

Case Study – 1

Course: *Fall Courses:* RCP 101, 102, 201,202,203; *Spring Courses:* RCP 103, 104, 201, 202, & 203; *Summer Course:* RCP 105.

Number of times you have assessed this course: All courses have been assessed 3 times.

Have you assessed SLO's in more than one course? Yes

How did you react when you first heard about SLO's and assessment? I felt that we acknowledged the need to assess the process of education (college and programs' goals).

1. Can you describe how you developed the SLO's for your course?

SLO development was accomplished by utilizing COR content, student objectives, and accrediting body benchmarks.

Was this done by a group or solo?

The SLO's were developed by me.

If solo was this driven by lack of related instructors or by lack of interest of other instructors?

Unfortunately in the past I have had a lack of qualified/motivated instructors who were willing or understood these types of quality/goal related indicators. I hired a new Director of Clinical Education this past summer (CoARC-requirement). She has the ability, motivation, and desire to pursue these quality indicators.

2. How did you assess the SLO's the first time?

Assessment was based on % enrolled and student accomplishment.

What did you use to measure this, was it a statewide exam?

Institutional learning objectives, the Commission of Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) standards/benchmarks, program goal(s), and national credentialing examinations were the stimulus that developed measurement tools.

3. What did you find with your assessment and did you change the assessment or the SLO's after the first time?

The majority of students > 80% were meeting accrediting body benchmarks and no they have not been changed as the 100% goal allows for re-evaluation of critical thinking and to improve course success.

Was this discussed in a group setting (is there a group of instructors you could discuss findings with?)

As stated earlier, there was a limited amount of instructional resource. I was able to access the Dean, nursing instructors, Health Science division members and my past experiences in assessment tool development (nurses are bread to use assessment strategies on a daily basis – of which I am one).

4. This past term what were your findings and what was your action plan?

Approximate 84% met benchmarks and action plans included increased case-based scenarios to improve critical-thinking and student performance.

5. What is the most frustrating aspect of the SLO/Assessment process for you? What strategies do you use to mitigate frustration?

Doing it all myself up until more stable assistance arrived. I keep telling myself that the students must have the best respiratory care education as I may be their next patient!

What could Administration/the college do to help you with getting this done?

The Administration (Dean)/ and the college understood the deficiencies in instructional resource. However, the human resource policies were such that specific processes needed to be followed until an adequate replacement for the position (Director of Clinical Education) could be found. [*My opinion: You must understand I come from the private sector where productivity is the deciding factor and time = revenue. Therefore, time is not a luxury. However, I am grateful to the Administration for its dedication and persistence in helping until the problem was resolved*].

6. What is the most satisfying aspect of the SLO/Assessment process for you?

The opportunity to review course objectives and identify program weakness.

Have you had time to observe trends, and if so do the trends fit your expectations of where you should be seeing improvement?

I have observed some trends but feel that some assessments are too broad. Pass/fail data doesn't identify specific program deficiencies. Based on specific college requirements I am not sure the current system can be altered to reflect measurable outcomes for additional program improvement.

7. Can you identify one or more examples of efforts that failed and explain the reason (s) the effort failed or what you learned from its failure?

Review of national credentialing exams annually speaks to every aspect of program review and until last year our program had an 80% pass rate on these exams. Now we have a 100% pass rate and are ranked 4th in the state for respiratory education.

This is fantastic, how much if any did the assessments of SLO's help in improvement of the program?

I am not sure if the majority of SLO's had an impact on this success rate, with the exception of the SLO's for RCP 204. I looked at specific deficiencies in the students' examinations (I have the ability through the National Board of Respiratory Care to identify specific areas of content that were not passed and alter the curriculum accordingly).

Case Study – 2

Course or courses: PSY 101

Number of times you have assessed this course:

Oh dear- can't recall exactly but I am guessing AT LEAST 2 full cycles- we did this the FIRST time we started so as many cycles as the first time we documented these for AVC

Have you assessed SLO's in more than one course?

YEP

How did you react when you first heard about SLO's and assessment?

Somewhat skeptical – unsure as to what they were and heard many complaints from colleagues that this reminded them of something that was implemented years ago but as I learned more I grew to understand the “rationale” – we need to document if our students are learning what we are trying to teach them to be successful.

