

THE ASSESSMENT CHRONICLES

OF LANEY COLLEGE

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HOW SLOs CAN MAKE YOU A BETTER TEACHER

by David Mitchell

When I first began working at Laney College, I was told that the syllabi for all my courses needed to have Student Learning Outcomes front and center! I dutifully complied. Every semester, I'd add them to my syllabi, read and explain them to my students on the first day of class, and then forget about them. It wasn't until fairly recently that I learned that SLOs can be a helpful teaching tool rather than just another boring accreditation requirement.

Think about it--if you keep your Student Learning Outcomes as the centerpiece when planning your courses and even use them during class, it logically follows that you're more likely to achieve the goals you set for your course and your students are going to learn what you want them to learn. Below you'll find some practical ways to use SLOs in your classes that help answer that age-old question students often have: *What am I supposed to be doing/learning in this class?*

1. After pointing out the SLOs in your syllabus, ask students to rate and discuss them. For example, they could rate each one "I" for important, "D" for difficult to achieve, "U" for unclear. By having students focus on the SLOs for a few minutes, they'll more clearly understand what they're supposed to be achieving in the course.
2. Write the SLO that you're working on that day on the board to make students aware of the focus of that day's activity. Or as an alternative, after the activity, ask students to refer to the syllabus to identify which learning outcome they were working on.
3. Put SLOs on handouts and assignments to show students what they're supposed to learn or gain by doing the activity/assignment.
4. Ask students to write reflection/minute papers to demonstrate how they're thinking about an SLO in relation to the assignment or their own learning.

So after having used some of these SLO activities in my classes on a regular basis, can I say my teaching has improved? I think so. Calling attention to my SLOs more often during the semester has helped both me and my students focus on what's important in my courses.

Have an activity that incorporates SLOs? Email us: mfossum@peralta.edu, djmitchell@peralta.edu

Assessment Requirements at Laney

by Cheli Fossum

Laney instructors often approach David Mitchell and me to ask what the Laney College assessment requirements are exactly, so I've listed them below for your reference and use. **Keep in mind that the purpose of assessment is to use evidence of student learning as a basis for dialogue with your colleagues, and then to use what you learn to improve teaching practices and curriculum.**

SLOs

- Every course must have a set of approved student learning outcomes (SLOs)
- These SLOs should be the same for all sections of the course.
- SLOs should appear on course syllabi, and students should demonstrate awareness of those SLOs.
- Every degree or certificate program must have a set of approved program learning outcomes (PLOs).
- Student services programs should all have a set of approved outcomes.

Assessment (ongoing)

- Every course SLO and program outcome (PLO) must be assessed at least once every three years.
- Assessment should be a collaborative process within the department/program. All instructors teaching the same course should combine their assessment information for the reporting process.
- Department meetings should include discussions about assessment and using assessment results as a basis for changes and improvements in courses and/or curricula.
- Assessment results must be documented in TaskStream (this includes assessment plans, assessment findings, action plans, and status reports).

If you need assistance meeting these assessment requirements in your department, David and I can help! We're happy to make special guest appearances at department meetings or help instructors on an individual basis. David is available on most Mondays and Wednesdays and I'm available on most Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Email us at djmitchell@peralta.edu or mfossum@peralta.edu

LANEY FACULTY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

In an effort to make Laney a more learner-centered college, the Learning Assessment Committee is sponsoring a book discussion group that focuses on education and teaching. The book we've chosen is called [Student Engagement Techniques: a Handbook for College Faculty](#) by Elizabeth Barkley. This book is a resource that offers college instructors over one hundred tips, strategies and techniques that have been proven to help teachers from a wide variety of disciplines to motivate and connect with their students. We're currently working on purchasing sets of these books for campus departments, and we'll let you know when and where the series of discussions will take place. Stay tuned!!!