



Characteristics of Effective Student Learning Outcomes

Harris-Stowe State University

May 2010



Goals

- ❑ Every HSSU syllabus has student learning outcomes.
- ❑ Every HSSU syllabus has the Hallmarks of Student Learning and Development.
- ❑ All course syllabi have been reviewed by the Dean, Chair, Director, and Faculty.



Student Learning Outcomes

**What will students be able to
do as a result of their
experiences in this course?**

Effective Student Learning Outcomes Are:

Measurable
Manageable
Meaningful

Measurable

They use action verbs that specify definite and observable student performance, actions, or behaviors.

- ☹ The students will be exposed to the major authors of British and American literature.
- ☺ The students will be able to identify the major authors of British and American literature.

Measurable

They can be directly measured.

- ☹ The students will have more confidence in their abilities.
- ☺ The students will demonstrate the ability to analyze arguments about social issues.

Measurable

They are written at an appropriate level of specificity.

- ☹ The students will demonstrate an understanding of good citizenship.
- ☺ The students will be able to list the criteria for good citizenship.

Measurable

They describe student rather than instructor behaviors.

- ☹️ This course is designed to give students insight into the underlying business, legal, and ethical concepts that govern corporations and government.
- 😊 The students will be able to compare and contrast the underlying business concepts that govern corporations.

Measurable

They describe outcomes rather than processes.

- ☹ The students will do the assigned readings.
- ☺ The students will be able to plan, design, implement, debug, and test internet WebPages.

Manageable

They are realistic and attainable.

- ☹ The student will be able to define, describe, analyze, evaluate, and propose solutions for the major social forces affecting major social problems.
- ☺ The student will be able to develop a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of a city neighborhood based on governmental records, “windshield” observations, and field interviews.

Manageable

They each indicate a single outcome.

- ☹ The students will be able to use the techniques of statistical reasoning and recognize common misuses of statistics.
- ☺ The students will be able to use the techniques of statistical reasoning.
- ☺ The students will be able to recognize common misuses of statistics.

Meaningful

They indicate behaviors that are direct results of your program.

- ☹️ The students will graduate from college.
- 😊 The students will be able to conduct a multiple-frames analysis to understand the managerial implications of group behavior in organizations.

Meaningful

They use simple language, which can be clearly understood by people outside the program.

- ☹ The students will be able to construct an ER model, normalize tables to 3NF, write executable SQL statements, and construct a working database with a current DBMS.
- ☺ The students will be able to design a relational database using the Database Design Methodology.



Meaningful

They are validated by colleagues.

*Would other professionals in the field consider
the outcome valid?*



SLOs and Assessment

Write outcomes with **assessment** in mind.

- How will I know if the students can do this?
- What will I do with the results of the assessment?

Examples



Introduction to Philosophy

- Students will be able to *define* “philosophy” and “philosophical issue.”
- Students will be able to *explain* the question: “How should I live?”
- Students will be able to *explain* responses to this question from a multi-cultural perspective.
- Students will be able to *critique* these responses and *draw conclusions* regarding this issue.



Introduction to Logical Thinking

- Students will be able to *explain* how the term “argument” is understood within the field of logic versus the everyday understanding of the term.
- Students will be able to *identify* arguments and other forms of discourse.
- Students will be able to *define* the types of discourse with which arguments are most commonly confused, including explanations, reports and informative claims.

*Student achievement of the above objectives
will be assessed by Test #2.*



Reviewing SLOs in Your Courses

- ❑ Do your course outcomes reflect the characteristics of effective SLOs?
- ❑ How do your course outcomes fit the Hallmarks of Student Learning and Development?
- ❑ Are the outcomes appropriate for all sections of the course?

As you go through your syllabi , check for coherence and for increasing levels of student learning outcomes from 100 to 400 level courses.