

Getting Started on SLOs

A Beginner's Workbook of
Helpful tips, concepts, and Methods

Compiled the by LPC SLO Steering Committee
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What are SLOs?

- SLOs are **Student Learning Outcomes**.
- SLOs describe the:
 - Knowledge
 - Skills
 - Abilities
 - Attitudes

that students have attained as a result of their various college experiences including: classes, activities, degree and certificate programs, and encounters with and use of various student and academic services on campus.

- SLOs help provide **evidence of learning**.
- One simple way to define an SLO—and to distinguish course SLOs from course objectives--is to ask yourself **what you expect a student to be able to DO** (as opposed to what you will expose them to) as a result of taking your class or taking part in your program.

Example 1: A history instructor may expect his students to demonstrate an ability *to distinguish* between historical interpretation and historical fact.

Example 2: An anthropology instructor may expect her students *to explain* the social construct of “race.”

- SLOs focus on **what students can DO** because they need to be **demonstrable**. How many students in the anthropology course mentioned above can DO what the instructor expects them to do? The only way to know is to have them demonstrate the ability. This leads to the next important step in SLOs, assessment.

What is Assessment?

- **Assessment deals with how an instructor knows** that the students can do what is expected of them?
- To assess SLOs, we need to develop assessment tools.
- Assessment tools **measure the outcomes**.

- Assessment tools may be examinations, essay rubrics, portfolios, or any of the other means we already use to evaluate student performance. All we need to do is make sure that our tools actually **correspond to, and accurately measure, the SLO.**

How Do I Get Started?

- Recognize that in a way you already do SLOs. Whenever you write a course syllabus, and when you develop course materials, you think about what you want your students to learn and how you will assess whether or not they have accomplished this in the course.
- Creating SLOs simply requires us systematically to articulate this intuitive process.
- **STEP ONE:** in one sentence, describe ONE major skill, ability, attitude, or new degree of knowledge that a student will gain by the end of your class or program.
 - Remember! This must be something you expect students to **DO**.
 - What they do must be demonstrable. See Bloom's Taxonomy for SLO-type action words.
 - Congratulations! You have just defined an SLO.
- **STEP TWO:** think about how this SLO corresponds to the Core Competencies. Note: your SLO may relate to more than one of them.

Core Competencies

Communication
Creativity and Aesthetics
Critical Thinking
Respect and Responsibility
Technology

- **STEP THREE:** now that you have an SLO you need to think about how you would know that students accomplished it. It's assessment time!
 - Choose one major graded assignment that you feel measures some aspect of the course SLO. It should be an assignment you always give that you feel is important.
 - If the assignment is an essay or presentation you may need to develop a rubric for evaluating how students demonstrate their ability to achieve the

SLO. A rubric will also ensure greater consistency in the evaluation process.

- If the assignment is an objective examination (multiple-choice, for example) you may need to revise or identify groups of questions that, when answered correctly, demonstrate student ability to achieve the SLO.

STEP FOUR: fill in the appropriate boxes in the [assessment plan and report document](#).

- Make sure that you keep a copy for yourself and provide a copy for the SLO Steering Committee.
- Share this assessment plan with fellow faculty members (full-time and part-time) in and outside of your department. Work on reaching a consensus if you find that differences exist concerning the same course. This may require revising the course SLOs.