

# Assessment Measures

Xavier University

# STEPS of SLO ASSESSMENT

Identify  
goals for  
learning.

(Student Learning  
Outcomes)

Identify  
where in the  
curriculum  
the goals are  
addressed.

(Curriculum  
Mapping)

Gather  
information  
about how  
well students  
are achieving  
those goals.

(Methods: Direct  
and Indirect  
Measures)

Use the  
information  
to improve  
learning.

(Action/Continuous  
Improvement)

# Definitions

## Student-Level Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

- How well an individual student is achieving the goals for the assignment and then the course
- Grades are usually the measure
- **Example 1:** Based on the measures, I determine that John is not meeting the goal for learning.
- **Example 2:** Our whole department gets together to share our ratings on a rubric for each student based on our competency goals for individual students.
- **Action:** Provide feedback to the student and develop strategies for helping the student achieve the goal for learning.

## Section-Level Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

- How well students as a whole within my section of the course are achieving the goals for the course
- **Example 1:** I determine that more than 50% of my students did not meet the goal for learning on this assignment.
- **Example 2:** I determine that my students did not meet the goal for learning on multiple measures in my section.
- **Action:** Redesign course activities in my section with the aim of improving student learning on that goal.

## Course-Level Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

- How well students as a whole within the individual course are achieving the goals for the course
- **Example:** I get together with the other instructors who are teaching the same course and together we share how well are our students are meeting the goal(s) for learning.
- **Action:** We determine as a group that we would like to see students in our course improve on this particular goal. We discuss things we would like to change in the course (all sections) to help students improve on this particular goal.

## Program-Level Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

- How well students as a whole are achieving the goals for your program
- **Example:** At a department meeting, our subgroup discusses what we found in our course and inquire about this particular learning goal across the program. What are other faculty seeing? Where else in the curriculum do we address this? Where else do we assess this?
- **Action:** Plans are made to assess this goal using an assignment completed during students' last term in the program. Data are collected and steps are made for curricular improvement.

# Efficiency in Assessment: Where to Begin

## Current practices

- What are you doing already to assess student learning?
- Where do conversations about student learning occur?

## Section-level to Course-level Discussions

- What opportunities are in place for taking information about student learning from the section level (your class) to the course level (everyone teaching that course)?

## Course-Level to Program-Level Discussions

- What opportunities are in place for taking information from course-level to the program-level?

## End-of-term Department Meeting (or Sub-Group Meeting)

- What regular meetings already exist for discussing student learning?

## Comprehensive Assignments

- Where are those student-level assignments in your program that get at multiple student learning outcomes?

## Common Assignments across Sections of a Course

- What common assignments exist currently?
- Where are opportunities for a common assignment?

## “Capstone” Courses

- Are there courses in your program that function as a “capstone” experience?

## Direct Measures

- Prompt students to represent or demonstrate their learning or produce work so that observers can assess how well students' texts or responses fit program-level expectations
- Yields information about specific strengths and weaknesses of students as a whole

## Indirect Measures

- Signs that students are probably learning, often based on reports of perceived student learning

# Examples of Direct Measures of Student Learning

## Student Work

- Written work, performances, or presentations, scored using a rubric
- Research projects, case studies, presentations, theses, dissertations, oral defenses, exhibitions, and performances, scored using a rubric
- Portfolios
- Tests such as final exams in key courses, qualifying examinations, comprehensive exams
- Pre-post tests

## Ratings of Student Skills

- Field experience supervisors or employers rate students on student skills using a rubric

## Standardized Tests

- Achievement Tests in a Particular Field of Study (e.g. EBI Major Field Tests, ACAT Area Concentration Achievement Tests, GMAT, GRE Subject Tests)
- Licensure or Certification Exams
- Instruments to Measure Specific Skills (e.g. California Critical Thinking Skills Test)

# Examples of Indirect Measures of Student Learning

## Student Response

- Student Survey: Students' perceptions of their educational experiences and the institution's impact on their learning.
  - *List PSLOs and ask, how well did you achieve each goal? What aspects of your education in the department helped you with your learning? What might the department do differently to help you learn more effectively?*
- Student Focus Groups: held with representative students to probe a specific issue that might have been identified
- For Freshmen and Seniors: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) provided by Xavier University OSIR

## Alumni, Employer, or Faculty-Staff Surveys

- Perceptions of student learning and the institutions' impact on their learning
- Alumni: ACT Alumni Outcomes Survey provided by Xavier University OSIR

## Admission Rates into Graduate Programs

- What are our students' acceptance rates?

## Placement Rates of Graduates into Appropriate Career Positions and Starting Salaries

- How do students fare after graduation?

# Considerations in Selecting Measures

Is this assessment based on the whole population (e.g. all majors) or at least a sample of a reasonable size?

How does this measure align with curriculum and educational experiences?

Are students aware that they are responsible for demonstrating this learning?

Do you want a measure that can be used only for summative assessment or would you like one for formative assessment?

A well-designed measure can be used for assessing multiple PSLOs.