Stony Brook University
Division of Student Affairs, Enrollment, and Retention Management

Student Employee Learning Outcomes
Best Practices

KEELING & ASSOCIATES, LLC
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SELO Document

- Addressed to student

- Clearly differentiates assessment of learning from employee performance review

- Some sections (e.g., sensitivity to difference) may seem abstract to students. More concrete: “What would a student who is sensitive to differences be like? What would that student do, and say? How would that student respond in certain situations?”

- Redundancy in some areas ensures that certain key characteristics are assessed in any position/role
Learning outcomes may differ from instructions given by supervisors.

Descriptions of many of the behavioral characteristics would benefit from more concrete examples; may be solved when the outcomes are applied in specific departments.

Proof is in the pudding (i.e., application of the general learning outcomes to specific students in specific roles in specific departments).
### SAERM student employee learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very specific; highly contextual</th>
<th>Practical; should reflect real duties</th>
<th>Measurable within routine scope of job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful; transferable life skill</td>
<td>Makes sense to student employees</td>
<td>Performance criteria aligned with learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Assessment categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject of Assessment</th>
<th>Student Performance</th>
<th>Institutional Effectiveness</th>
<th>Student Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student (individual learner)</td>
<td>Knowledge (content) acquisition and application; sometimes, retention</td>
<td>Performance: inputs, operations, outputs</td>
<td>Learning experiences (environment, curriculum, course, class, activity, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examinations and products; grades and scores; GPA; portfolios</td>
<td>Actuarial: retention and graduation rates, student:teacher ratio, entrance test scores, utilization, satisfaction, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Purpose of higher education; student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor (individual teacher)</td>
<td>Surveys: NSSE, CIRP Ratings: USNWR, etc.</td>
<td>Comparative benchmarks</td>
<td>Student learning outcomes; CLA, MAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Institution; national</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Differentiating *employment learning outcomes* from *performance measures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is being assessed</th>
<th>Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance against standards</td>
<td>Achievement of desired learning goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject of assessment</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Learning experience (e.g., training; on-the-job supervision)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of assessment</td>
<td>Performance evaluation; grades</td>
<td>Varies; common feature = show learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of assessment</td>
<td>Personnel or academic actions</td>
<td>Program review and improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Metrics and purposes

- Rates of academic progression and retention, grades, and graduation metrics are important indicators of student performance and institutional effectiveness.

- Those indicators speak to the *purpose* of higher education to the extent that getting a degree is a personal and public good.

- But academic progression, retention, achievement, and graduation do not necessarily measure *student learning* -- a higher order purpose.

- *Achievement of the purposes of higher education is not adequately assessed by traditional metrics alone.*
Evidence of learning is “seen” as learning outcomes in any learning domain.
How college affects students

Student Gains

Academic

Vocational

Developmental

Pascarella & Terenzini (1991; 2005)
How do these activities change students?

- Curriculum
- Academic major
- Certificate program
- Course
- Specific classroom activity
- Student development experience
- Student employment
- Experiential learning activity
Format for writing student learning outcomes

- **First year students**
- **Graduating seniors**
- **Students**

**who**
- engage with
- participate in
- complete

**activity**
- program
- course, curriculum, pedagogy
- x # counseling sessions

**intended elements**
- as demonstrated by
  - interview
  - observed behavior
  - journaling
  - blog
  - portfolio
  - post-survey
  - performance

**identify**
- list
- describe
- summarize
- discuss
- explain
- demonstrate

**at least...**
- with X% accuracy
- more/fewer than
- all

**as required by**
- external standards

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Thursday, January 15, 2009
Someone who does ___ will be able to do ___ to a degree and it is demonstrated by their doing ___ which can be shown to ___ who requires it for ___

**Person(s)**
- First year students
- Graduating seniors
- Students

**who**
- engage with
- participate in
- complete

**does _____**
- activity
- program
- course, curriculum, pedagogy
- x # counseling sessions

**intended elements**
- as demonstrated by
- and you know because
- they did ____ to prove it

**do ______**
- identify
- list
- describe
- summarize
- discuss
- explain
- demonstrate

**to a degree**
- at least...
- with X% accuracy
- more/fewer than
- all

**because**
- because it is required by _____ for

**because**
- because it is required by _____ for

**they did _____ to prove it**
- interview
- observed behavior
- journaling
- blog
- portfolio
- post-survey
- performance

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Increasing competence through complex learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Development Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship/Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relate knowledge to daily life</td>
<td>Describe the skills necessary for engaging in service learning</td>
<td>Develop a service learning retreat for first year students</td>
<td>Co-facilitate a service learning event that is related to their chosen major</td>
<td>Develop and present a 5-year post-graduation career plan that links life and learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Principle 1: \( \text{Work} = \text{Experiential Learning} \)

- Work done by student employees for campus departments represents experiential learning. Employment is a learning experience on multiple, often simultaneous levels.

- Working in teams
- Working effectively with others
- Intercultural maturity
- Personal accountability
- Specific job/role content

- Work that does not constitute experiential learning does not need to be done by students.
Principle 2: Student Employment Has Learning Purposes and Outcomes

Work done by student employees, as experiential learning, should have defined, intended purposes. *Student employment is an intentional learning experience.*

Achievement of those purposes should be assessed through student learning outcomes.

Those learning outcomes should map to overall Divisional and/or institutional learning outcomes.
Pre-service and in-service training must address the specific desired learning goals and transferable life skills; training plans, materials, and resources should be clearly aligned with goals and purposes.

In most student employment settings, both specific training and on-the-job experience are learning activities.

Assessments of achievement of desired learning outcomes should inform improvements in training methods, work/job arrangements and supervision, resources, or plans.
Principle 4: Student Employment Learning Outcomes are Horizontal

- The desired student learning outcomes of work/experiential learning are thematic across a variety of work settings; variations accommodate different contexts and services.

- Departments can share training programs and resources for similar desired experiential learning outcomes.

- Different departments can (and should) collaborate in defining and assessing student learning outcomes.

- Student employment learning outcomes provide an integrated, “horizontal” approach to establishing and assessing learning goals across a Division.

- That approach models cross-institutional learning and assessment.
Desired learning goals for student employees should constitute transferable life skills that contribute meaningful competencies that students will be able to use in the worlds of work and citizenship.

Specifying the transferable life skill(s) at the heart of an employment-related experiential learning experience helps define the intended student learning outcome.
## Examples: transferable life skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict resolution</th>
<th>Identifying, finding, and communicating needed information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performing assigned tasks with accuracy and accountability</td>
<td>Working effectively with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural competency</td>
<td>Safe operation of equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training others</td>
<td>Supervisory skills (e.g., providing feedback)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Principle 6: Learning Assessment is Not Performance Review

- Departments should be completely transparent in describing and assessing intended learning outcomes for student employees; this is not a test.

- Student employment learning outcomes are also not work performance indicators; while accountability may be a desired learning outcome of student employment, the assessment of learning outcomes provides information about the effectiveness and value of training and work experiences, rather than about personal performance.

- Student learning outcomes are also not employee satisfaction measures; students who learned something from employment may or may not have been satisfied with the experience.