

Student Learning Outcome Assessment

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Office of Writing, Research and New Media

Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning

American Association for Higher Education

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.
2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding that learning is multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.
3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.
4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.
5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing not episodic.
6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.
7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.
8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.
9. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public.

Benefits of Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

- Increased student awareness of their own learning
- Faculty self-assessment
- Context for course design and revision
- Map for curricular assessment and change
- Advising tool
- Program assessment and accreditation

Why Assess Student Learning?

To obtain information that can be used by program faculty to answer the following questions:

- Are our students learning what we think is important?
- Are they learning what they need to succeed in this field or profession?
- Are we improving in our ability to help students learn?
- Should our curriculum or teaching strategies be modified?
- Are there other techniques or additional resources that would help our students learn more effectively?

How Assessing Student Learning Can Impact Programs

- Changes in course content or design
- Changes in assignments or assignment sequence
- Revision of examination content and/or structure
- Changes in pedagogy
- Justification for past changes in course content, structure, or pedagogy
- Changes in relationships between faculty and students
- Facilitate discussion of curriculum and pedagogy at faculty meetings, committee meetings, and retreats
- Changes in advising process
- Development of new career services for students
- Refine current assessment instruments and practices
- Sharing assessment information with alumni and review boards