

The Spotlight



From the Desk of Joan Sholars, SLO Coordinator

Odette Richardson, Editor

Psychology, Education Department

By Stacy Bacigalupi

When we were first assigned the task of writing SLOs for the courses in the Psychology Department, I think we all dreaded it to a degree. But we already had been working on SLOs for Psychology, so we did have somewhere to start. Over the course of the 2008-09 academic year, we had met as a department a few times briefly discussing SLOs. Finally, as the deadline approached, we made a more definite plan of attack for these course-level SLOs. We started by looking at what the American Psychological Association (APA) had done, what another local community college had done, and then assigned each of the full-time department faculty members some classes to work on based on courses they taught. We worked on our assigned courses over winter break with the intent of meeting on Flex Day to write them.

The department met during the third breakout session of Flex Day and went class-by-class. We started with PSYC 1A, Introduction to Psychology, and the two people who were assigned that class shared what they had come up with over the break. As a department, we chose and agreed on the two most important SLOs for that course. We decided for each SLO how we would measure it, when we would measure it, and what percentage of students we would want to meet that SLO. We repeated that exact process for 10 other Psychology courses. Our Flex Day course-level SLO development meeting took about 90 minutes, and these completed SLOs were entered into e-PIE.

There were five courses for which we did not develop SLOs on Flex Day because they are either special classes, classes taught by adjunct faculty or are classes we have not taught in awhile, and we thought they would require a bit more thought. The plan is to complete these five courses by the end of the year working with the Research and Institutional Effectiveness Department and our own adjunct faculty to create these remaining SLOs.

In order to not overwhelm ourselves, we also decided to spread out the assessments of the SLOs over five to six semesters, assessing about two courses' SLOs per semester.

Three examples of the Psychology course-level SLOs developed, their means of assessment, and their criteria for success are provided in the table below.

Course	SLO	Assessment Method	Criteria for Success
PSYC 1A – Introduction to Psychology	Be able to differentiate the major theoretical perspectives of psychology.	Course embedded multiple-choice exam questions	70% correct
PSYC 1B – Biological Psychology	Demonstrate knowledge of the major anatomical structures and functions of the nervous system.	Course embedded multiple-choice exam questions	70% correct
PSYC 14 – Developmental Psychology	Identify major theories in developmental psychology.	Course embedded multiple-choice exam questions	70% correct

DEFINITIONS

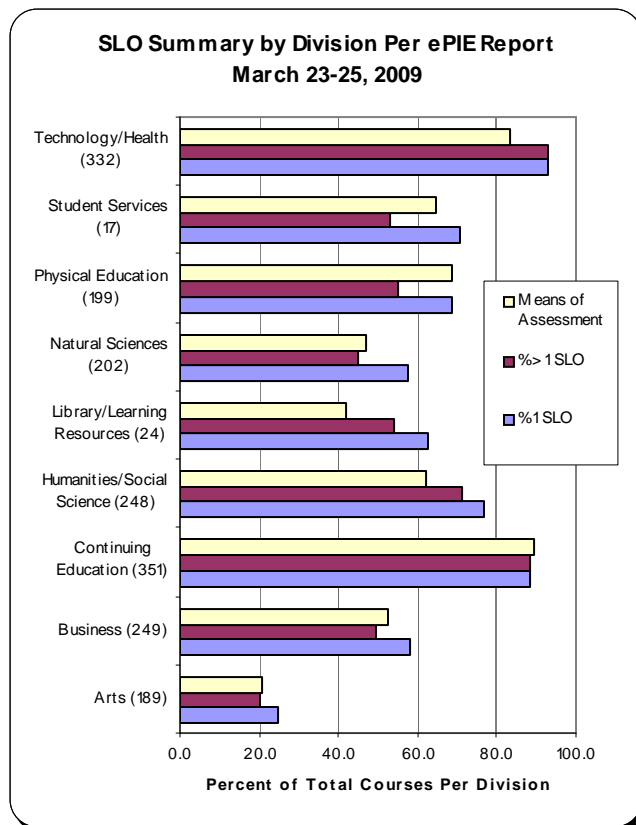
- **SLOs** (student learning outcomes) are statements about what a student will think, know, feel or be able to do as a result of an educational experience.
- **AUOs** (administrative unit objectives) are statements about what a client will experience, receive, or understand as a result of a given service.
- **GEOs** (general education outcomes) are statements that define the knowledge, skills, and perspectives acquired by students who satisfy our general education requirements.

Coordinator's Corner

I wish to thank everyone for all the time and energy given to developing course-level SLOs. You have done a great job. In Spring 2008, the Academic Senate adopted a goal to have at least 75 percent of all active courses with two (2) SLOs, means of assessment, and criteria for success by June 2009. Of the 1,811 college courses requiring SLOs, 70.8% have at least one reported in our electronic program review system called ePIE; 65.1% have more than one SLO recorded; and 64.4% have a corresponding means of assessment assigned to each course. We are well on our way to meeting and surpassing this goal with many of you clearly in the assessment phase on SLOs developed this past fall.

As you begin the assessment cycle, consider assessing your courses on some type of schedule. It is not required that you assess every course every semester, but determining a meaningful and realistic timeline for evaluating your SLOs is important. If it is feasible to review your 10 SLOs on an annual basis, then think about assessing some of them this semester and some of them in the fall. If your department determines a longer period is more reasonable, as did the Psychology, Education Department (see front page article), then follow that timeline. As Stacy Bacigalupi captured in her front page article, dividing the work ensures the assessment process does not become an overwhelming task for your department. And remember, if you need any assistance in determining an SLO assessment cycle, please feel free to contact me at Extension 4610.

Finally, the graph to the right shows the cumulative progress in percentages that each division has made as of



March 23-25, 2009 in achieving course-level SLOs and means of assessment. The number of courses for each division is shown in parentheses. Changes in these numbers may be a result of inactivated or removed courses and/or combined variable unit Work Experience courses.

Did You Know....

GLOSSARY TERM: Assessment Plan

Includes a detailed and clear procedure for measuring your intended outcomes. As phrased in the SLO guidebook, an assessment plan is like a "recipe for a cake that anyone can follow" (see pg. 21 of SLO Guidebook). The plan should include aspects such as the explicit method of assessment you will employ (e.g., questionnaire, course-embedded assessment), your expectation of success, who specifically will partake in the assessment (e.g., students), how you will collect your data (e.g., scan surveys and tabulate data in a database), whether or not you have pilot data or baseline data to make your predictions, when you will collect your evidence, and when you expect to have evaluated your results.

FAQ: Do SLOs need to change from year to year?

No. Since SLOs reflect the central skills in a course, they should remain fairly constant. However, they can be changed as necessary based on the clarification of faculty perspectives through sources like the review of curricular expectations and the results of previously assessed SLOs.

SLO Contacts

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