Learning About Components and Strength of Written Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

Learning Outcomes: After this session, participants should be able to 1) identify the components of a well-written PSLO, 2) differentiate between more and less well-written examples of PSLOs, and 3) apply this knowledge to PSLOs that pertain to their program areas.

Components of well-written PSLOs
1) Describes an observable behavior of the learner (Uses an action verb – See reverse for examples)
2) Specific content and expectations for behavior is stated
3) Easily and similarly understood by stakeholders
   a. Faculty in your program, or faculty who are part of a similar program at other institutions, should be able to the read the collection of PSLOs and know what concepts need to be understood, skills mastered, and issues addressed within the collection of courses **The PSLOs are strong enough to drive the curriculum.**
   b. Prospective students and parents/family of prospective students can understand what they'll be able to do when they complete the program. **The PSLOS clearly communicate the added-value of the program to prospective students and their parents/families.**
   c. **Assure stakeholders that students exit the program with the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful**
      i. Prospective employers should be able to discern the skill sets of graduates of career technical programs.
      ii. Transfer institutions should be able to discern the skill sets of graduates of educational programs that build upon this one.

Weaker:
1) As a result of completing the general education core, students will think in an interdisciplinary manner.
Stronger:
2) As a result of completing the general education core, students will apply knowledge, theories, and principles from a variety of disciplines to solve problems in their major field of study.

Weaker:
3) As a result of completing the BA in Psychology, students will know the historically significant systems of psychology.
Stronger:
4) As a result of completing the BA in Psychology, students will recognize and articulate the foundational assumptions, central ideas, and dominant criticisms of the psychoanalytic, Gestalt, behaviorist, humanist and cognitive approaches to psychology.

What differentiates the weaker examples from the stronger examples?

Let's practice
1. Design, install, maintain, troubleshoot, repair and program irrigation systems.
☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

2. Pass the Oregon State Department of Agriculture Pesticide Applicator licensing exams.
☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

3. Analyze, summarize and record financial transactions and prepare summary statements for small and medium-sized businesses, both manually and using computerized systems.
☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

Examples of verbs that describe observable behaviors in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains

Some Verbs for Use In Stating **Cognitive** Outcomes

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
define	discuss	compute	distinguish	diagnose	evaluate
list	describe	demonstrate	analyze	propose	compare
recall	explain	illustrate	differentiate	design	assess
name	identify	operate	compare	manage	justify
recognize	translate	perform	contrast	hypothesize	judge
state	restate	interpret	categorize	summarize	appraise
repeat	express	apply	appraise	plan	rate
record	convert	use	classify	formulate	choose
label	estimate	practice	outline	arrange	decide
		predict		organize	

Some Verbs for Use In Stating **Affective** Outcomes

Receiving	Responding	Valuing	Organization	Value Complex
sit erect	answer	join	adhere	act
reply	greet	share	integrate	practice
accept	read	complete	organize	discriminate
show	report	follow		influence

Some Verbs for Use In Stating **Psychomotor** Outcomes

Perception	Set	Guided Response	Mechanism	Complex	Adaptation	Origination
identify	react	display	display	display	adapt	create
detect	respond	manipulate	manipulate	manipulate	revise	compose
differentiate	start	work	work	work	change	arrange
		perform	write	operate		

Bad words that should not be used as cognitive objectives!

know	really know	understand	appreciate	become
learn	thinks critically	approach	improve	grow
increase	expand horizons	grasp the significance of		

These are poor choices because they are not observable

Worksheet to practice how to differentiate weaker and stronger examples of Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

Directions: Discuss with others whether the example is weaker or stronger and why. If it is a weaker example, make suggestions as to how it can be made stronger. Note: Learners will practice his/her ability to differentiate between weaker and stronger examples, not evaluate whether that outcome is a good one for a particular program.

"As a result of completing [this program of study], students will be able to:

1) Manage a caseload for a state division of children's services.
   ☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

2) Communicate effectively.
   ☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

3) Provide community leadership in resolving environmental hazards and issues
   ☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

4) Function effectively as part of a team.
   ☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

5) Survey and analyze business needs to identify and propose appropriate telecommunications solutions.
   ☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

6) Solve problems using appropriate tools.
   ☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

7) Demonstrate effective management and leadership practices and behaviors to provide exemplary customer service.
   ☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

8) Understand professional behavior.
   ☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

9) Apply an understanding of social theory by participating in urban planning committees.
   ☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

10) Produce quality work.
☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

11) Practice safety precautions, to protect themselves, vehicles and the environment.
☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

12) Have the skills for entry-level employment in landscape design, landscape installation, maintenance of landscapes, tree care industry and supply/equipment sales.
☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

13) Analyze, interpret, and communicate accounting information with stakeholders at a level appropriate to the stakeholder's understanding.
☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

14) Students will be exposed to a wide range of web-related programming languages, web development tools, and graphic design techniques and applications.
☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

15) Effectively assist the older person in preparing for and responding to aging issues by recognizing subtle changes in living patterns and behaviors.
☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

16) Apply scientific and technical modes of inquiry, individually, and collaboratively, to critically evaluate existing or alternative explanations, solve problems, and make evidence-based decisions in an ethical manner. (general education)
☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

17) Work as a member of a team to select, identify, define, illustrate and plan key operation practices for total quality management.
☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____

18) Use effective oral, written and listening skills with customers, partners and business associates.
☐Weaker | ☐ Stronger | Why? _____