Student Learning Assessment Planning
Workshop Goals

Participants will:

• Articulate the elements of the assessment process
• Learn how to write SMART Student Learning Outcomes
• Learn how to create an effective assessment plan
• Distinguish *direct* and *indirect* assessment methods
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
The Assessment Process

**Today’s Focus**

- **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.
Student Learning Outcomes

• 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?”

• SLOs are organized according to three broad domains/types of learning
  • **Content Knowledge** = cognitive (what the student is expected to know)
  • **Abilities, skills, competencies** = behavioral (what the student is expected to do)
  • **Values, dispositions/attitudes** = affective (what students are expected to care about)

• The primary focus is **student learning**; not other aspects of the program
• Include ‘action’ verbs such as Bloom’s to view student performance
• Focus on the few things that have the greatest **impact**
• Be written in the SMART way
Why are SLOs important?

• Communicate instructional intent
• Direct the choice of learning activities & strategies
• Data shows what and how students are learning
• Students understand the program’s goals/expectations
• Facilitate recruitment and retention efforts
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.

Upon completion of the BS in Secondary Education, students will 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.

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.
Bloom’s Taxonomy

Creating
Evaluating
Analyzing
Applying
Understanding
Remembering
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

• Upon completion of the MA program, students will have an understanding of student development theories.

• Upon completion of the MA program, students will apply student development theories to analyze issues in Student Affairs practice.

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
Creating an Assessment Plan
What is an Assessment Plan?

• Each degree program and stand-alone certificate is expected to develop and implement an assessment plan.

• It is not necessary to assess student achievement of all expected learning outcomes every year.

• An assessment plan allows programs the flexibility to focus on a subset of learning outcomes each year.

• The plan identifies the specific year that each stated outcome will be assessed over a three-year period. Programs are expected to assess all stated learning outcomes over a three-year cycle.
Elements of an Assessment Plan

1. Program mission
2. Student Learning Outcomes
3. Assessment methods/measures
Elements of an Assessment Plan

1. **MISSION STATEMENT**

- A statement that defines the purpose of the program and includes general values and guiding principles.
- Student Learning outcomes derive from a program’s mission.
- Consider:
  - What the program will do to make their core values and their real-world implications into a reality.
  - Include a description of the education that is envisioned for its students.
  - Should be as long as necessary to articulate the most basic purposes of the program.
Writing Program Mission Statements

The mission of *(name of your degree program)* is to *(purpose)* by providing *(functions or activities)* to *(your stakeholders)*.
The LSU Counselor Education program prepares students to function as professional counselors in a variety of human service settings such as schools, college counseling centers, mental health treatment facilities, and private practice. Our program prepares students to meet the mental health needs of clients in the state of Louisiana and nationally. Our goal is to prepare students to master the knowledge and skill areas specified by current preparation standards and best practices in the counseling profession. Graduates use their knowledge and skills to help individuals, couples, and families from diverse populations to enhance life adjustment, foster personal growth and wellness, promote social justice and advocacy, and expand competencies in coping with environmental demands across the life span.
Elements of an Assessment Plan

2. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

• Statements that describe what students are expected to know and be able to do upon completion of a course or program

• SLOs should be written in a SMART way AND Include ‘action’ verbs such as Bloom’s to describe student performance
Program SLO Example

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

• Upon completion of the BS in Secondary Education, Students will write, speak, and design products to effectively accomplish organizational and professional objectives.

NOTE: At minimum, all degree programs and stand-alone certificates must articulate at least three student learning outcomes and have at least one direct measure per outcome.
Elements of an Assessment Plan

3. MEASURES

• The tools/instruments used to gauge student achievement or progress toward a specified outcome(s)

• That is; the approaches to be used to collect evidence of learning: Direct, indirect, qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods

• A description of the assessment measure(s) for each student learning outcome should be included.

• At a minimum, the university requires one direct measure per outcome.
Categories of Assessment

• **Diagnostic/Pre Assessment** – the knowledge & skills students bring into the learning experience
  • What do students already know?

• **Formative assessment** – conducted during program with the purpose of providing feedback, which is then used to modify or improve the program
  • What are students learning?

