WRITING **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES** AND **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

***\*Assessment cannot begin until the outcomes have been defined.***

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLO’s)** –

* Concise, measurable statements about what a student should know, think or be able to do upon completion of the course.
* Outcomes are written using action verbs which follow higher-order skills on Bloom‟s Taxonomy (SEE ATTACHED)
* Typically, ***three to ten*** outcomes are sufficient to cover a single course. If your outline currently lists more than ten outcomes, they likely are not outcomes but are ***objectives or tasks written at too fine a detail***.

**Writing SLO’s**

* + Review your course description – what is the class about?
  + Consider asking yourself, what are the five key things students should learn in this class?
  + Review the major assignments and exams for the course. What knowledge, skills and abilities do the students demonstrate on these measures? Consider how the course relates to others above or below it in a sequence, as there should be some parallelism and a building of skills and knowledge.
  + Does your department or program have any thematic outcomes that should be included? For example, many courses within the health professions include outcomes relating to multi-culturalism and professionalism.
  + When stating expected learning outcomes, it is important to use verbs that describe exactly what the learner(s) will be able to do upon completion of the course. Examples of good action words to include in expected learning outcome statements: Compile, identify, create, plan, revise, analyze, design, select, utilize, apply, demonstrate, prepare, use, compute, discuss, explain, predict, assess, compare, rate, critique, outline, or evaluate.
  + There are some verbs that are unclear in the context of an expected learning outcome statement (e.g., know, be aware of, appreciate, learn, understand, comprehend, and become familiar with). These words are often vague, have multiple interpretations, or are simply difficult to observe or measure (American Association of Law Libraries, 2005).
    - Ex. The students will appreciate music from other cultures. (difficult to measure)
    - The students will be able to identify the characteristics of music from other cultures.

*Consider this: If you ran into a student who had taken your class the previous semester, what would you hope the student would say about what she took away from your course?*

**Course Objectives**

* Review your course content – what topics are you teaching on?
* Small steps that lead toward a goal (Student Learning Outcome), for instance the discrete course content that faculty cover within a discipline.
* For each SLO, what are the specific student behaviors, skills, or abilities that would tell you this SLO is being achieved?
* Objectives are usually ***more*** numerous and create a framework for the overarching student learning outcomes which address synthesizing, evaluating and analyzing many of the objectives (ASCCC, 2010, p. 10).

**Difference between SLO’s and Course Objectives:**

Course SLOs are the intended learning outcomes; objectives are the things that must be taught/covered in order to achieve those learning outcomes. Sometimes, these things are very close; often, they are quite distinct.” (March, 2009 ACCJC Newsletter, p. 3).

How do course SLOs relate to learning objectives? Most of the confusion about the difference between SLOs and learning objectives lies in the term “objectives.” Generally, objectives specify discrete steps taken within an educational program to achieve an outcome. **They are the means, not the ends.** So the “course” objectives specified by the California public college system’s Academic Senate, for example, are defined as follows: “Objectives are the key elements which must be taught each time the course is taught.” (March, 2009 ACCJC Newsletter, p. 2).

**Where confusion lies:**

Must SLOs appear in the faculty members’ course syllabi? Yes. The Commission acknowledges that the use of the words “learning objectives” in this standard appears to be vestigial language from the 1994 Standards. The Commission is currently editing the standards to change the words “learning objectives” to “student learning outcomes.” (March, 2009 ACCJC Newsletter, p. 3).

**Why both needed in the course of record (COR)**

Effective summer 2015, course revisions (and new courses) need to include both Student Learning Outcomes and Course objectives to meet the requirements set forth by ACCJC and Title 5. Courses that are eligible for C-ID designation my use the Course Objectives listed on the appropriate C-ID descriptor

**A Few Examples:**

Economics Course

SLO: Students will use economic theory and modeling to explain government policies and their effects.

Objectives:

* Students will learn current economic events and explain their relevance in terms of economic principle and theory.
* Students will learn how to develop and run a statistical model analyzing the current rate of inflation in relation to the Consumer Price Index

English IA

Upon completion of this course, Students will be able to:

SLO: Write essays that deliberately connect audience and purpose in a variety of genres.

SLO: Support a complex thesis statement with sophisticated evidence.

SLO: Demonstrate proficiency in evaluating, integrating, and documenting sources.

Objectives: Students will learn how to:

• Read, discuss, and write about texts and the essays of peers in a thoughtful manner.

