

Assessment Workshop Series

(co-host: Office of Assessment & Program
Review)

College of Agriculture

Developing an Assessment Plan for Program Student Learning Outcomes: *The Early Steps*

Retreat #1

Kansas State University

Summer, 2004

Main Source: Susan Hatfield, *Departmental Assessment Plans*, Academic Chairs
Conference, February 2004, Orlando, Florida; Shatfield@winona.edu

What you have brought with you to the workshop:

1. Goals and Student Learning Outcomes for your degree programs.
2. Academic Mission
3. Curriculum
4. Electronic file w/Matrix
5. University-wide Student Learning Outcomes
 - Undergraduate & Graduate
6. Printout of PowerPoint slides

Presentation Outline

Retreat #1:

- ☑ **An overview: Background/ Understanding Assessment**
- ☑ **Some Characteristics of a Good Departmental Assessment Plan**
- ☑ **Developing a Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in a Degree Program:**
 - ☑ A. Identifying, Constructing and Refining Student Learning Outcomes
 - ☑ B. Linking Learning Outcomes to Curriculum and Assessment Points

Presentation Outline

Retreat #2:

- **Developing a Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in a Degree Program (cont.)**
 - C. Identifying Methods and Multiple Measures for Assessing Learning Outcomes
 - D. Using, Acting and Communicating Results; Reevaluating the Plan

An Overview: Understanding Assessment at K-State

Assessment

Assessment is:

- ✓ an **ongoing** process,
- ✓ **aimed at understanding and improving student learning.**

It involves:

- ✓ making our expectations **explicit** and **public**,
- ✓ setting appropriate **criteria** and **high standards** for **learning quality**,
- ✓ systematically **gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence** to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards,
- ✓ using the resulting information to **document, explain, and improve** performance.

Evidence the Higher Learning Commission of NCA and others are looking for:

- Broad participation by faculty and students.
- Clear expectations for learning outcomes are communicated to students.
- Students (as a group) are learning from opportunities in curriculum (classes, internships, etc.).
- We are using results to improve student learning.

Typical Big Mistakes in Assessment

- Assuming that it will go away
- **Trying to do too much, too soon**
- **Expecting to get it right the first time**
[Your aim should be a “best faith” effort]
- Not considering implementation issues when creating plans

Big Mistakes in Assessment

- **Borrowing plans and methods without acculturation**
[Modification and 'tweaking' are necessary to best fit new approaches to your programs]
- Demanding statistical research standards
- Doing it for accreditation instead of improvement

Big Mistakes in Assessment

- **Confusing institutional effectiveness with student learning** (e.g., student retention data vs. what students are learning)
- Making assessment the responsibility of one individual
- **Assuming collecting data is ‘Doing’ Assessment** (i.e., only collecting data and not discussing the results or making improvements based on the results).

Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning

- Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
- Assessment requires attention to outcomes, but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
- Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.

Please refer to handout.

Source: *9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning*. American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) Assessment Forum, 1992 in Mary Huba & Jann Freed, (2000). *Learner-centered assessment on college campuses*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Good Characteristics of a Departmental Assessment Plan

Things to keep in mind on plan:

- **Flows from the academic mission.**
- **Number of critical learning outcomes is small and manageable.**
- **Ongoing rather than periodic.**
- **Uses multiple measures (e.g., both qualitative and quantitative).**

Please refer to handout.

Overview of Developing an Assessment Plan:

Recommended steps for starting, completing,
& sustaining the assessment process

Please refer
to handout with check
boxes for each step

Overview: Developing an Assessment Plan

1. Agree on University learning outcomes (linked to Mission Statement.) –**Faculty Senate Approval (April 2004)**
2. Identify and link degree program learning outcomes to University, college-wide, department-wide mission and learning outcomes, standards identified by an accrediting agency, and/or recommendations for organizations and industry.
3. Identify where in the curriculum the learning outcomes are developed or enhanced.
4. Identify the components of successful achievement of the outcome. (**What are you looking for students to accomplish?**)

Overview: Developing an Assessment Plan

5. Identify the assessment points (e.g., where in the curriculum, semesters, year)
6. Identify the assignments and activities (objects) that promote the achievement of the outcome.
7. Identify the evaluative criteria of effective, accurate, and successful performance for each component.