• **Summative assessment** – conducted after the program and provides an opportunity to evaluate student learning
  • What have students learned?
Assessment Methods

- **Direct Assessment** – requires students to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and/or behaviors that reflect achievement of learning (expected outcome).
  - Leadership development workshop example -- students demonstrate knowledge (define & discuss) of leadership theories

- **Indirect Assessment** – relies on individual perceptions to determine whether learning has been achieved; proxies of learning & supplement direct measures.
  - Leadership development workshop example -- percentage of students who reported that their knowledge of leadership theory increased as a result of participation in the leadership workshop.
Examples of Measures

**Direct Measures**
- Research projects
- Thesis/dissertations
- Capstone projects
- Student portfolios
- Course-embedded questions
- Exams
- Standardized Tests
- Performance assessments
- Case studies
- Presentations

**Indirect Measures**
- Focus group interviews
- Exit interviews
- Student surveys
- Student program evaluations
- Honors/awards
- Student publications
- Job/graduate school placement data
- Employer surveys
- Alumni surveys
## Three-Year Plan with Measures

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<td>Embedded test questions Essay</td>
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<td>SLO 2</td>
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<td>Pre-Post Tests Reflective Essays</td>
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<td>SLO 6</td>
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<td>Portfolio</td>
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# Three-Year Plan with Measures (detailed)

|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| SLO 1       | X         |           |           | **Data point 1:** Sample of Embedded questions on Final Exam (Short Answer), gathered every semester, assessed once every three years using the AAC&U critical thinking rubric  
**Data point 2:** Grades/GPA, all students, every semester |
| SLO 2       |           | X         |           | **Data Point 1:** Sample of Final Writing Assignment (Lab Report), gathered every semester, assessed once every three years using the AAC&U quantitative literacy rubric  
**Data Point 2:** Student perspective survey, all students, every semester |
| SLO 3       |           |           | X         | **Data Point 1:** Sample of Final Writing Assignment (Paper), gathered every semester, assessed once every three years using the AAC&U critical thinking rubric  
**Data point 2:** Sample of jury reviewed capstone portfolios, gathered every semester, assessed once every three years using a combined version of the critical thinking and quantitative literacy rubrics  
**Data point 3:** Grades/GPA, all students, every semester |
Elements of An Assessment Plan

Optional: CURRICULUM MAP

• A visual representation/matrix of the relationship between a program’s student learning outcomes and the courses that support those outcomes.

• A curriculum map provides clarity regarding where learning outcomes are addressed and developed across the curriculum, and opportunities for assessment.

• Mapping helps improve coherence in the curriculum

• Each required course should be linked to at least one student learning outcome
Elements of an Assessment Plan: Curriculum / Artifact Map

Curriculum Map
• A map links all program student learning outcomes to program courses.
• It’s clear in the map where outcomes are covered (or not covered) in the Curriculum.
• The level of exposure is identified for each outcome.

Artifact Map
• A map that links direct evidence to both program courses and discrete program student learning outcomes.
• Identifies what and when assignment(s) will be collected for programmatic assessment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Outcomes / Courses</th>
<th>Outcome 1</th>
<th>Outcome 2</th>
<th>Outcome 3</th>
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<td>Course 1500</td>
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</table>

I = Outcome is introduced
R = Outcome is reinforced
M = Outcome is mastered
Direct Evidence for Mapping

- The direct evidence (artifact) that is chosen for programmatic assessment, per outcome.
- Examples of direct evidence (course assignments that require performance of learning):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capstone projects</th>
<th>National/state normed exams</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>Portfolios</td>
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<td>Dissertations</td>
<td>Pre-Post Tests</td>
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<td>Essays</td>
<td>Reflective Essays</td>
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<td>Embedded test questions</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<td>Program Outcomes / Courses</td>
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<td>Course 1100</td>
<td>I (A): Final Exam</td>
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<td>Course 1200</td>
<td>R</td>
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<td>Course 1300</td>
<td>R</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I= Outcome is introduced  
R= Outcome is reinforced  
M= Outcome is mastered  
(A) = Outcome is assessed
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?
Office of Institutional Effectiveness Workshops

- Foundation and Fundamentals of Student Learning Assessment
- Student Learning Assessment Planning
- Curriculum Mapping
- Rubric Development for Assessment
- Creating a Quality Program Impact Report
- Taskstream 101
- Integrative Learning Core Planning Sessions

Register at training.lsu.edu
Join us for Geaux Assess Coffee Talks – last Friday of every month during the academic year from 9-10am in 336 T Boyd Hall.

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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