

HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE LEARNING OUTCOME STATEMENT

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Learning Outcomes for this Session

- Participants will identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be gained by students/others participating in Student Affairs' initiatives.
- Participants will gain knowledge to define the elements of an effective learning outcome statement.
- Participants will learn how to construct an effective learning outcome statement.

What is a learning outcome?

- “Learning outcomes are statements that specify what learners will know or be able to do as a result of a learning activity. Outcomes are usually expressed as knowledge, skills, or attitudes” *(As cited from the American Association of Law Libraries).*
- “Learning outcomes are statements of the knowledge, skills, and abilities the individual student possesses and can demonstrate upon completion of an experience” *(Adapted from the League for Innovation of Community College).*

What is the big deal?

- Promoting Student Learning
 - ▣ Promoting new skills, attitudes, abilities
- Creating Intentional Experiences
- Validation of New and Existing Programs and Initiatives
- Assure cohesion of staff, students, Colleges, Departments
- Most accurate way to assess learning, but also the most difficult.

Where do I start?

- University of California Mission
- UC San Diego Mission
- Student Affairs
 - Learning Goal Areas
 1. Effective Communication
 2. Interpersonal & Intrapersonal Competencies
 3. Leadership Skills
 4. Personal Skill Development
 5. Intellectual Growth
 6. Active Citizenship & Community Responsibility
- Department/College Mission/Goals

I read the mission/goals, what now?

- First, who is your audience?
- Second, brainstorm answers...
 - ▣ *What do we want participants to know?*
 - ▣ *What do we want participants to be able to do?*
 - ▣ *What do we want participants to understand?*
 - ▣ Will awareness be raised?
 - ▣ Do participants need to understand the context?
 - ▣ Are there things participants need to unlearn?
 - ▣ What are the most important things participants need to be able to do when they finish?

What else do I need to know?

□ Understand:

▣ Program Outcomes – versus – Learning Outcomes

- **Program Outcomes** examine what a program or process is to do, achieve or accomplish for its own improvement; generally needs/satisfaction driven.
- **Learning Outcomes** examine cognitive skills that students (or others) develop through department interactions. These are measurable and have transferable skill development.

Anything else?

- Learning Outcomes are:
 - ▣ Statements indicating what a participant will **know**, **think**, or **be able to do** as a result of an event, activity, program, or initiative
 - ▣ **Measurable and Assessable**
 - ▣ Convey what is to be accomplished
 - ▣ Focus on **learning** resulting from an activity rather than the activity itself
 - ▣ Reflect **missions/goals**

Anything else?

- Questions to consider...
 - ▣ Meaningful: How does the outcome support the departmental mission or goal?
 - ▣ Manageable: What is needed to foster the achievement of the outcome? Is the outcome realistic?
 - ▣ Measurable: How will you know if the outcome is achieved? What will be the assessment method?

Pitfalls...

- ❑ Describe program outcomes, rather than learning outcomes
- ❑ Too vast/complex, too wordy
- ❑ Multiple outcomes in one learning outcome statement
 - ❑ Watch out for “and”
- ❑ Not specific enough
- ❑ Not measurable
 - ❑ Learning outcomes...describe what students will **learn**
 - ❑ Activities...describe what students will **do**

Practice

- Event/Program everyone knows...
 - Sun God? Unolympics? Convocation?

- Practice
 - Students will ...
 - <learn what>
 - <under these circumstances / conditions>
 - <to this degree, level of efficiency / effectiveness>

Resources

- Bloom's Classification of Cognitive Skills
- Frameworks for Assessing Learning and Development Outcomes
 - ▣ Based on CAS Standards
- Student Voice Power Point Presentations
- Assessment Coalition Workshops