**Student Learning Outcomes Workshop**

Pacific University

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## Course goals are general statements that define an effective course (what the course should do).

## Student learning outcomes are specific results the students must achieve in order to attain the course goals (what student can do).

**Student Learning Outcomes focus on what you expect students to learn in the course.** These statements are specific and measurable. They help you determine how students will demonstrate mastery of the material and skills covered in your course.

**Learning outcomes often take this form:** As a result of participating in [course name], you/students will be able to [action verb] [Learning statement]. For example:

**Students will be able to**

* **describe** the key characteristics of the different classes of planets.
* **summarize the three main ethical theories: utilitarianism, Kantianism, and virtue ethics.**
* **apply** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* **present** alternative theories of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* **analyze** the relationship between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* **calculate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and graph \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
* **compare and contrast** the following concepts/theories with regard to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Other good verbs:**

identify, categorize, explain, demonstrate, perform, write, evaluate, report, create, discuss, appraise, synthesize, construct, design, present, apply, predict, recall, select, use, compute, calculate, rate, critique, quote, graph, rank, rate, compose, classify.

Do a search for Bloom’s Taxonomy to see more tips for using useful verbs.

**Verbs to avoid:**

**appreciate, be aware of, become familiar with, comprehend, learn, understand.**

**Steps for Developing Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Ask yourself: what are the most important things a student should know (cognitive), be able to do (skills), or value (affective) after completing the course/program?
2. Consult a list of action verbs, which are verbs that result in overt behavior or products that can be observed and measured. Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives provides some useful verbs to write objectives for different levels of learning.
3. Draft a list of possible learning outcomes. Be realistic in considering what is possible for students to accomplish in your course. Only keep the most essential learning outcomes.

**Purposes of SLO**

* By knowing where you intend to go, you increase the chances of you and the learner ending up there.
* SLOs make teaching more focused and organized.
* They guide the teacher relative to the planning of instruction, delivery of instruction and evaluation of student achievement.
* SLOs guide the learner; helps him/her focus and set priorities.
* They allow for analysis in terms of the levels of teaching and learning
* They show colleagues and students what we value.
* They help the learner self-assess.

**General Advice**

Don’t stress out. You do not need to reinvent the wheel. Do a Google search for “SLO” (Student Learning Outcomes) and the syllabus you are working on. You’ll see lots of examples out there. Borrow & customize. ☺

Do a Google search for “Student Learning Outcomes” if you want to learn more about SLOs in general. There are lots and lots of web sites out there! Some are targeted at beginners, while some are more advanced. Some are wordy, others minimalist, and others rely on videos; pick whichever seems more appealing to you! ☺

Contact Ramona Ilea at [ramona.ilea@pacificu.edu](mailto:ramona.ilea@pacificu.edu) if you need more help. ☺