What do they really know?

Assessing and measuring student learning outcomes

Kimberly Chestnut
Alyssa Lederer

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, attendees should be able to:

1) Explain why measuring student learning outcomes is important for college health professionals.

2) Describe effective approaches to measuring student outcomes in student affairs and academic settings.

3) Apply student learning assessment approaches to their individual institutional settings.
Session Agenda

• Introductions
• Historical perspective on SLOs
• Why SLOs are important in higher education
• Developing measurable outcomes
• Assessing/ measuring outcomes
• Documentation and dissemination of results
• Application activity
• Q & A
About Us

- Kimberly Chestnut, MA, MEd, PhD
- Alyssa Lederer, MPH, PhD, CHES
- Health Promotion Section Research Committee
IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU...
Poll Everywhere Questions

• What ACHA section are you a member of?
• What is your current comfort level with the assessment and measurement of learning outcomes?
• What do you want to learn from this session?
What is a SLO?

- Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are statements that specify what students will know, be able to do, or be able to demonstrate after the completion of a program/course/other teaching and learning effort.
Objective 1: Explain why measuring student learning outcomes is important for college health professionals.

Evolving Interest in Student Learning Outcomes
Evolution of Student Assessment

1960s and 70s

• Retention and student behavior research mirrored assessment work
  – Tinto’s research shows students who were academically & socially engaged had higher rates of retention
  – Data contributed to development of strategies and support systems for students who have historically struggled to be retained

• Scientific management theory application:
  – Program review, strategic planning, and budget management
  – Focuses attention on student outcomes
  – Students use campus programs/services & related satisfaction
  – Creation of assessment classification systems:
    • academic learning, career skills, personal development
Evolution of Student Assessment

1985
- First National Conference on Assessment in Higher Education
- considered beginning of higher education assessment movement
- trend embodied conflicting political and intellectual traditions

Early 1990s
- Continuous Quality Improvement
- Focused on the need to listen to those being served
- Introduced the idea of the student as a “customer”
- Offered a shift in focus from teaching to student learning

Mid 1990s
- New Learning Paradigm (Barr & Tagg)
- Institutions to have goal of producing learning rather than instruction
- Argued shift was inevitable because of the widening gap between what higher education claims to do and what it actually does
Evolution of Student Assessment

Resistance to Assessment

• Many schools had apathetic response to call for more tangible results
• Many faculty argued that assessment infringed on right to determine what and how to teach
• Many state governments struggled to synthesize results in a way that was meaningful to the public
Evolution of Student Assessment

New Millennium and many changes

• Considerable changes in accreditation
  – New language shifts accreditation towards academic standards and curricular alignment as proof of accountability as opposed to mere existence of assessment as evidence of accountability.

• Assessment of out-of-class experience grew as resources dwindled and concerns about accountability grew
  ◦ Student affairs practitioners began defining learning outside the classroom
National Landscape Regarding Assessment
National Agenda

National landscape critiquing the value of higher education:

• National and state government call for accountability increases pressure for institutions having the ability to articulate the value students receive from higher education

• Obama Administration Programs
  – Financial Aid Shopping Sheet
  – College Scorecard

• The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.
  – Measuring Up on College-Level Learning.
Key findings of 2013, Knowing What Students Know and Can Do: The Current State of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment in U.S. Colleges and Universities

- Stated learning outcomes for students are now the norm in American higher education
  - In 2013, about 84% of all colleges and universities has adopted stated learning outcomes for all their undergraduates, and increase of 10% from 2009
- Provosts perceive substantial support on their campus for assessment
- In general, institutional selectivity is negatively related to assessment activity
- Faculty are key to moving assessment work forward
Why SLOs?

• SLOs allow us to:
  • Assess the overall effectiveness of our efforts
  • Determine areas of strength
  • Determine bottlenecks
  • Make improvements for the future
  • Help students recognize what they have accomplished
  • Show value to stakeholders
Transparency of SLOs

• Decided on early
• Shared openly
• Shows your organization and intentionality
• Helps students to understand what to focus on
SLO Assessment Cycle
Assessment Cycle

1. Learning Goals
2. Learning Opportunities
3. Assessment
4. Using Results
Developing SLOs
In order to assess SLOs, objectives must be strategically developed.

Developing Measurable SLOs

1. **Specific**
2. **Measurable**
3. **Attainable**
4. **Relevant**
5. **Time Based**
# Measurable Verb Examples

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<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Synthesis</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<td>Apply</td>
<td>Arrange</td>
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<td>Select</td>
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<td>Support</td>
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<td>Write</td>
<td>Summarize</td>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Utilize</td>
<td>Revise</td>
<td>Test</td>
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Bloom's Taxonomy

- Knowledge
- Understanding
- Application
- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Evaluation
Now it’s time to play...

SMART or NOT?!
SMART or NOT?

• Attendees will understand learning outcomes.
  – NOT SMART

• By the end of the program, participants will be able to list 3 strategies to help a friend who has had too much to drink.
  – SMART!

• By the end of class, students will be able to design an intervention based on the Health Belief Model.
  – SMART!
Objective 2: Describe effective approaches to measuring student outcomes in student affairs and academic settings.
Acquiring Information

To determine what type of assessment method(s) you want to use:

- How much time do you have?
- How many people are you assessing?
- What is important to your stakeholders?
- What story do you want to tell?
- Direct or indirect measures?
Assessment Methods

- Evaluative surveys
- One-on-one interview/discussion
- Group discussion/focus group
- Teaching and learning activities
- Clickers/polling/non-technology learning checks
- Classroom Assessment Techniques
  - Minute paper
  - Muddiest point
- Reflection papers
- Individual/Group assignment
- Test
Documenting and Disseminating SLOs
Don’t let this information sit in a drawer!

Common practice in dissemination
• NILOA - Results for 2013 study, 90% of all colleges and universities are providing some information about student learning outcomes assessment on their websites or in publications.
  – Only 35% are assessment results, and only 8% offer information about whether the data had any impact on policy or practice.
Temple University Example

- Department level: department annual report, shares goals for programs and results of assessment
- Divisional level: department assessments used to inform strategic plan
- **Institutional level**: various survey results available online, resources for creating SLOs
Baseline provides the technology, resources, and expert consultation to create an integrated, coordinated, and comprehensive assessment approach across the department/division.

**Assess**
- Create measurement and assessment questions utilizing the ideal method for data collection

**Report**
- Analyze data and summarize assessment findings

**Act**
- Informed decision making and planning through the use of results
Temple University Example

Tool utilized to track student progress across certification programs, curriculums, orientation task assignments, and other student affairs initiatives such as passport programs, first year experiences, and even campus-wide experience programs.

- A community can have multiple curriculums
- A curriculum can have multiple domains
- Domains can have multiple items
- Domains can belong to multiple curriculums
- Items can belong to more than one domain
Indiana University Example

• Strategic placement of course content by public health competency/SLO on syllabi

• Assessing course competencies at the beginning and end of courses and asking students to reflect on change
Objective 3: Apply student learning assessment approaches to their individual institutional settings.

Application
Application Activity

Scenario:
A 45 minute educational program on the 6 Dimensions of Wellness is being offered at your school to support institutional efforts for holistic student success.

Consider the following:

• What setting and student population would you gear this program towards?
• What are two SMART SLOs for this program?
• How will you assess the SLOs?
• How will disseminate results?
Returning to Our SLOs…

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Contact Information

Kimberly Chestnut
kimberly.chestnut@temple.edu

Alyssa Lederer
lederer@Indiana.edu
SLO Resources


