

Writing Learning Outcomes



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Workshop

Rutgers University Libraries

May 2, 2008

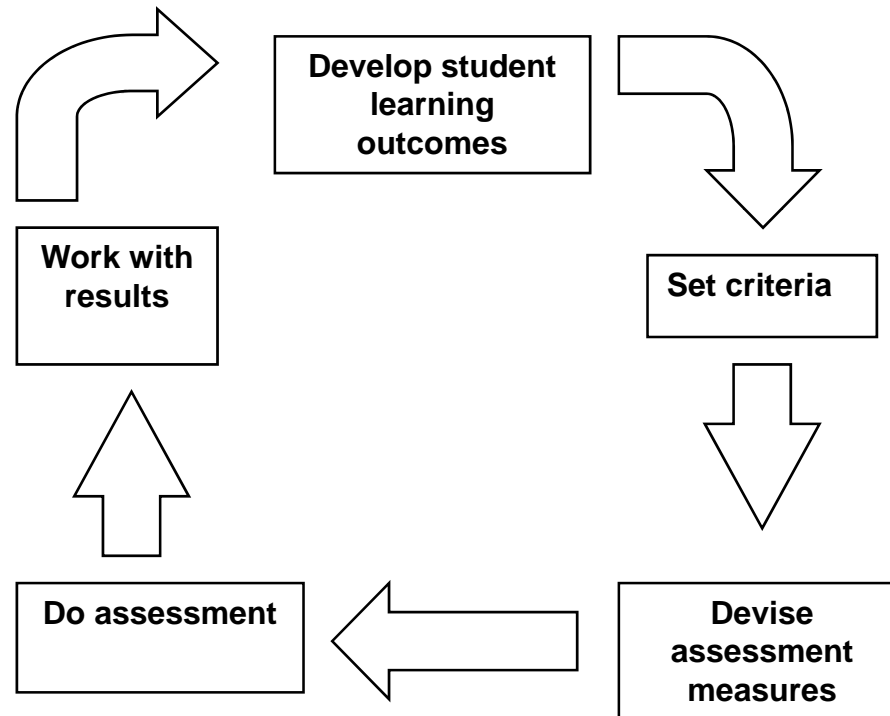


Learning Outcomes for Today

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Define the term “learning outcomes”
2. List characteristics of good learning outcomes
3. Write learning outcomes for an information literacy instruction session.

Assessment Loop





What are Learning Outcomes?

- Systematic look at what students are learning in library instruction
- Moving from “What am I going to teach today?” to “What do I want students to learn today?”
- Not the same as evaluating teaching
- Different from other library assessment efforts



Definition

A learning outcome is one sentence that indicates what students should represent, demonstrate or produce as a result of what they learn.

- source: Peggy Maki



Levels of Assessment

- Institutional (University wide)
- Program (e.g. Department)
- Course
- Session (e.g. IL instruction)



Good Learning Outcomes:

- Focus on what students will learn/know/be able to do
- Describe actions or behaviors
- Are results oriented
- Are observable and measurable
- Include a time frame



ACRL Standards

- 3 levels: standards, performance indicators, outcomes
- Can be used for LOA
- **Examples:** (1) Identifies keywords, synonyms and related terms for the information needed. (2) Selects an appropriate documentation style and uses it consistently to cite sources



Exercise: What Do You Cover?

Think of an information literacy instruction session that you have taught or are planning to teach.

List what you will cover in that session.



Learning Outcomes Formula

- 1. Time frame
- 2. Student focus
- 3. Action verb
- 4. Product/process/outcome



Using the Formula

- Time frame: “At the end of the library session...”
- Student focus: “...students will be able to...”
- Action verb: “...identify...”
- Product/process: “...a relevant database for their term paper research.”



Another Example:

- Time frame: “After completing the online tutorial...”
- Student focus: “...students will be able to...”
- Action verb: “...differentiate between...”
- Product/process: “...scholarly journals and popular magazines.”



