Michigan State University

From the SelectedWorks of Larry D. Long

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Where Are You Aiming? Using Learning Outcomes to Guide and Assess Practice

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/ldlong/33/
Writing Learning Outcomes

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Modified slides available at: works.bepress.com/ldlong/33
“Students will learn about social justice and become active and engaged citizens in their community”
Learning Outcomes

As a result of this program, participants will be able to:

- Write learning outcome statements
- Evaluate learning outcome statements
Overview

- Background
- Format of Learning Outcomes
- Practice: Write your own LOs
Learning Outcomes

What should students/staff learn as a result of an intervention?
What is a Learning Outcome?

- A concrete action that one demonstrates as a result of learning.
- It’s a demonstration of knowledge (cognition), a skill (behavior/performance), or a value (affect).
- Learning outcomes are statements of intentionality/purpose.
- They guide efforts to move someone from point A to point B as a result of that learning experience.
Importance of Learning Outcomes

- Help others understand what we do
- The basis for delivering content, activities, assessments... everything.
- Guide the planning of activities and assessments for further growth in that area.
- Driving force that supports **what, why, and how** we do things in our field
Importance of Learning Outcomes

Example A:

- You want CDs to learn how to pull RMS reports
- You host a workshop where you show CDs how to pull RMS reports

How do you know you accomplished your objective?

Example B:

- You want CDs to learn how to pull RMS reports
- You write out what a CD should be able to do
- You write learning outcomes
- You create the workshop based on the LOs
- To assess learning, you ask the CDs to generate a roster of all of the international students living in their hall
Goals vs. Learning Outcomes

**Goals** are often broad, somewhat abstract statements of what we want to do or be able to do.

Example - “Residential retention will increase by 10%”

**Learning Outcomes** are explicit statements of what one should be able to do, know, or feel after participating.

Example — “After participating in this workshop, students will be able to list five resources for assisting them with their job search.”
LOs vs. Other Outcomes

- **Learning Outcomes**
  What *people* should be able to *do, know, or feel* as a result of an activity

- **Program Outcomes**
  What the *program* should be able to do as a result of an intervention

- **Performance Outcomes**
  The level of *performance* that should be expected as a result of an activity
Bloom’s Taxonomy

- Reference for writing LOs
- Help make LOs measurable
- Three Domains
  - Cognitive (know, understand)
  - Affective (feel, believe, think)
  - Psychomotor (do)
# Bloom’s Taxonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Sample prompts</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remembering</td>
<td>recognize, list, describe,</td>
<td>memorize and recall facts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>identify, retrieve, name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>describe, explain, estimate,</td>
<td>understand and interpret meaning</td>
<td>LOWER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>predict</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applying</td>
<td>implement, carry out, use,</td>
<td>apply knowledge to new situations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>apply, show, solve</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyzing</td>
<td>compare, organize, cite</td>
<td>break down or examine information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>differences, deconstruct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>check, critique, judge,</td>
<td>judge or decide according to a set</td>
<td>HIGHER</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hypotheses, conclude, explain</td>
<td>of criteria</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating</td>
<td>design, construct, plan, produce</td>
<td>combine elements into a new pattern</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>or product</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For additional verbs, reference the session handout at: works.bepress.com/Idlong/33
How to Write Learning Outcomes

- Start with your mission/purpose
- Identify what you want people to be able to know, do, or feel.
- Can reference standards
  - Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) standards – www.cas.edu
  - ACUHO-I Standards
  - AACU Essential Learning Outcomes – www.aacu.org
- Write Learning Outcomes
- Make sure LO’s are measurable
Writing Outcome Statements

- **Audience** - Who is doing it?
- **Behavior** – What are they doing?
- **Condition** – When will they do it?
- **Degree of Achievement** (may be omitted) – How will you know they did it?

Heinich, Molenda, Russell, & Smaldino (2002).
By participating in the Be Spartan Green program, students will implement at least three methods to reduce waste as defined in the Student Green Pledge.
Activity

In small groups, write 2 to 3 learning outcome statements for your students/staff
Bridging Concepts

What do Learning Outcomes have to do with assessment?
Bridging Concepts

Learning Outcomes:
As a result of this program, participants will be able to:

- Write learning outcome statements
- Evaluate learning outcome statements

Because participants practiced writing LOs, I can feel confident I accomplished the first objective.
Learning Outcomes and Assessment:
Learning Outcomes are useful for developing assessments because they provide the framework for measuring learning and improvement.

“As a result of the workshop, student facilities workers will be able to repair a leaky faucet.”

I can assess if workshop participants learned the task by having them repair a leaky faucet.
Bridging Concepts

Direct Assessment:

When developing assessment strategies, use the action verb as a guide -> have students/staff do the action!

As a result of this program, participants will be able to WRITE learning outcome statements
Bridging Concepts

Indirect Assessment:
Have students/staff self-report their learning.

As a result of this educational program, to what extent did you learn how to write learning outcome statements?

☐ 1 - Not at all
☐ 2
☐ 3 - Moderately
☐ 4
☐ 5 - To a great extent

Limitation: Learning is self-reported and not observed. You can overcome this by “surveying” with test questions (e.g., Please write one learning outcome statement).
Bridging Concepts

Rubrics:
Use rubrics to gauge learning
“Students will learn about social justice and become active and engaged citizens in their community”

Now that you’ve learned how to write learning outcome statements, how would you improve this statement?
Overview

- Background
- Format of Learning Outcomes
- Practice: Write your own LOs

Any Questions?

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