Good Practices

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment: Good Practices

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

- Identify concrete skills and knowledge the students must develop and be able to apply upon completion of a course.

- Are observable and measurable – can be demonstrated by a student in an assignment, project, exam or performance, and then assessed.

- Required on all syllabi.


Course Design: Develop or review course content, assignments, activities, and assessments.

See Short Guide to Course Design (https://vpue.wsu.edu/policies/short%20guide%20to%20course%20design_final2013.pdf)

Mapping Student Activities to Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Good practice includes mapping and linking what students do in a course to the intended learning outcomes the activities are meant to develop. The form this takes may vary by course and the overall goals of the course. The following pages offer grids to help instructors map SLOs and evaluations in different types of courses: undergraduate; UCORE; graduate.

(Adapted from: http://admin.vancouver.wsu.edu/academic-affairs/required-components)

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1 Last updated August 14, 2018.
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SECTION 1: UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

1. Identify the course’s student learning outcomes, taking into account the course description in the WSU catalog. It is also highly recommended that you contact your department to see where this course fits into the degree program curriculum (curriculum map).

2. Using the template below, create a grid with three columns:

   - “Student Learning Outcomes”—the outcomes you identified in step #1 above.
   - “Course Topics, Learning Activities, Dates”—the topics, activities and scheduled dates where you plan to address the particular outcome.
   - “Evaluation of Outcome”—the assignment or activity that will be used to assess the outcome.

**EXAMPLE CHART:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Course Topics, Activities, Dates</th>
<th>Evaluation of Outcome:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the end of this course, students should be able to:</td>
<td>The following topic(s), learning activities, and dates(s) will address this outcome:</td>
<td>This outcome will be evaluated primarily by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a statement for each of the SLO you identified: (start statement with a verb)</td>
<td></td>
<td>List the ways you will evaluate progress made towards this outcome (e.g., writing, activities, project, exams, essay, report, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EXAMPLE:**

- Define basic terms and concepts in scientific methodology and analysis

**EXAMPLE:**

- Locate, categorize, critique, and evaluate sources of scientific information

**EXAMPLE:**

- Contextualize, discuss, and compare key scientists, advances, and theories in the biological sciences
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SECTION 2: UCORE COURSES (University Common Requirements for Undergraduates)

1. Identify the student learning outcomes for your undergraduate course, taking into account the course description in the WSU catalog. It is also recommended that you contact your department to see how this course fits into the program curriculum and its student learning outcomes.

2. Based on your course’s UCORE designator (https://ucore.wsu.edu/students/categories-and-courses/), match the course’s student learning outcomes with the required WSU Learning Goals, listed below.

   - Please see the UCORE Handbook for descriptions of each designator and its WSU learning goals, as well as sample outcomes, teaching resources, and information about assessment of learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designator</th>
<th>Category of UCORE Course</th>
<th>Required WSU Learning Goal(s)</th>
<th>Writing Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ROOTS]</td>
<td>Roots of Contemporary Issues</td>
<td>Diversity, Critical and Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, Communication, and Integrative Learning</td>
<td><strong>All UCORE courses must include a writing component.</strong> Student writing may be of various kinds, both formal and informal, in order to provide adequate instruction in writing skills and a wide range of student experiences in writing for many purposes and audiences. See Handbook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[QUAN]</td>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning</td>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning, Information Literacy Critical and Creative Thinking, Integrative Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[WRTG]</td>
<td>Written Communication</td>
<td>Communication, Information Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[COMM]</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Communication, Information Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[SSCI]</td>
<td>Inquiry in the Social Sciences</td>
<td>Critical and Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, Communication Quantitative Reasoning, Scientific Literacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[HUM]</td>
<td>Inquiry in the Humanities</td>
<td>Critical and Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ARTS]</td>
<td>Inquiry in the Creative and Professional Arts</td>
<td>Critical and Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[PSCI], [SCI], [BSCI]</td>
<td>Inquiry in the Natural Sciences</td>
<td>Scientific Literacy, Quantitative Reasoning Critical and Creative Thinking, Communication, Information Literacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[DIVR]</th>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Diversity, Critical and Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, Communication, Integrative Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[CAPS]</td>
<td>Integrative Capstone</td>
<td>Integrative Learning, Critical and Creative Thinking, Information Literacy, Communication (plus other WSU learning goals as appropriate to disciplines and course)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Using the template below, create a grid with four columns:
   - UCORE Goals
   - “Student Learning Outcomes”—the course’s learning outcomes you identified in #1
   - “Course Topics/Dates”—the topics, activities and scheduled dates when you plan to address the particular outcome
   - “Evaluation of Outcome”—the assignment or activity that will be used to assess the outcome
   (note that CAPS courses carry additional assessment requirements – see UCORE Handbook)

