

# The Future Of Assessment At CSM

## Fall 2015



# 2015: Year of the Reboot



# What's New

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## *WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS FALL:*

- General Education SLO assessment – pilot
- New division responsible for data entry & storage (ASLT)
- New requirements from ACCJC (disaggregation of data)

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## *WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON:*

- A college-wide assessment calendar, integrating our assessment routines
- Website / faculty handbook outlining best practices and policies for SLOs
- Discussing and establishing policies for student learning outcomes

# What we're doing today:

Opening a discussion about policies governing our student learning outcomes.

# What we're doing today:

Some questions:

- What should we learn from SLOs?
- How often should we conduct assessments?
- On what sample group?
- What goals should we set?
- Should we use direct or indirect methods?

... and so on.

What we do now:





- our own independent thing(s).

# Creating policies

TODAY'S DISCUSSION: We are beginning a conversation on these questions:

- Question #1: What *are* learning outcomes?
- Question #2: What are student learning outcomes for?
- Question #3: Where should we have college-wide policies, and where should we do our own thing?

Question One: What *are*  
learning outcomes?

# #1: What *are* learning outcomes?

“Student learning outcomes statements clearly state the expected knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and habits of mind that students are expected to acquire at an institution of higher education.”

*From the National Institute for Learning  
Outcomes Assessment*

# #1: Are learning outcomes like course objectives?

## BIOL 110 General Principles of Biology –

- *Explain* the principles of evolution that underlie all of biology.
- *Describe* relationships and dynamics in ecosystems.
- *Relate* molecular structure and function in cells and organisms.
- *Describe* the diversity of organisms.
- *Follow* instructions, *work* cooperatively using appropriate laboratory skills and the scientific method to *investigate* biological phenomena, *evaluate* current issues and *solve* both quantitative and conceptual problems in Biology.

These learning outcomes follow exactly the same rules as course objectives. Magic dust from Bloom's taxonomy of verbs differentiates between different levels of skill, and links SLOs to GE / program SLOs.



# #1: Can learning outcomes be expressed as specific tasks?

## **General Education SLO:**

Students can express ideas and provide supporting evidence effectively in writing and in speaking.

**The SLO below describes the specific thing that successful students should be able to do, rather than the knowledge and skills.**

Working independently, students can research and write a coherent, evidence-based ten-page argument, clearly written and correctly cited

# #1: Or, can learning outcomes be expressed as specific achievements?

“Students will demonstrate the ability to obtain 75% correct (passing grade) on the practical section of the State of California Board of Barbering and Cosmetology licensing exam.”

(from the Cosmetology Program SLOs)

**Another concrete outcome. (Though more concrete would be “Students will obtain 75% correct (passing grade) on the ... exam.”)**



# #1: Perhaps SLOs summarize, and course objectives set out details?

## (fictional) course objective for critical thinking

Students can

- Complete independent research
- Evaluate sources
- Identify logical gaps and errors in experimental and empirical studies, written arguments, and visual arguments (documentaries, advertizing etc.)
- Identify elements of rhetoric and distinguish these from logical support
- Write organized, complex, text-based arguments with relevant and sufficient evidence

(etc.)

## SLO for critical thinking

Students can develop and evaluate sound arguments.

**This summarizes all the skills laid out in the course outlines, and connects them to program and general education goals.**

So: Question One - What *are* student learning outcomes?

- Rehashed course objectives?
- Summaries of course objectives that connect to program and GE slos?
- Specific tasks students should be able to do?
- Specific goals students should achieve?
- ***Something else?***

Question Two: What are  
SLOs for?

## Question #2: What are SLOs for?

"The overriding purpose of assessment is to understand how educational programs are working and to determine whether they are contributing to student growth and development."

— Palomba and Banta (1999)

# Question #2: What are SLOs for?

- retention
- persistence
- graduation
- transfer
- success in external certificates / board exams (i.e., Cosmetology etc.)
- student satisfaction surveys
- grades
- SLOs?

# Question #2: What are SLOs for?

What unique information comes from student learning outcomes assessment?

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SLO assessments can show us –

- Strengths and weaknesses behind the grades;
- Program coherence;
- Grade inflation;
- Whether skills and abilities carry over between and across disciplines, courses and services.

## So, Question Two: What are SLOs for?

- To find patterns of strength and weaknesses?
- To promote program coherence?
- To keep our grades honest?
- To see if students retain skills once they leave the classroom, lab, or office?
- ***Something else....?***



Question #3: Where should we have college-wide policies, and where should we do our own thing?

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Where we *must* pull together:

- Disaggregating data
- Assessing General Education SLOs
- Setting a college “target” success rate for SLOs

# Question #3: Where should we have college-wide policies, and where should we do our own thing?

Where we *might* pull together:

- Sharing assessments across sections, courses, disciplines (e.g., ePortfolios, exit exams, capstone assignments)
- Common assessment calendar for the college
- Common purpose for assessment (see Q #2)

Question #3: Where should we have college-wide policies, and where should we do our own thing?

Where we should probably do our own thing:

- Assessment methods (discipline and service-area specific)
- Target “success” rates

So, Question Three: Where should we have college-wide policies, and where should we do our own thing?

- In assessment methods?
- In assessment procedures?
- In assessment targets?
- *Somewhere else?*

# YOUR TASK:

Thinking of how this will play out in your discipline or service area, brainstorm your responses to these questions!

- Question #1: What *are* learning outcomes?
- Question #2: What are SLOs for?
- Question #3: Where should we have college-wide policies, and where should we do our own thing?