactive learning techniques, personal response systems, etc. to enhance retention of knowledge. Further analysis of scores to correlate with other data, such as course grades, SAT scores.</li><li>2. Increase the amount of organismal biology in curriculum. Developed new courses: Ornithology offered in the Fall of 2007 and Entomology will be offered in the Fall of 2008 (both of which have emphasis on organismal biology.)</li></ol>



# Rubrics

- Rubrics are commonly used as an assessment tool (step 4) to evaluate a student's performance on case studies, term papers, oral presentations, etc.
- Rubrics are scoring criteria; they define the knowledge, skills, behaviors and/or attitudes students must demonstrate for goals and objectives to be met
- Many examples and styles of rubrics in various disciplines can be found on the Internet with a Google search entering: "Rubric" and "your discipline"



# Development and Use of Rubrics

1. Select the learning goal you want to evaluate
2. Choose the objectives of the learning goal you wish to assess
3. Develop the performance criteria for scoring
4. Determine the minimum score that will be acceptable before you begin the assessment
5. Perform a small sample test using at least two faculty members to assess the same material to determine if results are consistent
6. Instruct faculty on use of the rubric



# Sample Rubric

This is an example of a rubric developed for the following Journalism Objective: When presented with a case study, students will be able to identify ethical issues involved, critically analyze these issues, and identify the philosophical and professional considerations that underpin their analyses.

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
<b>Ability to identify ethical issues in a case study</b>	Clear and nuanced articulation of all key ethical issues involved in the case study	Clear and nuanced articulation of key ethical issues	Identification of key ethical issues	No Identification of key ethical issues
<b>Ability to critically analyze ethical issues</b>	Clearly articulated, critical analysis of behavior of journalist. Analysis reflects an understanding of ideals, laws and professional standards which guide journalists, and their ramifications, and includes creative problem solving of dilemma.	Clearly articulated critical analysis of behavior of journalist, reflecting an understanding of ideals, laws, and professional standards which guide journalists, and their ramifications	Ability to apply basic ethical principles guiding journalists to the case study	No evidence of ability to apply these principles to case
<b>Ability to identify Canons of Journalism and other professional ethical standards exhibited or violated in a case study</b>	Well articulated connection made between multiple professional standard and the case study	Connection made between more than one professional standard and the case study	Connection made between a key applicable standard and the case study	No identification of applicable professional standards in analysis
<b>Able to articulate philosophical underpinnings of ethical analysis</b>	Creative application of competing schools of philosophy to better understand ethical dilemma(s) in case and arrive at an acceptable course of action	Connection made between competing philosophical schools of thought and the ethical dilemma(s) inherent in the case	Awareness of philosophical underpinnings of the ethical dilemma(s) in case	Lack of evidence of understanding philosophical underpinnings of case
<b>Ability to articulate interplay between press freedoms and responsibility</b>	Nuanced and creative articulation of tensions between press freedoms and responsibilities inherent in case	Nuanced articulation of tensions between press freedoms and responsibilities inherent in case	Awareness of how tensions between press freedoms and responsibilities are embodied in case	Lack of awareness or unclear or improper understanding of these issues