

Guide to Assessment Measures

*"Evidence includes qualitative as well as quantitative information."
(Barbara Walvoord, Assessment Clear and Simple)*

Welcome to step three. This is equally as time consuming as the creation of SLOs, so prepare yourself mentally for the task ahead.

Take a look at your program matrix. You and your colleagues should have chosen which SLO to assess. Based upon your matrix, you should know which outcomes appear in which classes and maybe even which assignments demonstrate their effective usage.

****Remember:** you are not telling people how to teach in the classroom. This is not a question of academic freedom. You have all agreed that your students should be learning X. The question is whether or not they are [learning X]. You are all in this together! You are all here to grow successful students!

Your next task is to identify the traits of successful achievement of the outcome. In other words, what do you need to see in order to tell if student performance is acceptable? Once you have the answer to that question, you can create a measurement tool. In an ideal world, it can be used in multiple courses by multiple instructors. The result will be a tidy apple to apples comparison that no one can complain about (except you-know-who, but they always complain).

Next, you've got to gather evidence about how well students are meeting the outcome(s). This step is pretty important. You do not want to end up with data that you cannot use and do not need. You do not want to end up swimming in information that no one has time to parse either. Ideally, you will be using a combination of:

- *Direct measures- come from exams, papers, projects...essentially, any measure that is based upon direct evaluation of student work*
- *Indirect measures- provide indirect evidence of student learning, often based upon perceptions of what students learn or asking students themselves what they learned, rather than direct evaluation of student work.*

Here is a list of common sources of direct and indirect measures of student learning:

1. Direct

- a. **Portfolios-** a collection of papers, activities, projects, etc. that the student has developed and collected during a learning experience, course or program to show quality of learning and student academic achievement.
- b. **Evaluation by a Practicum Advisor-** completed during the practicum, to alter, improve the experience, or to show student academic achievement.
- c. **Behavior Observation-** observing student behavior during project, activity, or learning experience to determine student academic achievement.
- d. **Capstone Experiences-** usually a senior seminar or final course or experience that integrates overall learning and student academic achievement from program.

- e. **Standardized Tests**- a test given to students to determine level of competence, achievement, etc.
 - f. **Pre/post Tests**- a test given before and after the learning experience to determine levels of competence, student academic achievement, etc.
 - g. **Oral Exams**- an oral or verbal exam given during or at the end of a student learning experience used to show student academic achievement.
2. **Indirect**
- h. **Exit Interviews**: used to gather information and to show student academic achievement from students who have just completed a learning experience such as a course, a sequence of courses, a complete program, etc. Mostly used for program assessment.
 - i. **Focus Groups**- meeting with students in small groups to determine level of competence, student academic achievement, student growth, etc.
 - j. **Survey of Students and/or Graduates**- generally used to determine student's perceptions of the program, part of program, and overall quality and relevance of learning experience.
 - k. **Employer Survey**- generally a survey sent to employers who hire graduates, asking about worker quality, competence, capabilities, etc. Usually does not show student academic achievement.

Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) has a great website with additional resources and scholarly articles about both assessment methods

<http://www.nvcc.edu/assessment/loop/step3.html>

For help creating a measure or with any other aspect of assessment, please check out our [Peer Consulting Program](#).