1. Can you describe how you developed the SLO's for your course? (skip this one if you were not involved)

The two full time faculty collaborated and also invited all adjuncts to sit down at a coffee shop and work on developing the SLOs for Psy classes. Because we have so many and I don't teach them all, if we teach a specialty course then we mostly developed them with the adjunct that also teaches those specialties and if we had questions or needed feedback we asked/e-mailed one another. Unfortunately adjunct participation was limited. We tried to get adjuncts involved and e-mailed them and invited them to a meeting at Barnes and Noble and one adjunct did come on our second meeting so we had two full time and one adjunct.

Did you discuss assessment at the time you were coming up with SLO's or was it added later?

I believe we did this at the same time so that we could complete the entire process. We have already rewritten some of our Psych courses given several assessment cycles and discussing the results and finding that some of the questions needed to be reworded.

2. How did you assess the SLO's the first time?

We had multiple choice questions or essays / research papers and if there were multiple assessors we sent out detailed e-mails with the information and had instructors choose how they wanted to implement these (e.g., as part of an exam , or separately -and when it fit the classroom syllabus for that SLO topic/area)

How was this chosen as the first assessment method and was it universally accepted?

We felt it was the easiest way to get “good sound” data, we did not want to add to our already heavy work load and grading and felt this was a method we could easily incorporate since the SLOs were already part of the course anyway. Now we just want to “tease” them out – and we felt the adjuncts would be more easily persuaded to use the assessments since they have enough to do also

3. What did you find with your assessment and did you change the assessment or the SLO's after the first time?

To me I was amazed at some of the results! In one of our most important core classes- PSY 101 I was amazed to learn that students were not meeting that basic SLO - important information that lays down the foundation for future upper level classes!

Did you see a trend over time here or was it pretty apparent right away and you knew there was a problem?

We are still looking – but the trend remained clear on the SLOs that were not met right away- especially for PSY 101 since we were assessing a lot of courses and students so after cycle 2 and getting basically the same results it was pretty clear and after cycle 3 it was crystal clear that we were not meeting the SLO. However with the current changes we just made we are already seeing different numbers that are improved!

So after several cycles (I believe 3 if not even 4) we then sat down and decided what the next step would be, and we clarified some questions, threw some out that students may have misunderstood and are currently using this new assessment at this time. What we found (or I did) is that along with spending more classroom time on these basic fundamentals that are vital - the clarity of the assessment questions have yielded better outcomes.

In some of my classes I have also raised the % that I consider passing- rather than changing the assessment.

4. This past term what were your findings and what was your action plan?

Again -mixed - some SLOs were met, others not. Action plans included a discussion with adjunct about the assessment itself (hence the changes described above) or for me action plans included more classroom emphasis on the material that was vital to the learning and goals for the class. I also asked for additional funds for classroom material such as video aides and we have also asked for more full-time faculty to help us teach the fundamentals (when the budget finally allows....)

5. What is the most frustrating aspect of the SLO/Assessment process for you?

Although many of our adjuncts are MAGNIFICENT- a few are still not participating despite our repeated efforts to invite them to call us, e-mail us, have coffee with us at the end of each cycle.

Do they give a reason or just not do it?

NO - most did not give a reason....one possibility is the minimal communication with adjuncts that sometimes occurs.

And for me- just being overloaded with the amount of classes and work this sometimes entails. Although a rewarding process and I've learned a lot, sometimes the data entry and getting adjuncts on board is a bit frustrating and time consuming.

What might you need from Administration/ the college to make this process easier?

Honestly - Money is a HUGE motivator -but we know that is not possible- I think continued RECOGNITION of full time and adjunct that contribute to the process- even at

the dean's level- kudos are always helpful, how about we come together to support one another through these trying times?

6. What is the most satisfying aspect of the SLO/Assessment process for you?

Working with my amazing colleague Fredy- and some of the adjuncts that so eagerly participate! Also having a CONCRETE method of finding out if my students really are learning what I was assuming they were getting. And learning to my surprise that sometimes this was the case (yay) and sometimes not (boo) . So I learned about my assumptions and how I might make my class room experience even BETTER - in addition as a challenge for me to continue to grow as an instructor. My number one goal is to prepare the students for a 4-year school - and knowing through concrete data if they are or are not getting the basic building blocks to help them succeed later is very enlightening and rewarding.