** [I know it when I see it]*
8. Select multiple and appropriate methodologies and measures.

Overview: Developing an Assessment Plan

9. Writing the plan: which outcomes to assess, who to assess, objects (measures) to use, timelines, cycle of data collection, plan on how to use results for improvement
10. Constructing, reviewing and piloting learning objects (assessment measures) and instruments, evaluative criteria, and data analysis plan
11. Implement your assessment plan as well as collect, analyze, and interpret data.

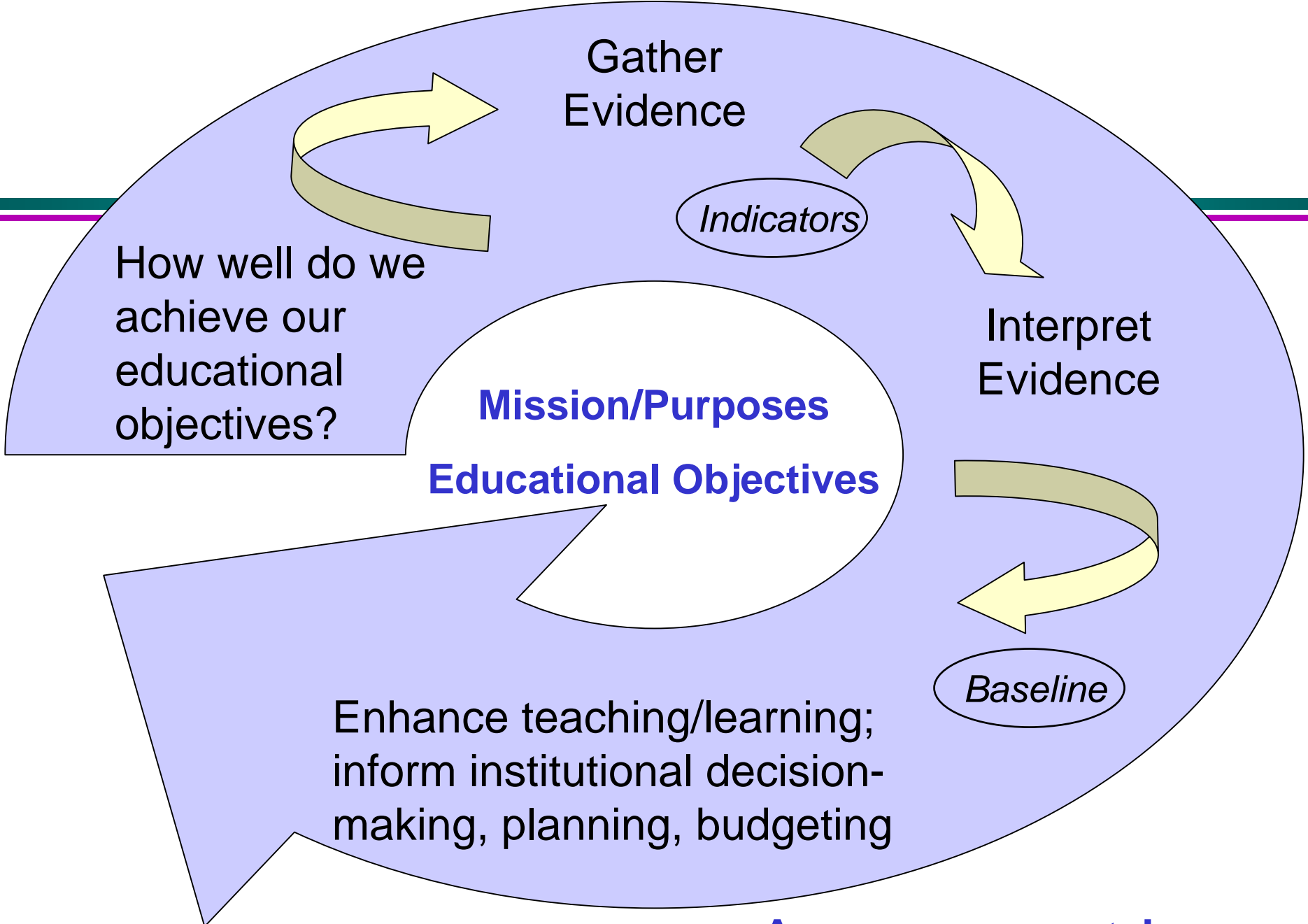
Overview: Developing an Assessment Plan

12. Identify changes needed to improve student learning.
13. Communicate and act on results, maintain feedback loops.
14. Re-evaluate plans.

Overview: KSU Suggested Template, Assessment Plan

For each learning outcome to be assessed in the next three years (input for assessment plans to be submitted Nov. 1, 2004):

- **“HOW”** will this learning outcome be assessed?
- **“WHEN”** will this outcome be assessed?
- **“WHO”** will be assessed?
- **“WHEN”** will faculty discuss the results of the assessment(s)?
- **“WHAT”** are your plan(s) for improving students’ learning for this learning outcome?



Source: Peggy Maki, 2002 AAHE Assessment Forum;
NCA Higher Education Learning Commission

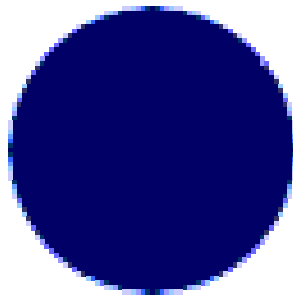
Assessment Loop

