



PREPARED BY THE OFFICE
OF
ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR- STUDENT AFFAIRS
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Overview

Concerns about accountability in higher education have been around for decades. Preparing to build a culture of evidence begins with the assertion that community colleges must not only measure the effectiveness of instructional programs but also assess the quality and contributions of support services and other co-curricular programs.

The use of learning outcomes and the learning outcomes workbook is a part of Dallas County Community Colleges' enrollment management strategy. The overarching goal is to continue to seek opportunities to better serve students, provide the highest quality of services and maximize the use of all of our resources.

The District's goal of serving students and the community is further supported by guidelines and expectations set forth by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and Southern Accreditation Council (SACs). The THECB, in their evaluation of public two-year colleges, has provided guidelines for institutions. These guidelines provide certificate or associate degree programs an institutional effectiveness process which, according to Board approved criteria;

- assess and evaluate public two year colleges and other public institutions
- achieve mission goals in certificate or associate degree programs
- provide for the systematic use of evaluation results to continuously improve institutional performance, programs, services and standards of operations

SACs, articulated their expectation under *Section 3: Comprehensive Standards*, expectations are described as follows: The institution identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs (including student learning outcomes for educational programs) and its administrative and education support services, assesses whether it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results. Include a description of how the institution will monitor the quality of proposed new sites(s) or delivery system.

The purpose of this workbook is to provide a framework for the development of learning outcomes and assessment for the student services function within Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD).

Feedback Loop - In creating this workbook, we have benefited greatly from information contained in the websites of both two year and four year colleges and universities, attending conferences and workshops, and talking with some of the front runners in Learning Outcome research, development and assessment. The District Office of Student Affairs will launch a Web site that highlights our enrollment management plan, which includes the learning outcome section.

The new Web site will contain:

- the learning outcome workbook and process
- upcoming professional development opportunities
- enrollment management work

Workbook Format

The Student Services Learning Outcome Workbook is divided into three sections that will serve as a template or process for the development of Learning Outcomes:

Section I - IDENTIFY- This section contains information that will help the leader and facilitator establish a starting point, focus, framework and common language. It emphasizes the importance of involving key stakeholder in the development of the enrollment management plan and linking learning outcomes to vision, mission, values and strategic plan. Student Services Learning Outcomes are drafted and shared. The information in this section will assist groups in moving through the other sections.

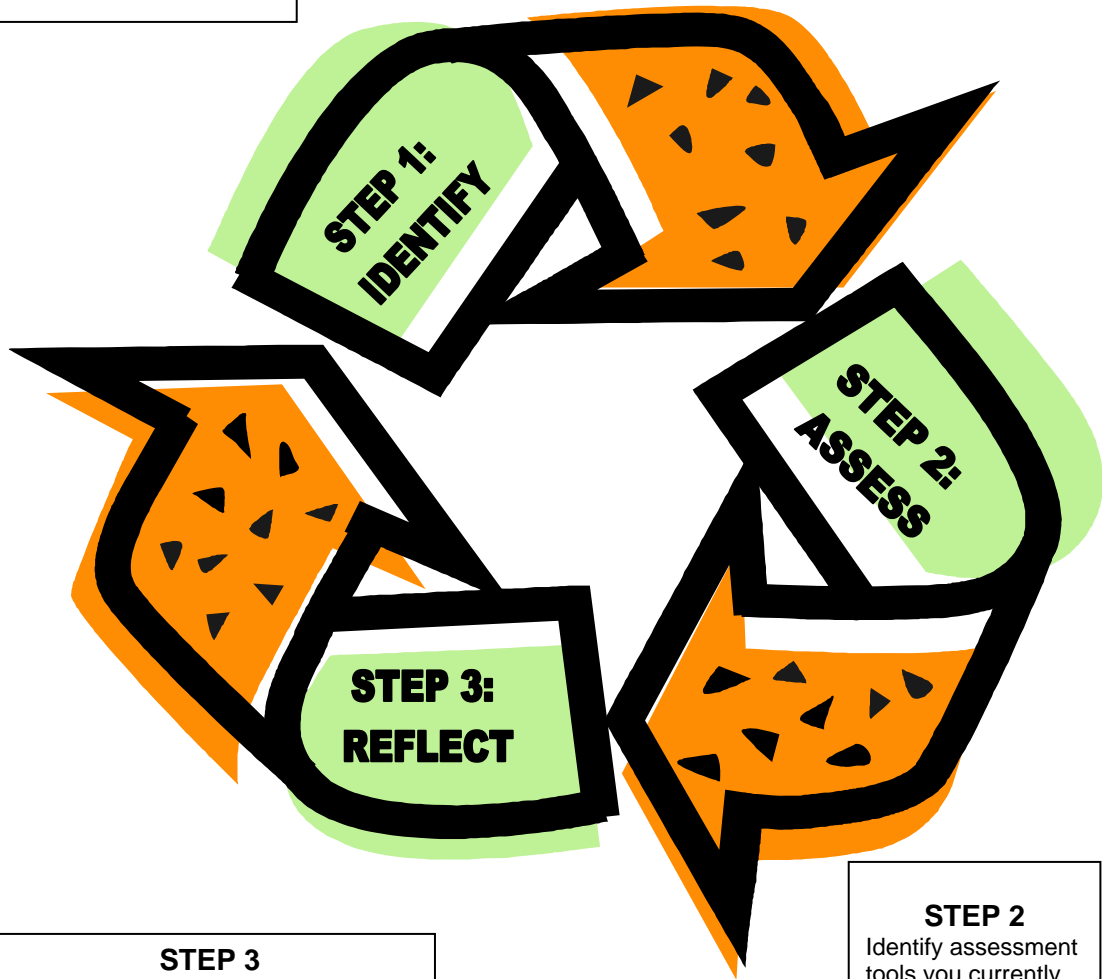
Section II - ASSESS – This section contains process information that can be used to draft an assessment plan, run the proposed assessment and then collect data.