One More Example:

- Time frame: “By the time they are seniors...”
- Student focus: “...students will be able to...”
- Action verb: “...construct...”
- Product/process: “...a research question that can be investigated using primary archival resources.”



Bloom's Taxonomy

- Classification of educational objectives
- Published in 1956, revised in 2001
(changes: noun to verb, synthesis/creating becomes highest level)
- Taxonomy = classification
- Cognitive levels (lower → higher)
- Provides way to express outcomes



Bloom's Levels (lowest → highest)

- Knowledge/Remembering
- Comprehension/Understanding
- Application/Applying
- Analysis/Analyzing
- Evaluation/Evaluating
- Synthesis/Creating



Verbs for Information Literacy

- **Knowledge/Remembering:** define, list, recognize
- **Comprehension/Understanding:** characterize, describe, explain, identify, locate, recognize, sort
- **Application/Applying:** choose, demonstrate, implement, perform
- **Analysis/Analyzing:** analyze, categorize, compare, differentiate
- **Evaluation/Evaluating:** assess, critique, evaluate, rank, rate
- **Synthesis/Creating:** construct, design, formulate, organize, synthesize



Verbs to Avoid

Understand

Become familiar with

Appreciate

Learn about

Know about

Become aware of



Examples: Bad and Better

Bad: Students will ***understand*** how to use social science databases.

Better: Students will ***perform*** a search in Social Sciences abstract that retrieves relevant items.

Bad: Students ***will be able to search*** the catalog.

Better: Students will ***use*** the catalog to ***identify*** a book on their topic.

Bad: Students will ***appreciate*** the importance of correct citation.

Better: Students will ***produce*** citations in correct APA format.



Now, write your own!

Choose two items from the list of what you cover in an information literacy session.

Transform them into learning outcomes, using the formula.

Find a partner and critique your outcomes using the following checklist.



Checklist for Learning Outcomes

- Includes a time frame?
- Focuses on students?
- Uses action verbs?
- Names a product or process?
- Measurable/observable?
- Prompts a measure/method?
- Will be useful for you to assess?



Assessment Methods

- Pre/post test
- Minute paper
- 3-2-1 exercise
- Bibliography analysis
- Standardized test



Using Assessment Information

- Rewrite learning outcomes
- Change what you do/how you teach
- Work collaboratively with colleagues (librarians and faculty)
- Revise assessment measures



Learning Outcomes are:

- Fundamental components of a learning assessment program
- Focused on student learning
- Indicate what students will know/be able to do
- Measurable, observable, overt
- Tools to help librarians improve student learning



Resources on Writing Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment
(University of Virginia)

<http://www.web.virginia.edu/iaas/assessment/outcomes.htm>

Faculty Teaching and Learning Center (Salt Lake
Community College)

Assessment Podcast series (includes one on writing learning outcomes)

<http://web.mac.com/ftlc1/iWeb/Site/Welcome.html>



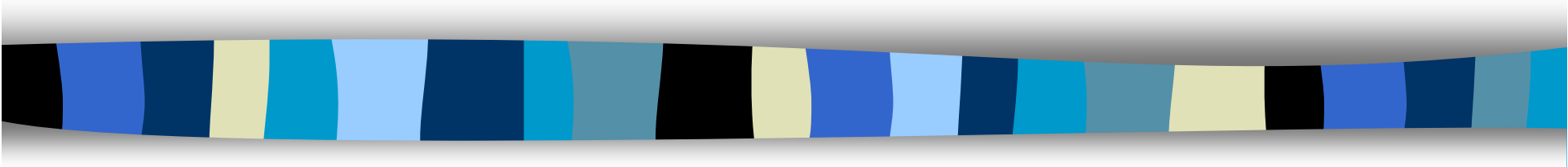
Let's assess this workshop!



Thank you to:

- Jeanne Boyle and Valeda Dent
- You, the participants!

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