Developing a Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning in a Degree Program

Working through the steps

Developing an Assessment Plan

- 1. Approved University-wide
Student Learning Outcomes**
(Linked to Mission Statement).



KSU Student Learning Outcomes

- Undergraduate
 - » Knowledge
 - » Critical Thinking
 - » Communication
 - » Diversity
 - » Academic & Professional Integrity

- Graduate
 - » Knowledge
 - » Skills
 - » Attitudes and Professional Conduct

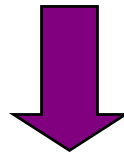
Please refer to handout

Developing an Assessment Plan

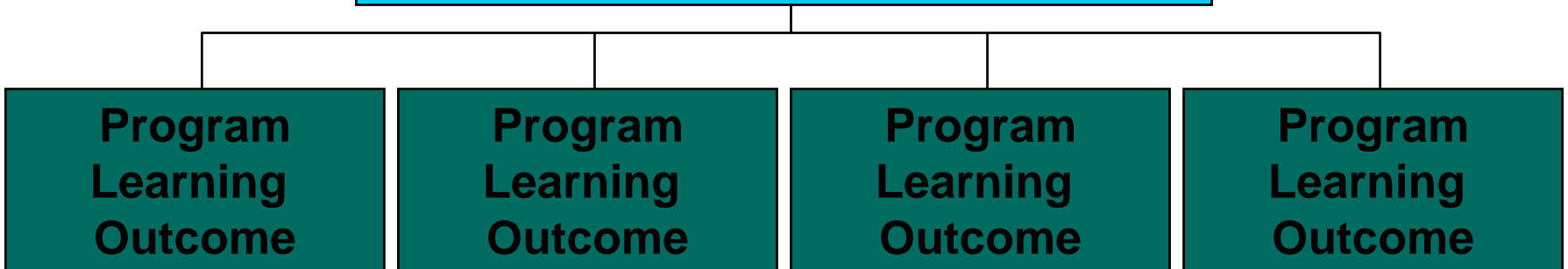
2. Identify and Connect Degree Program Student Learning Outcomes with at least one of the following:

- University Mission Statement and Learning Outcomes
- Department-wide Mission and/or Outcomes
- Standards, Criteria or Learning Outcomes Identified by Accrediting Agencies
- Recommendations from professional organizations/industry

University Mission & Student Learning Outcomes



Department/Unit Mission & Student Learning Outcomes



Accreditation reviewers praise institutions' assessment programs that "have clearly linked their assessment activities to their own statements of purpose and goals, and to their objectives for student learning, and in which all of these are reflective of relevant portions of the Institution's Mission and Goals statement and its published educational purposes." (Lopez, 1996.)