Section III - REFLECT - The data is compiled and the staff comes together again to discuss the results and prepare their report. This dialogue should include a discussion about the meaning of the results and how they can be used to improve student services learning outcomes.

The Process

STEP 1

- Involve stakeholders
- Establish timeline
- identify what you have
- Review mission, goals and values for district, college and department



STEP 3

How do you currently report your successes/challenges? Create a report format that is easy for all levels of your staff to understand. Identify next steps.

STEP 2

Identify assessment tools you currently use, think about the best way to measure different learning outcomes, and start small – what gets measured gets done!

HOW TO WRITE STUDENT SERVICES LEARNING OUTCOMES

This portion of the workbook is intended to help you write student services learning outcomes for programs and services that are offered at your campus.

Learning outcomes are not a new strategy. They focus on what students know and can do rather than what we do to support them. The focus shifts from student satisfaction to student learning, from teaching to learning centered. The primary question to be asked of student services is, “Do learning outcomes have any effect on student learning, development, academic success or other intended outcomes, particularly when compared to non-users? The learning outcomes challenge to student services is an opportunity to improve effectiveness and to integrate with faculty.

First let’s begin with a definition. Student learning outcomes are defined as a set of knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that students have attained as a result of their involvement in various educational experience(s). While there are numerous versions of how learning outcomes are defined, there is a consistent thought out about what the student must “do, know, or demonstrate”.

A student learning outcome is different from an objective. Objectives are smaller scale, describing small discreet skills or “nuts and bolts” that require basic thinking skills. Think of objectives as the building blocks used to produce whatever is used to demonstrate mastery of an outcome.

Objectives	Outcomes
Objectives describe skills, tools or content that student will master by the end of one specific course	Outcomes describe over-arching goals that a student will be able to demonstrate by the end of a course or program
Objectives require the use of basic thinking skills such as knowledge, comprehension and application	Outcomes require the use of higher level thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation
Objectives do not necessarily result in a product. Most often, objectives are synthesized or combined to produce something that measures an outcome	Outcome result in a product that can be measured and assessed.

Sample Student Service Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to maintain evaluate, adapt and improve weekly and monthly time schedules.
2. Student will be able to request appropriate accommodations of the Disabled Student Program & Services.
3. Student will participate in decision making about his/her academic direction leading to a career goal.
4. Students recognize their learning needs and take appropriate and proactive steps to ensure that they access services and programs necessary to their success.
5. Students will learn and utilize various adaptive technologies and software to accommodate disability-related educational limitations.



- *Consistent with mission statement*
- *Consensus – was staff involved in the development of learning outcomes*
- *Reasonable – for the ability of our students*
- *Key concepts – important to the program or service. Ask what students must know and be able to do or demonstrate after utilizing the program, service or office.*
- *Clarity – precise in description*
- *Singular – not multiple learning outcomes*
- *Use action verbs with the student as the subject.*
- *The characteristics of a good learning outcome must be observable, measurable and able to be demonstrated.*

LIST OF ACTION WORDS

Certain verbs are unclear and call for covert, internal behavior which cannot be observed or measured. These types of verbs should be avoided: appreciate, become aware of, become familiar with, know, learn and understand. Instead use the following verbs:

