

# Fullerton College SLOA Workshop:

**Understanding the “A” in SLOA  
Cycle:**

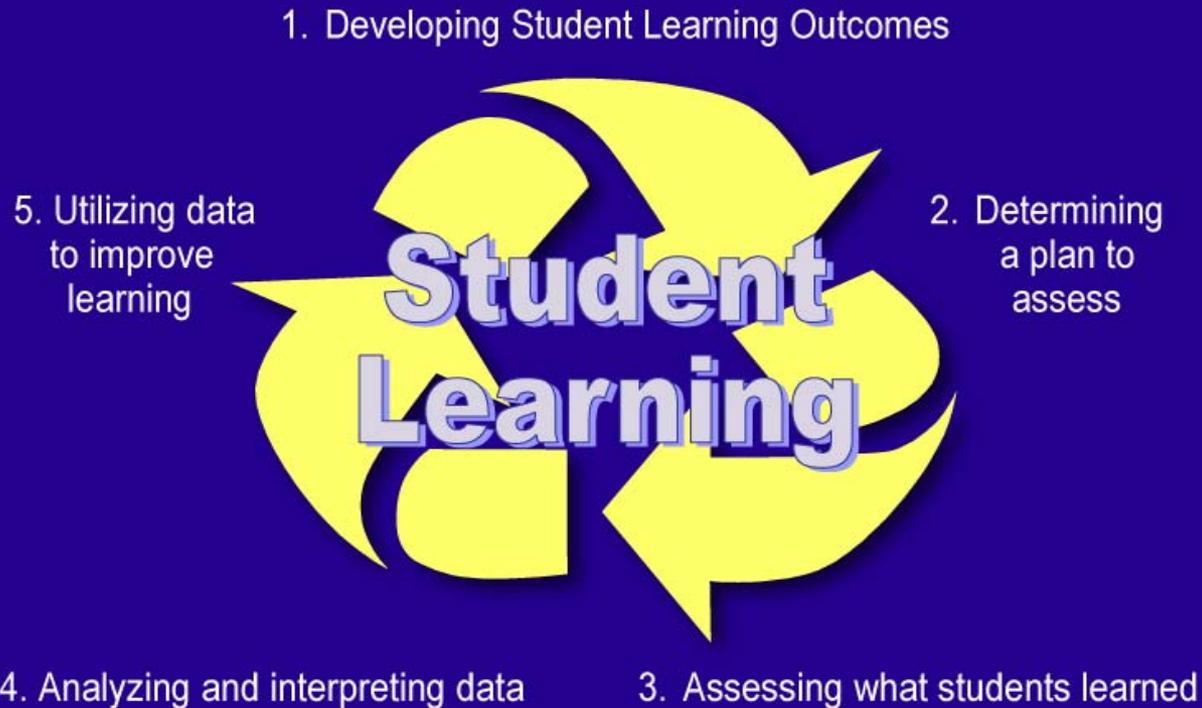
**Focus on Assessment**

# Purpose of Today's Workshop:

- To focus on How, When, and Why to assess student learning outcomes
- To identify appropriate, meaningful, and efficient methods for assessing SLOs in a variety of classes.

# The SLOA Cycle

The SLO PROCESS involves...



# Objectives and Outcomes: What is the difference

- An *objective* is a goal, something an individual strives for, makes a plan for, and around which organizes activities to achieve.
- *Instructional objectives* are the individual, often numerous, and varied instructional goals that we use to plan assignments, lectures, and other instructional activities. An objective might be something you can accomplish with your students in one or two class sessions, such as identifying the stages of the scientific method, or it might be the focus of a longer unit of study, such as summarizing a technical article accurately.

- An *outcome* is a consequence or result.
- A *learning outcome* is the result of a semester-long course of study. It brings together many of the individual, discrete objectives into single, comprehensive ability. For example, at end of a semester-long tennis class, students will be able to put together the various knowledge, skills, and techniques, such as knowledge of the rules, proper swing techniques, and strategies for returning a serve, to play tennis.

# Characteristics of Effective SLO

- Focus on what students can DO with the totality of their experiences in the course, not just a segment of what the course covered or presented
  - *Upon successful completion of ENGL 123, students will be able to distinguish between a thesis statement and a topic sentence.*
  - *Upon successful completion of ENGL 123, students will be able to compose a developed essay structured around a thesis statement*

Use active verbs that can be observed and measured.

- Upon successful completion of HIST 123, students will know major events in American history.
- Problem: The outcome doesn't indicate how students will demonstrate their knowledge—it is unobservable and unmeasurable.

# A clever solution

- Upon successful completion of HIST 123, students will be able to **demonstrate knowledge of** key events in American history.
- Problem: How will students demonstrate knowledge? The outcome should identify the specific behavior or activity students will be able to engage in to demonstrate their knowledge.

# A clever WORKABLE solution

- Upon successful completion of HIST 123, students will be able to **discuss** the causes of key events in American history.
- This outcome identifies the activity—discussion—that students will engage in to demonstrate their knowledge.

# But Danielle...

- Can't we just use our grades to indicate how well students are meeting SLOs?

# Grades vs. Assessment

<p><b>Grades</b> are a reflection of individual student performance in a single section of course.</p>	<p><b>Assessments</b> are a reflection of many or all students in all sections of a course.</p>
<p><b>Grades</b> assign a value or ranking to a student's performance that may be numerical (78%) or letter-based (C+) to indicate how a student performed along a spectrum of possibilities.</p>	<p><b>Assessments</b> are generally more concerned with whether a student met a minimal standard for success, which is usually criterion based (i.e., a student included all the necessary information in a resume.)</p>
<p><b>Grades</b> comprise multiple components including behaviors and activities not specifically included in outcomes or curricula, such as effort, attendance, and cooperation.</p>	<p><b>Assessments</b> comprise only those behaviors and activities specifically identified in an outcome or set of outcomes.</p>

# Common and useful assessment methodologies: Some principles

- Assessment methods should be consistent with activities and assignments students already do in the course or program being assessed
- Methods should be selected based on the nature of the outcome
- Both qualitative and quantitative methods can be effective

# Multiple Choice

- Match
- Identify
- Select

# Essay

- Describe
- Explain
- Discuss
- Analyze
- Synthesize

# Performance

- Synthesize
- Demonstrate

# Speech

- Describe
- Explain
- Discuss
- Analyze
- Synthesize

# Demonstration

- Demonstrate
- Explain

# Almost any current assignment can be modified to become an assessment if you follow these guidelines:

- Identify the components of the assignment that correspond to one or more SLOs for the course.
  - For example, four questions on a final exam might deal directly with students' ability to match an object with its physical properties
- Develop a common department understanding of the minimum level of performance/accuracy necessary on those components to warrant meeting the outcome.
  - For example, meeting the outcome might mean getting at least three of the four questions correct.

# Simple and effective ways to do assessment

- **Common final:** all instructors teaching the course to be assessed give a common final which has been developed to include tasks addressing one or more of the course SLOs.
- **Embedded questions on different finals:** All instructors teaching the course to be assessed include a set of questions developed to address one or more course SLOs on their individual finals.
- **Rubrics or common criteria:** Instructors teaching the course to be assessed apply a rubric or common criteria checklist to individual year-end assignments or projects.

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/>