Student Learning Outcomes
Faculty Manual

Rev. May, 2010

By

Jennifer Brezina, Michael Joslin and Leslie Bretall
Developing Assessment Plans for Courses

Here are some steps that will help you develop an assessment plan for a course:

First, check your SLOs:

- **How many are there?** If there are more than three, they likely aren't true SLOs – they may be objectives that were just moved into the SLO area. You should revise them into SLOs before creating an assessment plan.

- **Are the SLOs overarching** (“big picture” learning for the course) **or are they smaller objectives** (things learned in just one chapter, for instance)? If they are not overarching, you should revise the SLOs before creating an assessment plan.

- **Is the student learning described in the SLO observable and measurable?** If not, you should revise the SLOs to make them observable and measureable before creating an assessment plan.

Next, decide on an appropriate assessment tool. Consider:

- **What is the SLO asking the students to do?**
  - Identify a fact?
  - Perform a skill?
  - Analyze a complex phenomenon?
  - Solve a problem?
  - Explain a concept?
  - Create a learning product?
  - Prepare a performance?
  - Apply skills or knowledge to real-world situations?
  - Evaluate options and select appropriate resources or tools?

- **What types of assignments or activities will allow students to demonstrate the SLO (see Appendix C for more information about choosing an assessment tool)?**
  - Objective exams?
  - Essay exams?
  - Out-of-class formal essays?
  - Skill demonstrations?
  - Surveys?
  - Portfolios?
  - Performances?
  - Oral Presentations?
Developing Assessment Plans for Courses

- What criteria will you use to measure success or failure to meet the SLO?
  - Rubric (see Appendix E for tips on how to develop a rubric)?
  - Raw score?

- What are the expected results? (How many students do you expect to successfully meet the SLO?)

Then, decide how and when you will do the assessment:

- How often will you assess this course?
  - Will it be on a three-year cycle? A four-year cycle? Other?
  - Are there similar courses that could be grouped together?
  - Which semester will you begin assessing this course?
  - If you make changes, when will you reassess to see the effects?

- Will you assess all students and sections or will you use sampling?
  - If you are sampling, how many students/sections will be involved?
  - How will you decide which students/sections to involve?

- What do you need to do to prepare?
  - Do you need to set up meetings for faculty teaching the course?
  - Do you need to create a departmental test or rubric?
  - How will you distribute materials?
  - Do you need any additional resources or training?

Finally, think about how and when you will share the assessment results and use the results in decision-making about the course and/or program (“closing the loop”):

- What needs to be done to gather and present the data?
  - Do you need data from Institutional Research?
  - What format will you use to share the data? PowerPoint? Handouts? Other?

- When will be a meaningful time for your department to reflect on the results?
  - Department retreats?
  - Department meetings?
  - Other?