<i>Analyze</i>	<i>Apply</i>	<i>Argue</i>	<i>Arrange</i>
<i>Assemble</i>	<i>Assess</i>	<i>Calculate</i>	<i>Categorize</i>
<i>Choose</i>	<i>Classify</i>	<i>Compare</i>	<i>Compile</i>
<i>Compute</i>	<i>Create</i>	<i>Criticize</i>	<i>Critique</i>
<i>Defend</i>	<i>Define</i>	<i>Demonstrate</i>	<i>Describe</i>
<i>Design</i>	<i>Develop</i>	<i>Differentiate</i>	<i>Discuss</i>
<i>Distinguish</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Explain</i>	<i>Formulate</i>
<i>Identify</i>	<i>Illustrate</i>	<i>Indicate</i>	<i>Interpret</i>
<i>Label</i>	<i>List</i>	<i>Locate</i>	<i>Manage</i>
<i>Memorize</i>	<i>Order</i>	<i>Operate</i>	<i>Organize</i>
<i>Plan</i>	<i>Practice</i>	<i>Predict</i>	<i>Prepare</i>
<i>Propose</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Rate</i>	<i>Recognize</i>
<i>Repeat</i>	<i>Report</i>	<i>Reproduce</i>	<i>Review</i>
<i>Revise</i>	<i>Schedule</i>	<i>Select</i>	<i>Solve</i>
<i>State</i>	<i>Translate</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Utilize</i>
<i>Write</i>			

**Writing Learning Outcome Template-Student Services
Dallas County Community Colleges**

List program, service or activity:

As a result of students participating in _____,

They will be able to _____,

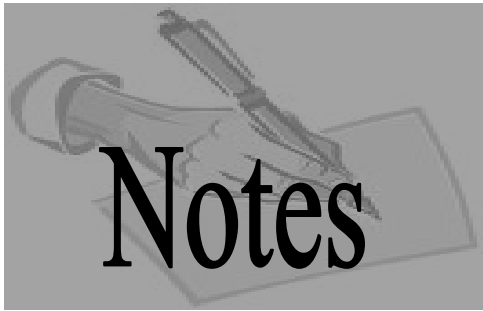
Ex: As a result of students participating in **the new student orientation session**, they will be able to **identify the services provided by each department, be aware of the hours of operation and general contact information for all student services departments.**

Practice: Write two student services learning outcomes.

After creating learning outcomes, reference these criteria:

Does the outcome support the program objectives?	Y	N
Does the outcome describe what the program intends for students to know, think, or do?	Y	N
Is the outcome detailed and specific?	Y	N
Is the outcome measurable and identifiable?	Y	N
Is the outcome a result of learning?	Y	N
Do you have or can you create an activity to enable students to learn the desired outcome?	Y	N
Can the outcome be used to make decisions on how to improve the program or service?	Y	N

Feedback: Share what you have written with another student service leader in a different program or service area to see if the outcome is written in language that a student or novice in the field might understand.



Key points you want to remember.....

Research you want to do.....

People you want to contact.....



Assessment

In the simplest terms, assessment is the systematic collection and analysis of information to improve student learning. However, “assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle of educational improvement”. The purpose of assessment is not merely to gather information; the purpose of assessment is to foster improvement. Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning.

The Assessment Cycle can be embarked upon by asking key questions

- What are you already doing that could be considered outcomes-based assessment?
- What are we trying to do and why?
- What is my program, service, office supposed to accomplish?
- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- How do we use the information to improve or celebrate successes?
- Do the improvements we make work?

Before Choosing an Assessment Method

- Think about what meeting the outcome looks like.
- Match the assessment to the outcome.
- Describe how your program is delivering the outcome (There may be clues in the delivery of the outcome that help you determine how to evaluate it.)
- Think about collecting data (from different sources to make more meaningful and informed decisions for continuous improvement and triangulation of data that you believe will be useful in answering the important questions you have raised).

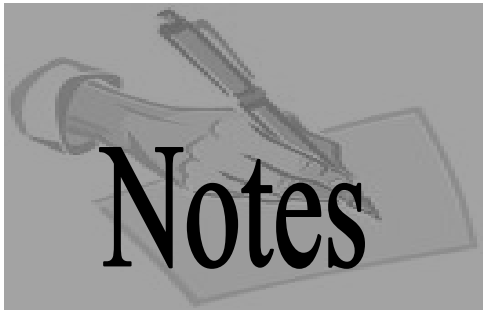
Methods of assessment that provide direct evidence of learning

- Student use of automated systems
- Student completion of assignments
- Student self evaluation
- Student service staff member evaluation of student
- Program, service or office evaluation of student participation
- Observation of student behavior

Methods of assessment that provide indirect evidence of learning

- Focus groups
- Student surveys
- Job placement statistics
- Retention studies

It is important that you approach the assessment process on a small-scale trail so that the validity and usability is clearly established before the full-scale assessment is run.



