Learning Outcomes at the University of North Alabama

Dr. Andrew L. Luna

Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment

Topics of Workshop

- What are Learning Outcomes?
- Required components for Learning Outcomes
- Problems with Learning Outcomes
- Characteristics of Learning Outcomes
- Types of Assessment
- Address specific issues with the Annual Planning and Assessment Report

What are Learning Outcomes?

- Learning Outcomes - statements of the knowledge, skills, and abilities the individual student possesses and can demonstrate upon completion of a learning experience or sequence of learning experiences (e.g., course, program, degree).

How Many Learning Outcomes Should There Be?

- There should be as many outcomes as are needed to clearly reflect what students will learn from a program

- Average number of learning outcomes for UNA programs is five

- The new Annual Planning and Assessment Report allows for up to seven learning outcomes per program

Required Components of a Learning Outcome

- Student learning behaviors – knowledge, skill, or attitude to be gained
- The method of assessment – conditions of performance
- Criteria for achievement – the levels of acceptable performance

Problems with Outcomes

- Outcomes are too broad
- Outcomes do not address core requirements/competencies or mission
- Outcomes are not measurable

Characteristics of a Good Student Learning Outcome

- It is **S**pecific
- It is **M**easurable
- It is **A**ctionable
- It is **R**elevant
- It is **T**imed

A Specific Outcome Refers to One Learning Behavior

- "Identify potential sources of patient stress and create an intervention plan for each one"

Better

- "Identify the five most common sources of patient stress on a post-surgical wound"

- "Create an intervention plan with at least three strategies for one major post-surgical patient stressor"

A Measurable Outcome Includes the Criteria for Success

- "The student will be able to identify a heart attack"

Better

- "A student will be able to describe the five signs of heart attack"

An Actionable Outcome is one that can be Demonstrated with Evidence

- "The student will know the function of a cell wall"

Better

- "The student will be able to describe the two most important functions of a cell wall"

A Relevant Outcome is One that Prepares Students for Future Experiences

- "Identify the primary components of Virginia Tort law" may not be applicable to law students preparing to take the Alabama Bar exam

A Timed Outcome Requires Proficiency within Certain Time Constraints

- "The student will be able to play a new musical piece, demonstrating both technical and musical ability, with little time preparation."

Steps To Creating Learning Outcomes

- Identify the major topics of the discipline
- Classify learning outcomes into domains – (Cognitive, Psychomotor, Affective)
- Within each domain, identify the level of learning required
- Choose the specific action verb for that level of domain (Bloom's Taxonomy)
- Decide how you will measure the achievement of that outcome

Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Outcomes

Category	Definition	Related Behaviors
Knowledge	recalling or remembering something without necessarily understanding, using, or changing it	define, describe, identify, label, list, match, memorize, point to, recall, select, state
Comprehension	understanding something that has been communicated without necessarily relating it to anything else	alter, account for, annotate, calculate, change, convert, group, explain, generalize, give examples, infer, interpret, paraphrase, predict, review, summarize, translate
Application	using a general concept to solve problems in a particular situation; using learned material in new and concrete situations	apply, adopt, collect, construct, demonstrate, discover, illustrate, interview, make use of, manipulate, relate, show, solve, use

Bloom's Taxonomy, Cont.

Category	Definition	Related Behaviors
Analysis	breaking something down into its parts; may focus on identification of parts or analysis of relationships between parts, or recognition of organizational principles	analyze, compare, contrast, diagram, differentiate, dissect, distinguish, identify, illustrate, infer, outline, point out, select, separate, sort, subdivide
Synthesis	relating something new by putting parts of different ideas together to make a whole	blend, build, change, combine, compile, compose, conceive, create, design, formulate, generate, hypothesize, plan, predict, produce, reorder, revise, tell, write
Evaluation	judging the value of material or methods as they might be applied in a particular situation; judging with the use of definite criteria	accept, appraise, assess, arbitrate, award, choose, conclude, criticize, grade, judge, prioritize, recommend, referee, select, support

Types of Assessment – Direct

- Comprehensive Exams
- Nationally Normed Exams
- Certification/Licensure Exams
- Locally developed pre-test/post-test
- Performance/Project Assessment
- Portfolio Evaluation

Important: SACS requires at least one Direct form of assessment for every learning outcome

Types of Assessment - Indirect

- Student Exit/Evaluation Surveys
- Employer Surveys
- Alumni Surveys
- Graduate Tracking
- Quantitative Data (retention rates, graduation rates, observation, etc)
- Qualitative Data (focus groups, syllabus review, observation, etc.)

How Can OIRPA Assist?

- Create university wide reports – Five-year departmental reports
- Analyze university-wide assessment data – NSSE, CAAP
- Hold workshops on assessment and IE
- Work with individual departments on annual reports, program review, and outcomes assessment
- Provide ad hoc data reports for departments

Questions or Comments?