

Writing Student Learning Outcomes

To transform and advance student learning.

To understand how we might be impacting student learning we must first define our student learning outcomes and then measure if the program or service implemented to facilitate such learning was effective. Learning Outcomes are goals that describe how a student will be different because of a learning experience. More specifically, learning outcomes are the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students take with them from a learning experience. (Suskie, 2009).

The Division of Student Affairs will be updated with learning outcomes defined by the Curriculum Committee. Program Learning Outcomes should be defined through a strategic planning process to align with the division's learning outcomes and strategic plan.

How do I go about writing a learning outcome?

It may be difficult to know where to start in writing a student learning outcome. Here are some questions that might help you brainstorm a list of outcomes.

1. What do you want the student to be able to do?
2. What knowledge, skill or abilities should the ideal student participant demonstrate?
3. How will students be able to demonstrate what they learned?
4. How does this program and outcome fit within the Division's Student Learning Outcomes?

The focus should be on what a student will be able to do with the information or experience.

Once you have identified the intended outcomes, you will want to write a formal learning outcome statement. The key is to make sure the statement is

S.M.A.R.T.

- **Specific**-Outcome is focused on a specific category of student learning. If it is too broad it will be difficult to measure.
- **Measurable**- Data can be collected to measure student learning.
- **Attainable**- The outcome is attainable given the educational experience.
- **Results-Focused**- The program outcome is aligned with Divisional Student Learning Outcomes.
- **Tailored**- Outcome is specifically tailored to the program.

The following statement may get you started:

As a result of participating in (program or experience), students should be able to (action verb) + (defined by explicit and observable terms).

How Many Outcome Statements Should I Write?

It is recommended that you limit yourself to 3-6 outcomes. Try to focus on the most important goals of your program. Remember in the end, you have to measure all of them!

A helpful and frequently used resource when writing student learning outcomes is Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Skills. Below you will find a chart that shows the multiple levels of student learning, beginning with the simplest form and ending with the most complex.

Teaching in Blooms: A guide to levels of learning and teaching strategies

Structuring An Outcome Statement

Blooms Category	Definition	Action Verb	What the Teacher Does	Learning Activities
Knowledge Information Gathering	recalling or remembering something without necessarily understanding, using, or changing it	Tell, list, describe, name, repeat, remember, recall, identify, state, select, match, know, locate, report, recognize, observe, choose, who, what, where, when, cite, define, indicate, label, memorize, outline, record, relate, reproduce, underline	Directs Tells Shows Examines	Lecture, reading, audio/visual, demonstration, question and answer period, memorize and recite
Comprehension Deeper Understanding of Knowledge	understanding something that has been communicated without necessarily relating it to anything else	Explain, restate, find, describe, review, relate, define, clarify, illustrate, diagram, outline, summarize, interpret, paraphrase, transform, compare similarities and differences, derive main idea, arrange, convert, defend, discuss, discuss, estimate, extend, generalize, give examples, locate, report, translate	Demonstrates Listens Questions Compares Examines	Discussions, reflection, illustrate main idea,
Apply Use of Knowledge	using a general concept to solve problems in a particular situation; using learned material in new and concrete situations	Apply, practice, employ, solve, use, demonstrate, illustrate, show, report, paint, draw, collect, dramatize, classify, put in order, change, compute, construct, interpret, investigate, manipulate, modify, operate, organize, predict, prepare, produce, schedule, sketch, translate	Shows Facilitates Observes Criticizes	Role plays, case studies, fishbowl activities, construct a model, collection of photographs

<p>Analyze</p> <p>Compare and Contrast</p>	<p>breaking something down into its parts; may focus on identification of parts or analysis of relationships between parts, or recognition of organizational principles</p>	<p>Analyze, dissect, detect, test, deconstruct, discriminate, distinguish, examine, focus, find coherence, survey, compare, contrast, classify, investigate, outline, separate, structure, categorize, solve, diagram, determine evidence and conclusions, appraise, break down, calculate, criticize, debate, experiment, identify, illustrate, infer, inspect, inventory, question, relate, select</p>	<p>Probes</p> <p>Guides</p> <p>Observes</p> <p>Acts as a resource</p>	<p>Practice by doing, simulated job settings, write a commercial to sell a product, make a flow chart, put on a play or skit, write a biography, plan an event</p>
<p>Evaluate</p> <p>Judging the Outcome</p>	<p>judging the value of material or methods as they might be applied in a particular situation; judging with the use of definite criteria</p>	<p>Coordinate, judge, select/choose, decide, debate, evaluate, justify, recommend, verify, monitor, measure, the best way, what worked, what could have been different, what is your opinion, test, appraise, assess, compare, conclude, contrast, criticize, discriminate, estimate, explain, grade, interpret, rate, relate, revise, score, summarize, support, value</p>	<p>Accepts</p> <p>Lays bare the criteria</p> <p>Harmonizes</p>	<p>Use in real situations, on the job training, create a new product, write a new language code and write in it, persuasively present an idea, devise a way to solve a problem, compose a rhythm or put new words to a song</p>
<p>Create</p> <p>Original or new creation</p>	<p>creating something new by putting parts of different ideas together to make a whole.</p>	<p>Create, hypothesize, design, construct, invent, imagine, discover, present, deduce, induce, bring together, compose, pretend, predict, organize, plan, modify, improve, suppose, produce, set up, what if, propose, formulate, solve (more than one answer), arrange, assemble, categorize, collect, combine, devise, explain, generate, manage, perform, prepare, rearrange, reconstruct, relate, reorganize, revise, argue for</p>	<p>Reflects</p> <p>Extends</p> <p>Analyzes</p> <p>Evaluates</p>	<p>Self study, learning through mistakes, create criteria to judge material, conduct a debate, write a half yearly report,</p>