

Assessment of Learner Outcomes

Guidelines

6/21/06

Regents' System Goal B: Improve Learner Outcomes. Institutions will facilitate improved learner outcomes in competency areas where Kansas needs to advance.

The Board has announced its desire that direct measures of learner outcomes constitute at least one-half of the indicators supporting the learner outcomes goal.

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In the Board's opinion, "learner outcomes" includes the following:

- student learning per se
- graduation and retention rates

The Board's philosophy on assessment of learner outcomes includes the following:

1. Assessment of learner outcomes is a difficult undertaking.
2. Kansas has the resources to become a national leader in the assessment of learner outcomes.
3. No single measure of learner outcomes provides complete or perfect information.
4. Measures of learner outcomes vary in their usefulness and in their sophistication, and therefore can often be viewed on a continuum from no measures to weaker measures to stronger measures.
5. The measurement of learner outcomes should not be hindered by the search for the nonexistent perfect evaluation tool.
6. The strongest measures of learner outcomes include some form of standardization such as training for evaluators, norming processes, and independent validation beyond the local setting.
7. The indicators supporting the learner outcomes goal should be evaluated both independently and as a group.

Examples of Direct Measures of Learner Outcomes*

1. Performance on locally developed exams
2. Performance on essays
3. Performance on blind-scored projects
4. Performance on professional exams
5. Performance in capstone experience or capstone course

6. Performance in juried review of projects, exhibitions, and/or performances
7. Performance on portfolios scored on a rubric
8. Performance on nationally recognized certification and placement exams
9. Performance on other standardized tests
10. Pretest/post-test gains
11. Student success rate in the initial enrollment in a general education mathematics or English course.
12. Success rate of developmental students in college-level general education courses.
13. Success rates of students in a particular program or achieving a particular certification or minor
14. Response to "real-life" scenarios
15. Student performance on embedded questions - questions intended to measure specific student outcomes that are placed within tests of all sections of the same course. Sets of embedded questions, each requiring a higher level of proficiency, are used across sequential courses.
16. Performance on oral exams

Examples of Indirect Measures of Learner Outcomes

1. Interviews of students, alumni or focus groups
2. Surveys of students, graduates, or employers
3. Self-reported job placement data
4. Self-report of student learning
5. Self-report of student satisfaction
6. Number of students participating in a particular activity (research, clinicals, international experience)
7. Addition of graduation or certification requirements to the curriculum
8. Faculty development activities
9. Number of students in a particular program
10. Number of students meeting particular requirements (as opposed to success rates)

*Some examples are taken from the web pages of Kansas State University, the University of Central Florida, San Diego State University, and other sources