The assessment process has changed how you teach the class, has it changed you at all?

It made me realize and look at what my job was about – and be more concrete in my own thinking about what I was doing as a teacher and what I hoped to pass along to my students rather than just “blindly” going through the same routine each semester.

7. Can you identify one or more examples of efforts that failed and explain the reason (s) the effort failed or what you learned from its failure?

AS mentioned before - our results for two of the SLOs for PSY 101 were not as high as I had hoped or really as is needed to show that our students are getting the important parts of the class. I would say that this may have been due (we are still in the process of discovering the "culprit") - may be due to the questions and assessment method in addition (personally I believe) I was not emphasizing the material enough and also making it interesting.

Is it interesting to try and sort out problems with the assessment tool and problems with the learning in the classroom or is it frustrating when you don't get a clear answer right away?

Both – it's a puzzle and can be fun to try to find out what one is doing or the circumstances that are “causing” the students not to get that SLO- but also frustrating because we realize we may have to try a multitude of different approaches before we pinpoint the problem or it may be complex and be more than one simple factor. Human behavior is so complex anyway- so figuring out the “reason” can be quite a mystery and long pathway – but also a growing one and interesting one filled with some frustration at times – but also those amazing AHA moments when you get it!

Some of the info can be a bit "dry" and boring (research methodology) and historical figures and theories) so it got me to think more creatively about how to get students interested in learning and retaining this important info.

CASE STUDY - 3

1. Can you describe how you developed the SLO's for your course? (skip this one if you were not involved)

The course I am describing is LAC 900, Supervised Tutoring. Our situation in the Learning Center was challenging, because we had to determine what students learn from the tutorial separate from the content of the tutorial. Once we created our slo's, then it was just a matter of how best to measure them. I thought we could start with only one part of our program, general tutoring. I decided on a pre/post assessment, developed a rubric and the instrument, and did a pilot in 2006.

2. *How did you assess the SLO's the first time?*

The tutorial specialists and I developed an instrument that would be a pre/post measure, trained some tutors to use the instrument, and then did a pilot. The results were significant with the exception of one measure.

3. *What did you find with your assessment and did you change the assessment or the SLO's after the first time?*

The results were significant with the exception of one measure: motivation. I speculated that the change in motivation might be because of skills and attitudes that the students had before tutoring began; however, it turned out that the problem was in the training of the tutors to score motivation, which they had confused with "desire." We changed the training and then we saw a statistically significant change in student motivation via the tutorial that we could measure.

We continued to refine the instrument and the trainings.

4. *This past term what were your findings and what was your action plan?*

The data base that we used to collect the data has been corrupted, so we are waiting for intersession to look at spring and fall 2011 data.

Our most important plan is to consolidate the data from all the LC programs into one data base.

5. ***What is the most frustrating aspect of the SLO/Assessment process for you? What strategies do you use to mitigate frustration?***

Not having a stable data base for collection of our data.
I yell a lot (not really).

6. ***What is the most satisfying aspect of the SLO/Assessment process for you?***

I like to look at data anyway, so for me it was fun. It was also challenging to attempt to measure something that my professional field knew students were learning but they had no way of capturing the data, until now. I also am proud that my technique is becoming a national model, if only on a limited scale.

7. ***Can you identify one or more examples of efforts that failed and explain the reason (s) the effort failed or what you learned from its failure?***

See response to question 3.

8. ***Number of times you have assessed this course:***

About 10 times

9. ***Have you assessed SLO's in more than one course?***

Sure. The Learning Center faculty is working on an issue with LAC 901. We think we have come up with a better instrument to measure our slos for that course and we are also adjusting the wording of the slos.

10. ***How did you react when you first heard about SLO's and assessment?***

I was the AVC faculty accreditation coordinator as well as Senate president at the time, so I was aware of the fight against it at the state senate level. It had been the topic of debate for a while, and I had seen it coming. Personally, I thought it looked like fun and something worth knowing.