Key points you want to remember.....

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Reflect

There will need to be a report on the analysis of learning outcomes with respect to student services. The report content should include the following:

Direct Evidence

- Evidence that shows directly what a student has learned
- Examples of direct evidence should be included.

Indirect Evidence

- Evidence that shows student learning indirectly
- Student learning can be inferred rather than directly demonstrated.

Formative Evaluation

- Evaluation for the purpose of improvement
- Formative evaluation usually takes place continually throughout the semester.
- Examples: post-service survey.

Summative Evaluation

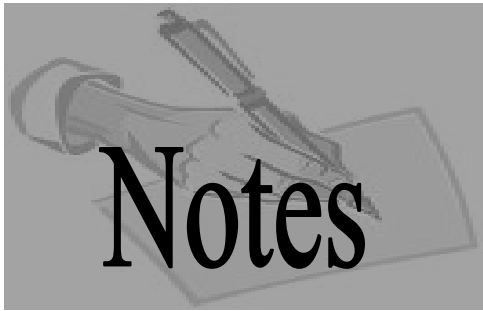
- Evaluation that is used to show learner achievement
- Summative evaluation usually takes place at the end of a semester.
- Formative and summative evaluation should be used to complement each other.

Qualitative Evidence

- Data that is narrative or descriptive in form
- Qualitative evidence usually involves fewer cases than quantitative data, but shows much more specific information and tends to be very subjective.

Quantitative Evidence

- Data that is numerical in form
- Quantitative evidence usually involves a great number of cases.
- It is used to show general patterns and trends rather than specifics.
- It tends to be much more objective.



Key points you want to remember.....

Research you want to do.....

People you want to contact.....

Sample Report Format

References

The Learning Outcome Workbook was made possible due to research, conversations and attending conferences on the subject matter. The sources that were invaluable during the process are listed here so that you can delve further into the benefit of implementing a Learning Outcome strategy.

1. University of Rhode Island – Office of Student Learning & Outcome Assessment. Ph. 401-874-5401, Email: www.rui.edu/assessment
2. El Camino College – Student Services & Community Advancement. Ph. 310-532-3670, Email: www.elcamino.edu/academics/slo/studentservices.asp
3. San Diego State University- Student Development Office
4. Santa Monica College-Office of Student Success/Student Affairs
5. College of the Sequoias-Student Services and Enrollment Management
6. Mesa College-Student Services/Student Affairs
7. Bakersfield College (Dr. Janet Fulks) Email: jfulks@bakersfieldcollege.edu. Website: <http://online.bc.cc.ca.us/courseassessment/>
8. [http://www.sccollege.edu/apps/comm.asp?\\$1=849](http://www.sccollege.edu/apps/comm.asp?$1=849)
9. <http://www.elcamino.edu/academics/slo/>
10. <http://www.profj.us/slo/>
11. Marilee J. Bresciani, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Postsecondary Education and Co-Director of the Center for Educational Leadership, Innovation, and Policy San Diego State University 3590 Camino Del Rio North San Diego, California, Marilee.Bresciani@mail.sdsu.edu
12. Dr. Margery Regalado, Terrence Willett, M.S., Gavilan Community College San Francisco, November 2003
13. O'Banion, T. (1997b). Creating more learning-centered community colleges [Monograph]. Mission Viejo, CA: League of Innovation.
14. http://galvin-group.com/dspsresources/assets/DSPS_Student_Learning_Outcomes_Spring_2006.doc

Books and Articles

Community College Student Affairs: What Really Matters; Steven R. Helfgot, Marguerite M. Culp. Number 131-Fall 2005

Assessment Practices in Student Affairs: An Applications Manual; John H. Schuh, M. Lee Upcraft and Associates

O'Banion's Six Principles

The Learning College

1. creates substantive change in individual learners
2. engages learners in the learning process as full partners who must assume primary responsibility for their own choices
3. creates and offers as many options for learning as possible
4. assists learners to form and participate in collaborative learning activities
5. defines the roles of learning facilitators in response to the needs of the learners
6. succeeds only when improved and expanded learning can be documented for learners

Appendix

- A Examples “How to write Learning Outcomes
- B Additional Learning Outcomes Worksheet
- C Additional Report Worksheet

B

Writing Learning Outcome Template-Student Services Dallas County Community Colleges

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Ex: As a result of students participating in ***the new student orientation session***, they will be able to ***identify the services provided by each department, be aware of the hours of operation and general contact information for all student services departments.***

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