Developing Learning Outcomes for Student Affairs
What are learning outcomes?

Learning outcomes are statements that identify what students learn.

What are some examples of what students learn while in college?

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Key Component of an Assessment Plan

1. Institutional/Departmental mission
2. Goals and objectives
3. Learning outcomes
4. Methodology
5. Results
6. Use of results
Types of Learning Outcomes

**Cognitive** (Knowledge)
What should students **know**?

**Behavioral** (Skills)
What should students be **able to do**?

**Affective** (Attitudes, Values, or Beliefs)
What should students **think** or **care** about?
Outcomes should be . . .

Specific
Measurable
Aspirational == SMART
Reasonable
Time-specific
How to write a student learning outcome
Students **who** participate in orientation **should** be able to navigate the campus effectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>who</th>
<th>should</th>
<th>What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>participate in orientation</td>
<td>know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores</td>
<td>attend this program</td>
<td>be able to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletes</td>
<td>complete training</td>
<td>care about</td>
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Effective learning outcomes...

- Are practical, attainable, and follow a reasonable timeline
- Are created with input from a variety of members of the institutional community
- Are multi-faceted
- Utilize a number of different data collection methods
- Are reviewed and tweaked as needed
Seamless Learning Outcomes

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Methods for Assessing Outcomes

- **Indirect methods**
  - What students SAY they learned (self-reported data)
  - Methods that ask students to reflect on their learning
  - May be considered insufficient on their own

- **Direct methods**
  - What they actually learned (Evidence)
  - Require students to demonstrate learning
  - More widely accepted but also more challenging
Examples of assessment methods

Indirect methods:
- Surveys
- Analyses of grades and transcripts
- Graduate program admissions and success
- Job placement
- Focus groups with students
- Interviews with students

Direct methods:
- Writing samples
- Student portfolios
- Scores on tests
- Student presentations
- Capstone projects or papers
- Internship or job supervisor ratings
Essential strategies for success

1. Agree upon goals and objectives
2. Design and implement a thoughtful approach to assessment
3. Involve a variety of individuals
4. Select, design, and implement data collection approaches
5. Examine, share, and act on findings
6. Regularly reexamine assessment process
Assessment is a cyclical process…

- Gather Data
- Interpret Data
- Create and Implement Methods
- Improve Programs and Services
- Goals, Objectives, Outcomes

Mission

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Suggested Resources


References


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