• Identify, analyze, and use various examples, evidence, appeals, etc.

• Find, evaluate, and incorporate textual evidence and research material into essays.

• Apply the stages of the writing process (P-W-R: prepare, write, and revise).

• Understand and avoid plagiarism by using MLA format for papers and references.

• Identify and correct grammatical or stylistic weaknesses in your writing.

• Reflect thoughtfully on your progress as a writer and a student.

Physical and Biological Sciences

Upon completion of this course, Students will be able to:

SLO: Apply critical thinking and analytical skills to interpreting scientific data sets.

SLO: Demonstrate written, visual, and/or oral presentation skills to communicate scientific knowledge.

SLO: Acquire and synthesize scientific information from a variety of sources.

SLO: Apply techniques and instrumentation to solve problems

Objectives: Students will learn how to:

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SLO: Identify the key theoretical positions in a topic area, discuss them critically, and apply them to particular issues

Objectives:

* Learn theories and their proponents
* Learn to critique the theories and discuss their applications
* Apply them to a specific problem or topic

SLO: Compare and contrast different approaches to theatrical costume design

Objectives:

* Identify key issues in costume design
* Different types of approaches to costume design

Class\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Upon completion of this course, Students will be able to:

SLO:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Objectives: Students will learn how to:

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**WRITING SLO WORKSHEET:**

1A. In the space provided, list the major elements that you want your students TO KNOW (facts, theories, concepts, models, etc.) at the end of the course.

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1B. In the following space, list the major things you want your students TO BE ABLE TO DO (skills, abilities, procedures, etc.) after taking the course

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Checkpoint! Please make sure your outcomes do not refer simply to the course content (the facts the students will know). Be sure to include learning outcomes that describe what the student can do and who they are. Brainstorm as many outcomes as you like in this section. Later on, you will have the opportunity to narrow down and prioritize these outcomes.

Rewrite the expected learning outcomes you listed under Steps 1A and 1B. In this section, be sure that these learning outcomes follow the guidelines discussed in the first section.

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*While all the outcomes you brainstormed are likely to be important, it is recommended that you select no more than 5 – 10 student learning outcomes to be listed on your syllabus as the overall course-level expected learning outcomes. This helps to keep the course (and your assessment plan) focused and manageable. You will find that the other learning outcomes you listed will still have a place in your course. Most likely, you will address those learning objectives at a more basic level (e.g., as an outcome for a particular chapter, unit, assignment, etc.).*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Checklist** | **Yes** | **No** |
| Do the SLOs include active verbs? |  |  |
| Comments: |  |  |
| Do the SLOs suggest or identify an assessment? |  |  |
| Comments: |  |  |
| Do the SLOs address more sophisticated or deeper level of learning such as described in Bloom’s Taxonomy or Webb’s Depth of Knowledge as guidelines? |  |  |
| Comments: |  |  |
| Does the set of SLOs address more than one domain (cognitive, psychomotor, and affective)? |  |  |
| Comments: |  |  |
| Are the SLOs written as outcomes rather than as objectives?   * Language indicates an important overarching concept versus small lesson or chapter objectives. * Outcomes address what a student will be able to **do** at the completion of the course. * SLOs address student competency rather than content coverage. |  |  |
| Comments: |  |  |
| Are the SLOs appropriate for the course or program?   * Consistent with the curriculum document of record * Represents a fundamental result of the course * Aligns with other courses in a sequence, if applicable * Represents collegiate level work |  |  |
| Comments: |  |  |
| Do the SLOs reflect as value seen at other colleges, professional organizations or vocational expectations? |  |  |
| Comments: |  |  |
| Will students understand the SLOs? |  |  |
| Comments: | | |

**As you talk colleagues about SLOs, keep these things in mind**:

* Each class section, course, program and institution has unique factors.
* Disciplines have unique language and culture.
* Cross disciplinary conversations are invaluable; do not do this in a vacuum.
* Ultimately discipline-specific conversations best define competencies for students.
* Everyone is a learner when it comes to assessment.



**Adding Course Objectives into CurricUNET**

A visual is provided below on how to input the Course Objectives into CurricUNET.

**Process**: After your last SLO, give the next SLO the heading ‘Course Objectives’ (see number 6 in the example below). Enter all of the course objectives in one cell rather than as additional SLO’s. Use letters when you paste the Course Objectives so that they are different from the SLO’s.

