Teaching Excellence Series: Student Learning Outcomes

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Agenda

- Introductions
- Defining student learning outcomes
  - Characteristics of effective learning outcomes
  - Evaluating examples of learning outcomes
- Steps to writing student learning outcomes
- Let’s write some outcomes
What Are Intended Student Learning Outcomes?

- Statements describing what students will know, will be able to do, or will value/believe as a result of their learning experiences
Why bother to write outcomes?

- We are committed to excellence in teaching and learning.
- If we think information is important enough to cover, then we care if students are learning it.
- Defining and assessing learning outcomes has the potential to improve student learning.
- We are accountable to various accrediting agencies.
Course Level Learning Outcomes

- Inform students of what is important and expected
- Provide direction for instructional activities
- Assist in the selection of appropriate assessments of learning
Goals vs. Objectives vs. Outcomes
How do you define these terms?

- Goals are where you want to go, objectives are how you get there, and outcomes are proof that you have arrived.

- Student learning outcomes build upon, but are different from, course objectives and course goals because they represent a different perspective.

--Janet Fulks
Characteristics of effective learning outcomes

- Learner-centered, not teacher-centered
- Describe what students will know or be able to do
- Clear and specific
- Measurable
Evaluating Learning Outcomes

Evaluate the examples on the next four slides
Evaluating Learning Outcomes

- Example 1:
  This course will cover topics including fundamental analysis and applications related to credit and equity markets.
Evaluating Learning Outcomes

- Example 2:
  Students will study the role of financial statement analysis in the evaluation of a firm’s financial performance and the prediction of its future economic condition.
Example 3: Students will improve their ability to critically analyze and assess a firm’s current economic condition and financial performance using only publicly available financial information.
Evaluating Learning Outcomes

Example 4:
At the end of this nutrition course, students will be able to analyze a documented nutritional problem, determine a strategy to correct the problem, and write a draft nutritional policy addressing the broader scope of the problem.
How to write Student Learning Outcomes

- Let’s be S.M.A.R.T
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Actionable
  - Relevant
  - Timed
Steps to writing Student Learning Outcomes:

- Describe what students should know, be able to DO, or value/believe by the end of the course.
- Represent what is fundamentally important in a course.
- Link to the common domains of learning; cognitive (Bloom’s Taxonomy), affective and psychomotor.
- Focus on observable outcomes (an “action verb” can provide that focus).
More steps to writing Student Learning Outcomes:

- Avoid wording like the following:
  Students
  “will have a better understanding of . . .”
  “will be familiar with . . .”
  “will improve their ability to . . .”

- Write in a language that students (and those outside the field) are able to understand.

- Write outcomes that are measurable and suggest or imply an assessment.

- Include in the course syllabi.
Questions to ask yourself about each Student Learning Outcome

- Is it too narrow, too broad?
- Is it measurable?
- Will it help direct instruction?
- Will it help direct what and how to assess student learning?
Resources


Web Resources


- Council for Higher Education Accreditation http://www.chea.org/

- American Association for Higher Education http://www.aahe.org/
Let’s write some Student Learning Outcomes!