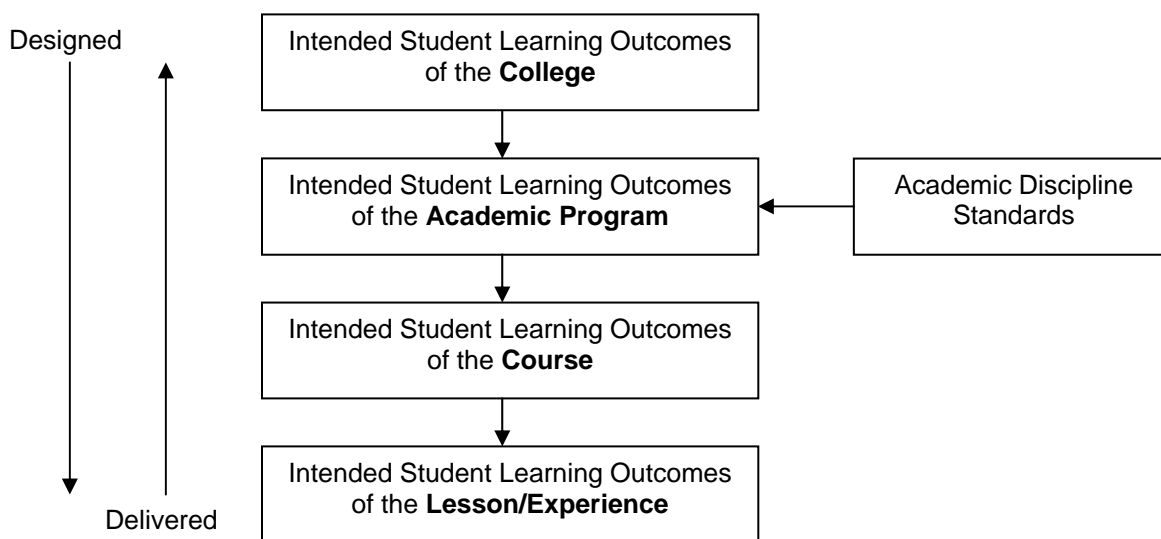


## Levels of Assessment

The curriculum of a higher education institution can be considered to consist of a number of levels: college, academic program, course, lesson/learning experience. Ideally, the curriculum is designed by concentrating on the mission, vision and goals of the institution and then insuring that the purpose of each subsequent level is aligned with the level above it. As learning outcomes are established for each subsequent level, there should be a logical relationship between the learning outcomes at one level with the level above it. For academic programs, we would expect to see a connection to both the college and the academic discipline. We would also expect the specificity of the learning outcomes to increase as we move from the macro to the micro level. While curriculum is designed from the macro to the micro level, students experience it in the opposite direction. (Figure 1)

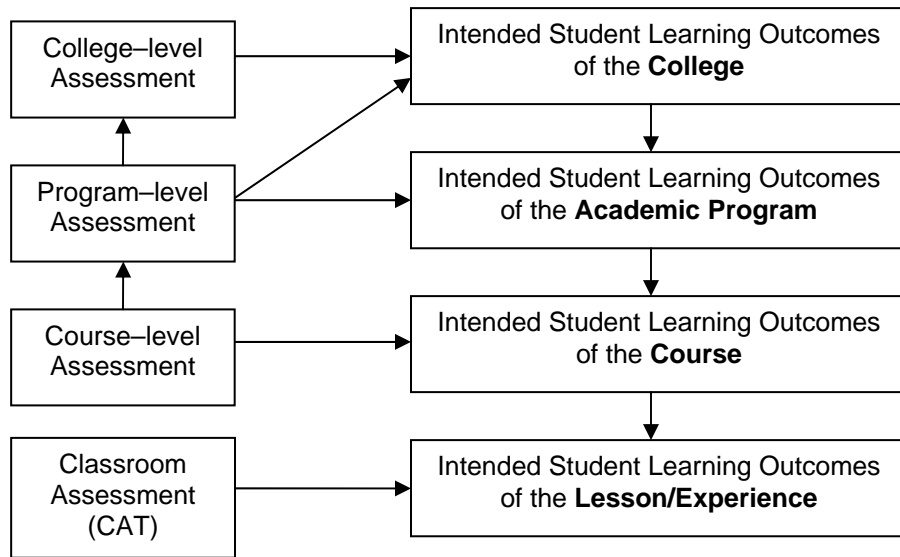
Figure 1. Relationship between Levels of Intended Student Learning Outcomes



