

Use of Results



From the Desk of Joan Sholars, SLO Coordinator

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The SLOs for your course have been developed. You have written the assessment tool. You have even assessed the course and have evaluated the results. Now what? What does “Use of Results” mean? What are some possible ways to use the results of the assessment?

“Use of Results” is a thoughtful reflection on what happened with the assessment of the SLO. Some possible use of results include, but are not limited to:

1. **Time.** Try adding more time to teach the topic. This is always hard to do because it usually means taking time away from another topic. Consider adding labs or projects that deal with the topic(s).
2. **Delivery.** Try different delivery methods (i.e., lecture, seminar, group activities, etc.). Make sure that tutors are trained in the topic.
3. **Curriculum.** Look at the curriculum very closely. If the curriculum is changed, how do you know that adding more time to the topic helped students achieve the goal set in the SLO? Reassess the SLO after the curriculum change. The SLO Coordinator or the research department can help with a statistical study to see if the change was meaningful. Students may not be able to demonstrate the SLO because of a course-sequencing issue. For example, the measurable objectives and the SLOs that were set up for the course are great, but the students were never taught the prerequisite skills that they need in order to meet the requisite course. Reflect such issues in the *Use of Results* section in ePIE (Mt. SAC’s electronic Planning for Institutional Effectiveness process).
4. **Staff Development.** Create staff development trainings for the department on different ways to teach the topic. For example, in the past Mt. SAC’s math department has done trainings on new computer software (Maple) and calculator trainings for faculty.
5. **Ask Students.** Survey students to see what it is that they don’t understand (one-minute paper on the “muddiest point) or to see what resources students believe they need to help their understanding.
6. **Ask Faculty.** Discuss with faculty in the department ideas on how to increase students’ understanding of the topic(s).
7. **Resources.** Ask for needed resources such as tutors, lab equipment, etc. Is the reason that students are not meeting the SLO because you need extra resources (more faculty, enough lab equipment for all the students, a quiet room, staffing, etc.)? Reflect this information in the *Use of Results* section and also be sure to include it in the *Resources Needed* section in ePIE.
8. **Outside Your Control.** Maybe the reasons why the SLO may not be working are outside the control of the faculty in the department (e.g., earthquake, construction, etc.). It is okay to reflect on both internal and external reasons why students may not be able to demonstrate the goal that was set by the SLO. This information can be reflected in the *Use of Results* section in ePIE. Include, if needed, what the division or Instruction Office could do to help with these internal and external conditions.

All of the above dealt with the prospect that students did not meet the goal of the SLO. What if students did meet the criteria? What then?

1. The department might want to continue assessing the SLO to validate the results.
2. The department might want to “retire” this SLO and start working on the next priority SLO. (**NOTE:** DO NOT DELETE THIS SLO IN ePIE — you will want to keep a record of all the work the department has done.)
3. The department might want to look at the SLO again to see if its focus was too narrow or too broad.
4. The department might want to set the criteria at a higher level and reassess the SLO.

As you can see, there are lots of reasons why students may or may not meet the SLO. Look at the analysis of the assessment done in a course closely and as a department discuss all the issues.

Let's look at some examples of what could happen after the SLOs have been assessed and evaluated for a course.

EXAMPLE 1

Department Yogi developed an SLO with a criteria for success indicating that at least 60 percent of the students taking the assessment will score at least 7 out of 10 questions correctly. After evaluating the results of the assessment, Department Yogi finds that only 50 percent of the students scored at least 7 out of 10 questions correctly. What can Department Yogi do?

- Department Yogi could look at the course outline and see how much time is being devoted to the topic that the SLO is addressing. If the department felt strongly that the SLO was addressing an important concept in the course, then it should make sense that enough time is given to cover that topic in class and in labs.
- The department may wish to research the student's lack of understanding further by doing a different assessment to see if they can pinpoint the exact area of confusion.

EXAMPLE 2

Department Bravo developed an SLO with a criteria for success indicating that at least 70 percent of the students taking the assessment will score at least 7 out of the 10 questions correctly. After evaluating the results, Department Bravo finds that 75 percent of the students scored at least 7 out of 10 of the questions correctly. What can Department Bravo do?

- Department Bravo could report that they have met the criteria set for the SLO and what they've learned. But the department might wish to investigate further. Maybe the criteria set was too low and the department might want to consider raising the criteria for success.
- The department might want to assess again to make sure that the results were not a fluke.
- The department might want to relook at the SLO and see if its focus needs to be narrowed or broadened.

Remember, the goal is to increase student understanding and success. As a department, discuss what you, as experts, believe will help the students. There is no such thing as failure when it comes to SLOs. If we do not meet the criteria for success that we set for ourselves, then as faculty, let us leave no stone unturned until we can find a way to help our students meet the goal(s) that we have set. Departments Yogi and Bravo worked hard to find answers to their SLO dilemmas. Should we do any less?

If you have any questions, please contact me at Extension 4610 or jsholars@mtsac.edu.