



# Teaching Excellence Series: Student Learning Outcomes

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# Agenda

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- 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?

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- 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

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- 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?

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- 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

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



# Evaluating Learning Outcomes

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Evaluate the examples  
on the next four slides



# Evaluating Learning Outcomes

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- Example 1:

This course will cover topics including fundamental analysis and applications related to credit and equity markets.



# Evaluating Learning Outcomes

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- 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.



# Evaluating Learning Outcomes

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- 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

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- 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

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- Let's be S.M.A.R.T
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Actionable
  - Relevant
  - Timed



# Steps to writing Student Learning Outcomes:

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- 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:

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- 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

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- 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

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- Huba, Mary E., and Jann E. Freed. *Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2000.
- Nichols, James O. *The Departmental Guide to Implementation of Student Outcomes Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness*. New York: Agathon, 1991.
- Stevens, Dannelle D., and Antonia J. Levi. *Introduction to Rubrics: An Assessment Tool to Save Grading Time, Convey Effective Feedback and Promote Student Learning*. Sterling: Stylus, 2004.
- Walvoord, Barbara E. *Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
- Weimer, Maryellen. *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002.



# Web Resources

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- Fulks, Janet. *Assessing Student Learning in Higher Education*. 2004. Bakersfield College.  
<http://online.bakersfieldcollege.edu/courseassessment/>
- *Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment in the Classroom. A Work Book*. Cabrillo College  
[http://pro.cabrillo.edu/slos/docs/ClassroomSLO\\_AssessmentWorkbook.pdf](http://pro.cabrillo.edu/slos/docs/ClassroomSLO_AssessmentWorkbook.pdf)
- How to Write Student Learning Outcomes. Laney College.  
[http://www.laney.peralta.edu/apps/comm.asp?\\$1=31028](http://www.laney.peralta.edu/apps/comm.asp?$1=31028)
- 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!