## Levels of Assessment

Academic assessment may occur at a variety of levels within the curriculum and is related to the level of the student learning outcomes the assessment is intended to address. The relationship between the levels of academic assessment and student learning outcomes is depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Relationship between Levels of Intended Student Learning Outcomes and Academic Assessment



For institutions accredited by the North Central Association- Higher Learning Commission, academic assessment is typically organized at the institutional and program levels. However, information gathered through assessment activities carried out at the course level are often incorporated into the assessment process at a higher level (i.e. course-embedded assessment, capstone courses). Also, assessment activities at the college level (CIRP, NSSE) may provide information that may be useful to assessment efforts at the program level. Typically, institutions require assessment plans for the general education program and each academic major.

### *Institutional Assessment*

Morningside College engages in a number of assessment activities at the institutional level. These include entry, environment/experience, and outcomes assessments. The focus of the institutional assessment activities is based on the Morningside mission, vision, goal and eight student learning outcomes. Due to the existence of the eight Morningside student learning outcomes, general education assessment can be considered to be institutional in scope.

The institutional assessment program relies on information gathered centrally through the Office of Assessment & Institutional Research and locally through the academic programs and specific offices. The goal of centralizing some of the assessment efforts is to avoid redundancy, reduce overall workload, and to capitalize on available information sources. The following table summarizes current and projected information sources.

Entry	ACT/SAT scores
	Placement results
	Entry-level skill assessments
	CIRP survey
	Demographic information
Environment/Experience	NSSE
	Retention rates
	Academic progression*
	Student satisfaction survey*
Outcomes	General education assessment results*
	Academic program assessment results*
	Graduation rates
	Alumni employment placement survey
	Alumni surveys (1 and 5 years post graduation)*

\*Projected

### *Academic Program Assessment*

Each academic program has a purpose and a set of student learning outcomes. In addition to specific learning outcomes unique to the academic discipline, specific outcomes from the eight Morningside student-learning outcomes are associated with the academic programs. Programs may also be concerned about collecting information about students at the point of entry into the program as well as the experiences and activities of students while they are in the program.

### *Course Assessment*

Faculty may engage in course level assessment for a number of reasons. Assessment plans developed at the institutional or program level may include assessments that are embedded within a particular course. Course level assessment activities, such as course-embedded assessments, may serve a dual role if these are also used as part of the faculty member's process for assigning student grades. Capstone courses, for example, are often designed to include assessments used both in determining student grades and for providing information for an institutional or program assessment plan. An instructor may also engage in course assessment as part of a course improvement effort or research project.

At Morningside College, instructors of courses included within the Distribution are required to engage in course-level assessment activities and sends a results report to the CPC. This information will be used to determine the extent to which students are

achieving the student learning outcomes associated within the distribution. It is also likely that the information will be used within the institutional plan for assessing student achievement of the eight Morningside learning outcomes.

### *Classroom Assessment*

Classroom assessment techniques (CATs) are voluntarily used by faculty as part of an instructional improvement process and for monitoring student learning. In general, it is difficult to utilize information gathered through the use of CATs at the program or institutional level. However, widespread use of CAT-generated information for instructional improvement should be considered evidence of an institution's learner-centered focus. It also indicates concern about the continued improvement of instructional methods and engagement in scholarly research.