

# WRITING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

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# *What is Assessment?*



- It is the systematic collection and analysis of information to improve student learning.
  
- Effective assessment answers three basic questions.
  1. What are you trying to do?
  2. How well are you doing it?
  3. How (using the answers to 1 and 2) can you improve?

# Why Assess?



Because assessment can . . .

- Make data about the effects of the curriculum available, faculty can engage in more productive conversations about the status of student achievement and make better decisions about how it might be improved.



Because assessment can . . .

- Yield data about instruction, faculty can make reliable decisions about innovations or experimental projects in instruction and share successes more easily.



Because assessment can . . .

- Offer a larger view of student needs and accomplishments, faculty can identify directions for future instructional development.



Because assessment can . . .

- Provide evidence that faculty members make a difference in student learning, faculty can enjoy greater satisfaction in their work as educators.

# PARTS OF OUR ASSESSMENT PLAN



1. Choose an intended outcome to assess. **Write a learning outcome.**
2. Relate the intended outcome to one (or more) of the General Education Requirements.
3. Relate the intended outcome to one (or more) component of the College Strategic Plan (2011 – 2012).

# PARTS OF OUR ASSESSMENT PLAN

## (cont.)



4. Implement the plan and collect the data.
5. Summarize the results.
6. Make recommendations for improvement.



# STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: *WHAT ARE THEY?*



- Learning outcomes are goals that describe how students will be **different** because of a learning experience.

# HOW TO PHRASE OUTCOME STATEMENTS

When you write learning outcome statements:

- Describe realistic and achievable outcomes in **simple** language.
- Word it in language that focuses on student behavior.
  
- Use concrete action words to:
  - ▣ Describe in explicit, observable terms what students can do after they've learned the material.
  - ▣ Help students understand what we want them to learn.
  - ▣ Make assessment easier by stating what the assessment will be.

# THREE TYPES OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES



There are three broad categories of learning objectives that are often used to articulate student learning outcomes. (Think of Bloom's Taxonomy.)

Cognitive Objectives:

*“What do you want your graduates to know?”*

Affective Objectives:

*“What do you want your graduates to think or care about?”*

Behavioral Objectives:

*“What do you want your graduates to be able to do?”*

# CHOOSING OUTCOME STATEMENTS



Outcome statements may:

- ❑ Come from the “Recommendation” section of the previous assessment plan.
- ❑ Come from the list of program goals for your program.
- ❑ Come from accreditation requirements.

# Process vs. Outcome Statement



Ask students, “What are you doing at the college?”

- Process response:  
*“I attend classes.”*
- Outcome response:  
*“I am learning about my field in order to prepare for a career.”*

# Process vs. Outcome Statements



Ask faculty, “What do you do at the college?”


- Process response:  
*“I teach.”*
- Outcome response:  
*“I facilitate student learning.”*

# Example #1: Criminal Justice



- Students in the criminal justice program will be able to list the guidelines for the collection of evidence from a crime scene.

# Example #2: Chemistry



- ❑ Students completing the General Chemistry sequence will be able to interpret phase diagrams.
- ❑ Students completing the General Chemistry sequence will be able to interpret cooling curves.



# Example #3: Engineering



- Graduates of Engineering Technology will program the departmental robot to complete a specified multi-step manufacturing process.

# Example #4: Horticulture



- Students in the Horticulture Program will apply problem solving techniques used by horticulture professionals.

# Example #5: English Composition



- Students completing the English Composition sequence will be able to compose an essay concerning an assigned current events topic using standard written English (SWE).

# Example #6: Drafting



- Students completing the Drafting and Design sequence will be able to integrate major concepts from the sequence into a capstone project.

# Next Steps



- Once you write a student learning outcome, get departmental agreement on it and your assessment project. Ask for your colleagues' input.
- Allow time for mistakes and for ongoing faculty input and discussion.

## Next Steps (cont.)



- When developing assessment methods, make sure your selections:
  - Answer questions that are important to you and your department.
  - Are manageable.
  - Result in useful feedback that highlight accomplishments as well as areas requiring attention.



# Acknowledgements



Assessing Student Learning, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Suskie,  
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Program Based Review and Assessment: Tools  
and Techniques for Program Improvement,  
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