

# WRITING OUTCOME STATEMENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC AREAS

---

*Best Practices in Assessment*

*Workshop 1*

*October 2012*

# What is Assessment?

---

- It is the systematic collection and analysis of information to improve student learning.
  - Effective assessment answers three basic questions.
    1. *What should students be learning and in what ways should they be growing?*
    2. *What are students actually learning and in what ways are they actually growing?*
    3. *Using the answers to 1 and 2, what should be done to facilitate student learning and growth?*
-

# 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.
  - ❑ 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 student learning outcome.**
  
  2. A) Relate the intended outcome to one (or more) of the program goals.  
  
B) Relate the intended outcome to one (or more) of the General Education Requirements.  
  
C) Relate the intended outcome to one (or more) component of the College Strategic Plan.
-

# PARTS OF OUR ASSESSMENT PLAN (cont.)

---

3.
    - a) Means of assessment
    - b) Sources of data
    - c) Desired result
  
  4. Summarize the results.
  
  5. Make recommendations for modifications.
  
  6. Actions taken based on recommendations.
-

# STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: *WHAT ARE THEY?*

---

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

# 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.
-

# DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF OUTCOME STATEMENTS

---

- Are very specific
  - Describe or define desired student achievements; what students should know (cognitive), think (affective), or be able to do (behavioral) when they have completed a program
  - Are “results” oriented
  - Must be measurable
-

# 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.
-

# 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.
-

# Acknowledgements

---

- Assessing Student Learning, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Suskie, Jossey-Bass.
  - Program Based Review and Assessment: Tools and Techniques for Program Improvement, Office of Academic Planning and Assessment, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.
-

# For more information, contact any of the Academic Assessment Fellows:

---

- ❑ Gail Fernandez, x7525  
[gfernandez@bergen.edu](mailto:gfernandez@bergen.edu)
  - ❑ Joseph Mamatz, x5025  
[jmamatz@bergen.edu](mailto:jmamatz@bergen.edu)
  - ❑ Mauro Marzocco, x7141  
[mmarzocco@bergen.edu](mailto:mmarzocco@bergen.edu)
  - ❑ Jane Phelps, x7043  
[jphelps@bergen.edu](mailto:jphelps@bergen.edu)
-