Note: The UCORE Handbook provides additional sample grids and information about UCORE courses, and the UCORE website includes sample UCORE syllabi and other resources for teaching and assessment.

**EXAMPLE GRID:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WSU Learning Goals of the Baccalaureate</th>
<th>Course-level Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Course Topics, Activities and Dates that will address this outcome:</th>
<th>Evaluation of Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List the WSU Learning Goal(s) aligned with the course outcome</td>
<td>Write a statement for each course Learning Outcomes you identified: (start with a verb)</td>
<td>List the course topic, learning activities, and dates you plan to address this outcome</td>
<td>List the ways you will evaluate progress made towards this outcome (e.g., writing, project, performance, exam, report)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scientific Literacy
- EXAMPLE: Define basic terms and concepts in biology

Information Literacy
- EXAMPLE: Locate, categorize, critique, and evaluate sources of scientific information

Communication, Scientific Literacy
- EXAMPLE: Contextualize, discuss, and compare key scientists, advances, and theories in the biological sciences
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For instance, the syllabus could include a grid like the one below, for a fictional class in “Consumer Chemistry”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WSU Learning Goal</th>
<th>Course-level Learning Outcome “At the end of this course, students should be able to…”</th>
<th>Course Topics &amp; Learning Activities</th>
<th>Learning Outcome Assessed By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scientific Literacy:</strong></td>
<td>Evaluate validity of popular claims about consumer products, using scientific methods and scientific literature</td>
<td>Topic: Bogus Claims 1. Read text chapter X 2. Class discussion of popular consumer items 3. Pheromones lab 4. Presentation using peer-reviewed literature</td>
<td>Lab report* - using rubric Presentation** - assess quality of research, strength of findings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Incorporates writing practice.
** Incorporates library instruction in information literacy.
SECTION 3: GRADUATE COURSES

1. Identify the student learning outcomes for this course, taking into account the course description in the WSU Catalog and expectations for graduate students. It is recommended that you contact your department to see how this course fits into the program curriculum and its learning outcomes.

2. Using the template below, create a grid with three columns.

3. Add learning outcomes and assessment statements relevant to your particular graduate course.
   - The learning outcomes should specify an action that is done by the students and describe what students are expected to know and will be able to do by the end of the course.
   - The assessment statements should describe how student performance or work for each course-level learning outcomes will be evaluated.

EXAMPLE CHART:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes for this course:</th>
<th>Course Topics/Dates</th>
<th>Evaluation of Outcome:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the end of this course, students should be able to:</td>
<td>The following topic(s)/dates(s) will address this outcome:</td>
<td>This outcome will be evaluated primarily by:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Write a statement for each of the Learning Outcomes you identified:** (Start your statement with a verb)

**List the course topic and date you plan to address this outcome**

**List the ways you will evaluate progress made towards this outcome (e.g., writing, projects, group activities, exams, reports)**

EXAMPLE: Identify and describe how research is situated in a scholarly discourse embedded in the literature.

EXAMPLE: Select appropriate methods to investigate research questions within a field of study.

EXAMPLE: Develop graduate-level writing and oral presentation skills through course assignments.

EXAMPLE: Analyze, evaluate and synthesize research systematically.