Review

- So far:
 - » Overview of the assessment process.
 - » Covered the larger influencing guidelines for individual programs.

- Next:
 - » A quick review of student learning outcomes and the language we use.
 - » Examine tasks for departments.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Student Learning Outcomes are the:
 - » **knowledge,**
 - » **skills / abilities,** and
 - » **attributes / dispositions**

we want our students to be able to demonstrate.

- Learning outcomes are usually derived from students' academic and co-curricular activities.

Characteristics of Student Learning Outcomes

They are:

- Learner Centered
- Specific
- Action oriented
- Cognitively Appropriate

Student Learning Outcomes

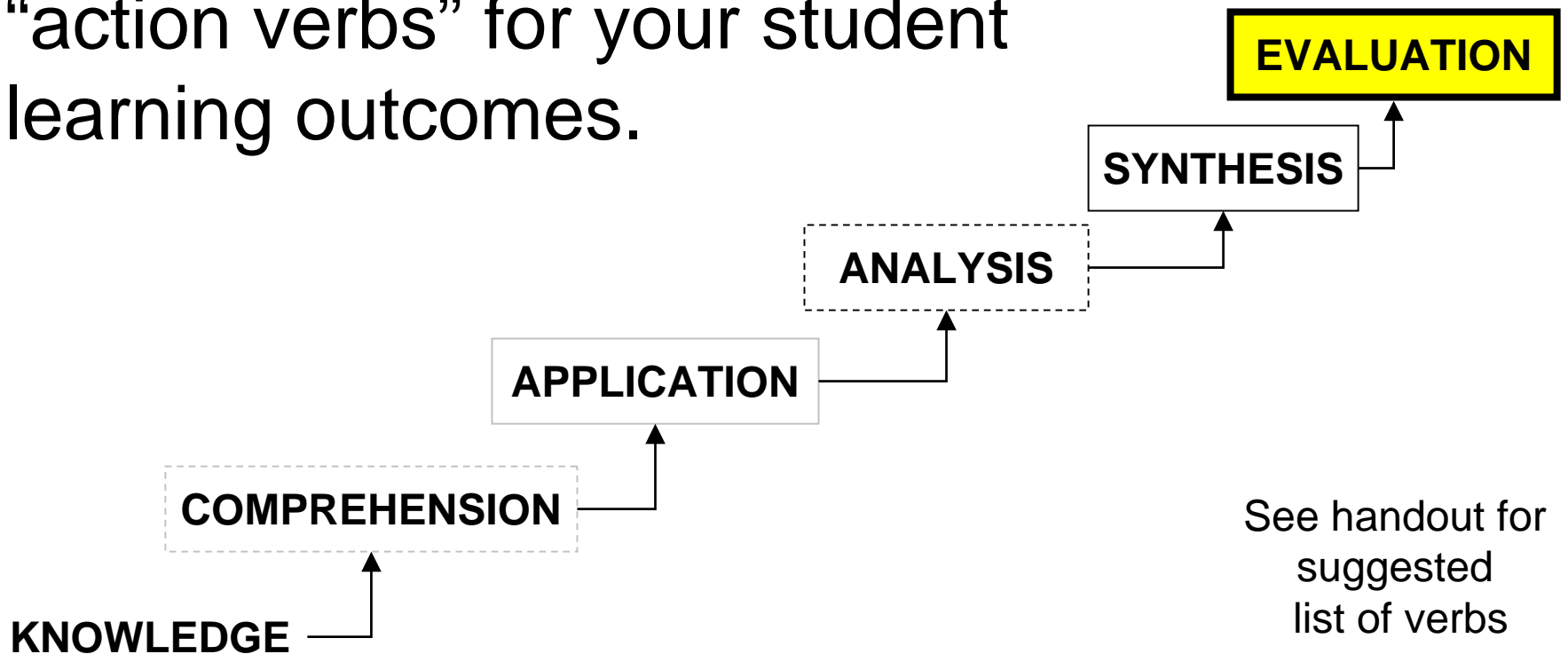
Basic Format:

- Students will be able to <<action verb & description>> to <<something>>.

