Developing Student Learning Outcomes

*the SMART way*
Levels of Assessment

Institutional Assessment
- Determination of institutional performance

Program Assessment
- Determination of how well an academic program is meeting student learning outcomes

Course Assessment
- Determination of how well a course is meeting student learning outcomes and objectives

Classroom Assessment
- Determination of individual student performance at course level by instructors

Includes General Education
- To Improve
- To Inform
- To Prove
- To Support
Types of Assessment

Pre Assessment (Early)
• What do students know?

Formative Assessment (Midpoint)
• What are students learning?

Summative Assessment (Exit)
• What have students learned?
Six Fundamental Questions

- How are your stated student learning outcomes appropriate to your mission, programs, degrees, and students?
- What evidence do you have that students achieve your stated learning outcomes?
- In what ways do you analyze and use evidence of student learning?
- How do you ensure shared responsibility for student learning and for assessment of student learning?
- How do you evaluate and improve the effectiveness of your efforts to assess and improve student learning?
- In what ways do you inform the public and other stakeholders about what and how well your students are learning?
The Assessment Process

Provide Opportunities for Learning: faculty achieve consensus on learning outcomes to be assessed, and map outcomes to curriculum

Describe selected methods: faculty identify both direct and indirect evidence, and assessment tool, for each learning outcome

Gather Data: faculty develop timeline for gathering assessment data; pre, formative, and/or summative assessment

Evaluate and Interpret Data: faculty and staff collaborate to interpret assessment data and develop strategies to improve student learning opportunities

Plan Improvements: faculty and staff implement strategies to improve student learning; changes to curriculum or pedagogy

Reflection: Faculty and staff reflect on the strategies implemented and determine impact.
Provide Opportunities for Learning: faculty achieve consensus on learning outcomes to be assessed, and map outcomes to curriculum

- Emphasize essential skills developed over time
  - Not restricted to a single course or learning experience
- Demonstrate acquisition of specific disciplinary/professional knowledge and skills necessary after taking the degree
  - Ask: “What makes a graduate of the program able to function and learn in a specific discipline/profession after the degree?”
- Be written in the SMART way
- Include ‘action’ verbs such as Bloom’s to view student performance
- Focus on the few things that have the greatest impact
SMART Outcomes are...

• **Specific** outcomes must be very explicit on what you are wanting the students to know and be able to do. Each outcome should address only one achievement.

• **Measurable** outcomes should be written in a way that can produce quantifiable evidence; using overt verbs.

• **Attainable** outcomes should be aggressive; consider what your target will be. Don’t create an outcome that would be difficult for undergraduate students to achieve.

• **Results-oriented** outcomes must be aligned to the department, college, university goals and mission.

• **Time-bound** outcomes are written in a way that can achieved within a certain timeframe (Certificate, Bachelor, Master, or PhD level).
SMART Outcome Hierarchy

Graduates will be able to understand and communicate with others, analyze and solve problems, and make socially responsible decisions based on literacies in the arts, humanities, and sciences.

RESULTS-ORIENTED

Upon completion of the BS in Secondary Education, students will

TIME-BOUND

Program Outcome: write clear and effective prose in several forms, using conventions appropriate to audience (including academic audiences), purpose, and genre. Target: 90% will achieve Milestone Level 3 on the Written Communication VALUE Rubric

SPECIFIC and ATTAINABLE

Course Outcome: Students will describe the history, role, and purpose of legal aspects in Higher Education. Method: Students will write a 4-6 page essay on a legal aspect topic in Higher Education.

MEASURABLE
Bloom’s Taxonomy

Creating
Evaluating
Analyzing
Applying
Understanding
Remembering
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remember</th>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Apply</th>
<th>Analyze</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
<th>Create</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>Compare Contrast</td>
<td>Justify</td>
<td>Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Examine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Find</td>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>Examine</td>
<td>Explain</td>
<td>Prioritize</td>
<td>Compose</td>
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<td>List</td>
<td>Predict</td>
<td>Illustrate</td>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>Recommend</td>
<td>Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relate</td>
<td>Outline</td>
<td>Classify</td>
<td>Categorize</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Construct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write</td>
<td>Restate</td>
<td>Solve</td>
<td>Investigate</td>
<td>Decide Choose</td>
<td>Imagine</td>
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Describing Observable Behaviors

- Use ‘action verbs’ to indicate the observable behaviors learners must perform
- Covert vs overt performances
  - Covert: Invisible/mental/cognitive/internal performance that cannot be directly observed
  - Overt: Visible/audible performance that can be observed directly
Covert Verbs

Avoid terms/phrases that describe covert behaviors, such as:

- know
- familiarize
- gain knowledge of
- comprehend
- study
- cover
- understand

- be aware
- learn
- appreciate
- become acquainted with
- realize
- develop the capacity to
Program SLO Example

• Students will have an understanding of how to communicate effectively to accomplish organizational and professional objectives.

• Students will write, speak, and design products to effectively accomplish organizational and professional objectives.

Can the students in the Program complete this outcome?

When will the student complete the outcome?
Course SLO Example

• Students will understand and gain knowledge of the history, role, and purpose of homeland security.

• Students will examine and describe the history, role, and purpose of homeland security.

Why should students take this course?

If this course were taken out of the program, what would students not learn?
Event SLO Example

• As a result of participating in the Common Reading Experience program, students will demonstrate an awareness of human and cultural differences and will understand their role in creating positive change in their communities.

• As a result of participating in the Common Reading Experience program, students will examine human and cultural differences and will reflect on their role in creating positive change in their communities.

Can the students in the complete this outcome after experiencing this event?

Why should students participate in this event?
Activity
Intentional Planning

• Mapping and Coordinating
  • If the learning outcome is important, a single exposure isn’t enough
  • Map courses/learning experiences to outcomes, from program entry to program exit
    • Determine how entry experiences are different from exit experiences
      • What difference is expected in student response?
      • Plan to assure student’s development of outcomes from program entry to exit
  • Consider how courses, classroom instruction might be coordinated with co-curricular activities

• “Learning” =
  
  what students know (content knowledge) +
  what they can do with what they know (performance)

• Performance-based assessment captures both components
• Content knowledge assessment captures only half of the learning
Planning is Key

• Aligning assignments to objectives, objectives to courses, courses to program outcomes leads to intentional learning.

• Integrating assessment of student learning into current existing initiatives is essential.

• Assessment is about continuous improvement - how can you improve if you don’t know what you need to improve upon?
Assessment for Learning Workshops

• Foundation and Fundamentals of Student Learning Assessment
• Curriculum Mapping
• Creating an Assessment Plan

Register at training.lsu.edu
Join us for Geaux Assess Coffee Talks – last Friday of every month from 9-10am in 336 T Boyd Hall (fall/spring semesters only).

This is an informal opportunity for colleagues to share their assessment for learning experiences, ask questions about Taskstream, or just enjoy good company and good coffee.

No reservation needed – just show up.
Getting in touch is easy!

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