

# How to Assess Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in Your Department – Step by Step

## Key Ideas: Evidence, Dialogue, and Improvement

- 1. Check your department's assessment plan to see which SLOs should be assessed this semester**
  - Plans are developed in Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) and should be accessible to all department members
  - Plans are prioritized to assess core courses, and any SLOs that are mapped to a program (degree or certificate)
  - Plans should result in all SLOs for all courses being assessed within a 3 year period, with programs assessed every 4<sup>th</sup> year
  - Assessing individual SLOs leads directly to assessment of programs
  - You can also find SLOs in course syllabi, the Course Outline of Record (COR) in Meta, or here: <https://laney.edu/assessment/current-slos-plos/>
  
- 2. Gather the faculty who teach the same/similar courses**
  - Collaboration is best practice!
  - If assessment is unfamiliar, or you need to brush up, check out the training materials on the Learning Assessment Committee's webpage <https://laney.edu/assessment/training-materials/>
  - Training materials continue to be developed – check back as needed
  - Check out the rest of the webpage for more information about assessment
  
- 3. Develop an assessment tool/rubric together**
  - All instructors involved in the assessment should agree on a common tool (set of test questions, writing assignment, project, presentation etc.) with a common scoring rubric
  - Take note of the assessment methods in the COR – they should prove useful, but there may be multiple interesting ways to assess a given SLO
  - All instructors should evaluate the same assignment in the same way
  - Find the Bloom's verbs in the SLO - action words that describe what students should be able to DO (the verbs will suggest the assessment tool – check out [this document](#) for guidance)
  - Discuss the rubric and its use – consider having a “norming” session so that all instructors will be scoring the assignment in the same way
  - Decide what constitutes “successful” attainment of the outcome and what percentage of students you'd like to see successfully meeting the standards (these are your success criteria)
  
- 4. Collect data**
  - All instructors use the assessment tool to assess their students' performance on the selected assignment
  - Tally the number of students in each category of the rubric
  - Keep copies of the completed rubrics or surveys (these should be attached in Meta when you enter data)

**5. Meet again to discuss results and create action plans**

- At or before this meeting, share the results with all participants (it's good to include each instructor's results and the compiled results)
- Strive for an attitude of honest curiosity – everyone must feel safe in order for this process to have its intended effect
- Analyze the results. What do these results mean? What are the specific strong points and weak points? Where are the learning gaps?
- Plan changes to the course that you think will address the identified learning gaps and improve student performance. Are there tips or techniques you can learn from one another?

**6. Enter data in curriqunet Meta**

- Your department may have a set standard for which faculty are responsible for this step
- For collaborative efforts, the best option is to select one or two lead faculty to pool data on Level 1 (levels are different proposal types in Meta)
- For alternatives consult the Assessment Coordinators

**7. Implement action plans for subsequent semesters**

- Select one or two instructors from your group to ensure this follow-through happens

**8. Reassess – did your action plan result in better student learning?**

- You will have an opportunity to discuss this in the Reflection on your next assessment of the SLO

**9. Update your curriculum as needed**

- Not all individual assessments will result in updates to the COR, but over time the COR will likely reflect changes based on assessment

**10. Repeat, forever, for all SLOs in the department**

- Assessment is a continuous process intended to result in improved learning over time
- Assessment should be part of your routine each semester/year
- Some assessments will be simple, some more complex
- Assessment should never be busy work – put in the effort to make it beneficial to students