Articulating manageable, meaningful, and measurable SLOs

Course-level SLOs

Definitions: Short statements describing what students should know or be able to do upon completing a given course. Course-level SLOs should reflect the knowledge, attitudes, values, or skills students need to be successful in subsequent courses.

Guiding questions
- Why is this course important for students to take?
- What essential knowledge, attitudes, values, or skills should students gain from this experience?
- What knowledge, attitudes, values, or skills should your students have acquired to perform well in future classes or jobs?

How to craft good SLOs?
- Start with an action verb (use the Bloom’s Taxonomy verbs list) that describes exactly what students should be able to do upon completion of the course.
- Avoid verbs that are too vague or have multiple interpretations (know, be aware of, appreciate, learn, understand, comprehend, become familiar with, think critically)
- Action verbs should appropriately reflect the expected level of learning. Verbs such as “describe” or “identify” are well suited for 100 level courses. Verbs reflecting application (e.g., locate, research), analysis (e.g., compare, explain), evaluation (e.g., judge, evaluate) and synthesis (e.g. design, produce) are well suited for upper level courses.

Characteristics of good SLOs
1. Manageable: Is the SLO realistically attainable for students? Does your department have the resources to assess this SLO?
2. Meaningful: Does the SLO reflect an important concept or skill? Will measuring this SLO produce results that can drive course or program improvements?
3. Measurable: Is there at least one method the department can use to assess the extent to which students have achieved this SLO?

Tips
- Keep your SLOs short and simple.
- Limit the number of SLOs to 5 - 8 statements for each course
- Divide complex SLOs into separate outcomes
- Make sure you have other people (faculty, students) review your SLOs
- Make sure your assessment instruments (exams, projects) align with your SLOs

Why reinvent the wheel? Google “Learning outcomes + [course title]” to help you get started!

Assessment Workshop / Program-level SLOs

10/02/2015
Examples

Upon completing [course#], students should be able to:

- Identify and describe the major theories of human development
- Explain the steps involved in metabolism and the ways energy is derived from carbohydrate, fat, and protein
- Describe the functions and roles of each component of the justice system
- Critically analyze and evaluate examples of photographic art
- Define the terms used in plant growth and reproduction
- Apply economic principles to a wide variety of real world situations
- Summarize the distinctive characteristics of a particular novelist
- Format spreadsheets to look professional in both hard and soft copy
- Describe the major events and individuals associated with the history of the United States
- Compare and contrast the different types of business organizations
- Apply the principles of psychology to practical problems
- Calculate the germination rates of various seeds
- Recognize selected examples of Western music aurally
- Discuss the general principles used to guide environmental risk management projects
- Explain the role of active listening in the interviewing process
- Evaluate the economic contributions of the non-profit sector in the United States
- Use fitness equipment safely, minimizing the risk of injury