

Module 2b: Basic Elements for Developing Student Learning Outcomes

Passport to Great Teaching
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Basic Element 1: Define the terms

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are defined generally as what students are expected to know and be able to do by completion of a course or program of study

BASIC ELEMENT 1: Ensure that this definition is applied consistently

Basic element 2:
Apply a categorical organizing framework

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graph TD; A[Examples:] --- B[Content]; A --- C[Communication]; A --- D[Critical Thinking]; A --- E[Creativity];
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Basic element 3: SLOs that are Recent, Relevant, and Rigorous

Student Learning Outcomes reflect the curriculum and your expectations, as these elements evolve, learning outcomes change.

Recent – the outcome reflects current knowledge and practice in the discipline.

Relevant – the outcome relates logically and significantly to the curriculum.

Rigorous – the degree of academic precision and thoroughness that the outcome requires to be met successfully.

Basic element 4: Distinguish Outputs from Outcomes

Outputs describe and count what we do and whom we reach, and represent products or services we produce. Processes deliver outputs; what is produced at the end of a process is an output.

An **outcome** is a level of performance or achievement. It may be associated with a process or its output. Outcomes imply measurement - quantification - of performance.

Outcomes and outputs: What is the difference?

We seek to measure outcomes as well as their associated outputs; however, SLOs focus on **outcomes**.

For example, while we produce a number of new student musicians (the output), it is critical that we have a measure of the *quality* of the students as defined by our program (the outcome).

Outcomes describe, in measurable terms, these quality characteristics by defining our expectations for students.

**Two Examples:
Outputs or Outcomes?**

- The mean scores our students received on the 2017 course history final examination increased by 10 points over the 2016 scores.
Output Outcome
- We increased the number of students in the psychology program from 100 in 2017 to 110 in 2018.
 Output Outcome

**Basic Element 5:
Distinguish SLOs and Program Goals**

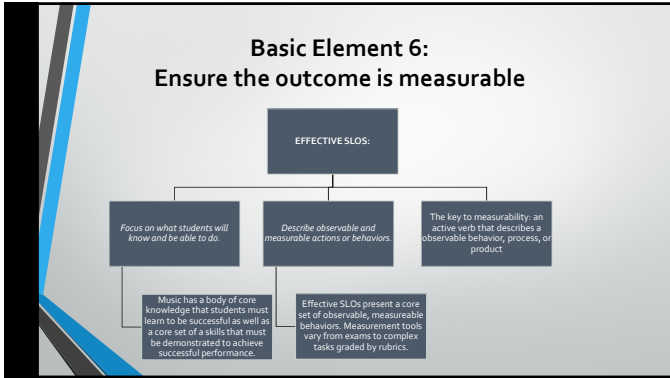
Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) describe what students should know and be able to do as a result of completing a course or program of study.

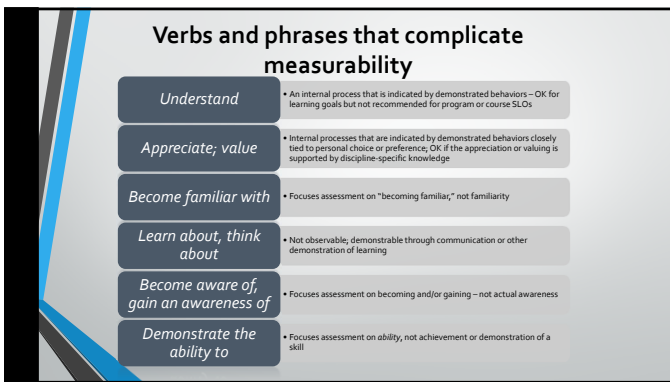
Teachers set *targets* for their SLOs. The general benchmark is 70%, although you can set it higher if you wish.

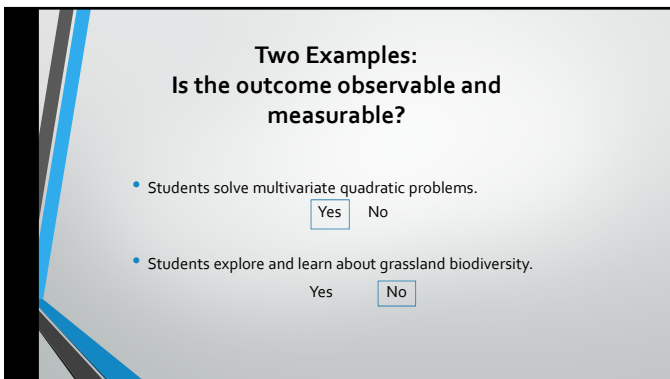
Program Goals describe your expectations for program elements, such as admission criteria, enrollment caps, acceptance rates, etc.

**Two Examples:
Program Goals or Student Learning Outcomes?**

- We will increase our internship participation by 20% next fall.
 Program goal SLO
- Students discriminate musical quality based on sound musical reasoning.
Program goal SLO







Basic Elements: A Summary

- Ensure that the definition of SLO is applied consistently
- Consider an categorical organizing framework
- Recency, Relevance, and Rigor
- Distinguish Outputs from Outcomes
- Distinguish SLOs from Program Goals
- Ensure the outcome is measurable

Check for Understanding

- Examine the student learning outcomes for one of your courses. How do these outcome meet the basic elements described in this module?