Example:

- Students will be able to apply research methodologies to examine issues within the discipline.

- Bloom's taxonomy is a useful guide when deciding on the “action verbs” for your student learning outcomes.



Example #1


Gather factual information and apply it to a given problem in a manner that is relevant, clear, comprehensive, and conscious of possible bias in the information selected

BETTER: Students will be able to apply factual information to a problem

COMPONENTS:

Relevance
Clarity
Comprehensiveness
Aware of Bias

Components can help clarify what we want students to demonstrate.



Visual Display of Example #1

Student Learning Outcome

**Students will be able to apply
factual information to a problem.**

Components

Relevance

Clarity

Comprehensiveness

Aware of Bias

Do we need another example?

- Should we go through another example of taking a “wordy” learning outcomes and rephrasing it?

Example # 2

Students will be able to:

Imagine and seek out a variety of possible goals, assumptions, interpretations, or perspectives which can give alternative meanings or solutions to given situations or problems.

Q. What is the essential learning outcome statement?

Q. What are the components that contribute to the outcome statement?

Example #2 (cont.)

BETTER: Students will be able to provide alternative solutions to situations or problems.

COMPONENTS:

Assumptions

Perspectives

Interpretations

Analysis of comparative advantage

Examples of Components

- Organization, Structure
- Level of understanding
- Complexity of ideas
- Support for ideas
- Coherence of presentation
- Knowledge of material
- Mechanics: Writing, Language, Style
- Awareness of audience
- Problem Identification

Please refer to
handout for more
examples

Time to Reflect

- Take the next 5-10 minutes to revisit your program's student learning outcomes.
- Any “tweaking” needed?
 - » If so, mark those and work on them before the next workshop.

Connecting Learning Outcomes to Curriculum

- 3. Identify how program-level learning outcomes are integrated into the curriculum or co-curricular activities.**

*Where do they show up?

Identify where in the curriculum the student learning outcomes are **developed / covered**

Student Learning Outcomes



Major Courses and/ or All Courses in a Program

	Course 1	Experience 2	Course 3	Experience 4	Course 5
	Introductory				Advanced
1.	X		X		X
2.		X		X	X
3.		X	X	X	
4.		X		X	X
5.	X	X		X	
6.		X	X		X
7.	X		X	X	

Legend: X = outcome addressed in the course

Alternative Approach:

Identify where in the curriculum the student learning outcomes are **introduced, emphasized or reinforced**

Student Learning Outcomes

Major Courses/Experiences in a Program

	Course 1	Experience 2	Course 3	Experience 4	Course 5
	Introductory				Advanced
1.	I		E		R
2.		I		E	R
3.		E	E	R	
4.		I		E	R
5.	I	E		R	
6.		I	E		R
7.	I		E	R	

Legend: I – Introduce E – Emphasis R - Reinforced

Break

When we come back:

First Working Group Task

First Working Group Task

- Identify where your program's student learning outcomes are covered in your curriculum.
- Identify the specific courses and/or experiences that contribute to your learning outcomes.
 - » You can target all of your learning outcomes or just a few.
 - » You can target all of your courses/experiences or just the most significant, major, or critical ones.

First Working Group Task

- You can use the worksheet provided or any piece of paper to create your Curriculum Matrix.

- 30-45 minutes

Student Learning Outcomes



Major Courses and/ or All Courses in a Program

	Course 1	Experience 2	Course 3	Experience 4	Course 5
	Introductory				Advanced
1.	X		X		X
2.		X		X	X
3.		X	X	X	
4.		X		X	X
5.	X	X		X	
6.		X	X		X
7.	X		X	X	

Legend: X = outcome addressed in the course

Break

When we come back:

**Questions so far*

**Identifying ways to assess the program's learning outcomes*

Questions / Reactions

- What questions or issues arose in your group?
- What insights were discovered?
- Does anything need to be clarified before we move on?

