

OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT TERMINOLOGY

This publication uses some terminology related to expected learning outcomes and assessment. A brief glossary of terms has been provided below for reference purposes.

Assessment of expected learning outcomes – the process of investigating (1) *what students are learning* and (2) *how well they are learning it* in relation to the stated expected learning outcomes for the course.

Assessment plan – the proposed methods and timeline for assessment-related activities in a given course (e.g., *when are you going to check what/how well the students are learning and how are you going to do that?*).

Classroom Assessment Technique (CAT) – Angelo and Cross (1993) developed a variety of techniques/activities that can be used to assess students' learning. These CATs are often done anonymously and are not graded. These activities check on the class' learning while students are still engaged in the learning process. *An example of a CAT is a non-graded quiz given a few weeks before the first exam.*

Course description – a formal description of the material to be covered in the course. This description is usually taken or adapted from the course description found in the university's course catalog.

Course purpose – the course purpose describes the intent of the course and how it contributes to the major. The course purpose goes beyond the course description.

Criteria for grade determination – indicates how the methods of assessment will be used to determine the final grade for the course (may include percent or weight associated with specific assignments – test = 20%, project = 30%, etc. and categories for scores into grades – A = 90-100, B = 80-89, etc.). Obviously, other approaches to determining final grades are possible but a statement of how the grade is determined should be included.

Expected learning outcome - a formal statement of what students are expected to learn in a course (*synonyms for "expected learning outcome" include learning outcome, learning outcome statement, and student learning outcome*).

Evaluation – making a judgment about the quality of student's learning/work and assigning a grade based on that judgment. Evaluation activities (such as exams, papers, etc.) are often seen as formal ways to assess the expected learning outcomes for a course.

Methods for assessing student learning outcomes – this term refers to any technique or activity that is used to investigate *what* students are learning or *how well* they are learning. Formal methods for evaluating student learning outcomes include graded quizzes, exams, papers, homework assignments, etc. Informal methods for assessing student learning outcomes include Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) such as class discussion, non-graded quizzes, etc. Both formal and informal assessment methods are used to investigate how well students have acquired the learning outcomes for the course.

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