Assessment 101:
The Basics of Writing Learning Outcomes
Outcomes for the session

After attending this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Restate the difference between a goal and a learning outcome
- Describe what makes an outcome measurable
- Create 1 learning outcome based on a project idea
- Correctly identify the ABCD method
Focus on the assessment cycle

- Foundational Documents (mission, goals, strategic plan)
- Establish Criteria for Success (outcomes or targets)
- Use results for Improvement
- Determine Effectiveness
- Provide Programs and Services
Questions We Need to Ask Ourselves

What are we trying to do and why?

What is our department and its programs trying to accomplish?

How well are we doing what we want to accomplish?

How do we know?
Connecting to the bigger picture

College or University mission/goals
↓
Division **mission**
↓
Division/departmental **goals**
↓
Division/departmental **objectives**
↓
**Outcomes** for students and programs
The image contains a slide titled "Definition of Terms." The content reads:

**Definition of Terms**

A **goal** is an end result written in broad terms.

Students will become acquainted with topographic maps and their usage.
A **learning outcome** examines cognitive skills that students (or other stakeholders) develop through department interactions; measurable, transferable skill development.

Statements indicating what a participant (usually students) will **know, think, or be able to do** as a result of an event, activity, program, etc.

Needs to be **specific** and **measurable**!
Definition of Terms

Learning Outcome

Students should be able to locate and identify features on topographic maps by latitude and longitude.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience/Who</th>
<th>• Who does the outcome pertain to?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behavior/What</td>
<td>• What do you expect the audience to know/be able to do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition/How</td>
<td>• Under what conditions or circumstances will the learning occur?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree/How much</td>
<td>• How much will be accomplished, how well will the behavior need to be performed, and to what level?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Outcome Statement:

A - Students will ...
B - <learn what>
C - <under these circumstances / conditions>
D - <to this level of efficiency / effectiveness>
Learning outcome examples

1. After attending a financial aid session, students will be able to accurately fill out the FAFSA form.

2. As a result of three meetings with an academic coach, students will be able to compare study strategies that is appropriate for their learning style.

3. After participating in a leadership retreat, organization presidents will be able to differentiate between tasks to complete themselves versus those to delegate to their executive board before their first spring semester planning meeting.
The 3 M’s of learning outcomes

Meaningful
- How does the outcome support the departmental mission or goal?

Manageable
- What is needed to foster the achievement of the outcome? Is the outcome realistic?

Measurable
- How will you know if the outcome is achieved? What will be the assessment method?
Beware of these common challenges

• Too vast/complex, too wordy
• Multiple outcomes in one learning outcome statement (the word “and” is usually your first clue!)
• Not specific enough (e.g., effective communication skills)
• Not measurable
• Describe program outcomes, rather than learning outcomes
Watch Out For Verbs That Aren’t Measurable!

**Words to Avoid**
- Realize
- Believe
- Comprehend
- Conceptualize
- Self Actualize

**Phrases To Avoid**
- Awareness of
- Comprehension of
- Capable of
- Interest in...
- Knowledge of...
- Understanding of...
Improve it!

Students will improve their communication skills.

Students will identify two strategies for facilitation in the classroom after attending the Communication Skills for Educators session.

Audience, Behavior, Condition, Degree
Improve it!

Students and parents will know what kinds of career services exist on campus after orientation.

Students and parents will be able to list three career exploration services available at the Career Center after participating in the Career Center session at Orientation.

Audience, Behavior, Condition, Degree
All assessment is a perpetual work in progress

-Linda Suskie