Developing an Assessment Plan

- 4. Identify the components of successful achievement of the outcome and refine your learning outcomes.**

Where's the bar?

What are we looking for in students' performance?

What types of knowledge, skills, attributes are we looking for?

Earlier in the presentation: Example #1

Students will be able to **apply** factual information to a problem.


COMPONENTS:

Relevance

Clarity

Comprehensiveness

Aware of Bias



Components can help clarify what we want students to demonstrate.

Quick Group Discussion

- Talk with your group about:
 - » Identifying achievement – the criteria, standards, or “bars” you’ve set for your students.
 - » 5-10 minute brainstorming

Linking Learning Outcomes to Assessment Points ...

- 5. Identify where to target assessment efforts (i.e., identify assessment points or data collection points in the curriculum).**

Identify where in the curriculum the student learning outcomes are assessed, and which outcomes we want to focus on.

Several potential strategies

Student Learning Outcomes



Major Courses and/ or All Courses in a Program

	Course 1	Experience 2	Course 3	Experience 4	Course 5	After Graduation
	Introductory				Advanced	
1.	X		X		X	
2.		X		X	X	
3.		X	X	X		
4.		X		X	X	
5.	X	X		X		
6.		X	X		X	
7.	X		X	X		

Legend: X = outcome addressed in the course

Student Learning Outcomes

Major Courses/Experiences in a Program

	Course 1	Experience 2	Course 3	Experience 4	Course 5	After Graduation
	Introductory				Advanced	
1.	I		E		R	
2.		I		E	R	
3.		E	E	R		
4.		I		E	R	
5.	I	E		R		
6.		I	E		R	
7.	I		E	R		

Legend: I – Introduce E – Emphasis R - Reinforced

Student Learning Outcomes

Major Courses/Experiences in a Program

Course 1 Experience 2 Course 3 Experience 4 Course 5 After Graduation

Introductory

Advanced



1.	I		E		R	
2.		I		E	R	
3.		E	E	R		
4.		I		E	R	
5.	I	E		R		
6.		I	E		R	
7.	I		E	R		

Legend: I – Introduce E – Emphasis R - Reinforced

Student Learning Outcomes

Major Courses/Experiences in a Program

	Course 1	Experience 2	Course 3	Experience 4	Course 5	After Graduation
	Introductory				Advanced	
1.	I		E		R	
2.		I		E	R	
3.		E	E	R		
4.		I		E	R	
5.	I	E		R		
6.		I	E		R	
7.	I		E	R		

Legend: I – Introduce E – Emphasis R - Reinforced

Second Working Group Task

Linking Student Learning Outcomes to Curriculum and Identifying Assessment Points

1. Decide which learning outcomes you are targeting for the next three years.
2. Identify where in the curriculum these outcomes are developed or enhanced.
3. Discover what measures, assignments, exam questions, etc. are already in use.

Linking Student Learning Outcomes to Curriculum and Identifying Assessment Points

4. Discuss with your department

- Different assignments, test questions, essays, in-class exercises, papers, projects, surveys, etc. that are currently being used.
- Which of these tasks, measures, surveys, and assignments will do the best job of assessing students learning?

Your list for Workshop #2

1. Discuss with your faculty (and students, if possible) what was worked on in today's workshop.
2. Bring a revised draft of your Curriculum Matrix that illustrates:
 - A) Where student learning outcomes are present in the curriculum (by courses or experiences)
 - B) Where student learning outcome are assess in the curriculum (over the next 3 years)

Your list for Workshop #2

3. Identification of existing assessment methods or tools used in courses and experiences in your department.
 - This includes class assessments such as papers, tests, presentations,; internship evaluation; exit interviews; alumni/industry surveys; or other methods.
4. Thoughts about how you will implement this over the next three years.
 - We will work on this work plan in Workshop #2

Questions?

