

Academic SLO Assessment Philosophy

Learning is more than simply receiving information and memorizing facts. It requires that students actively participate as they discover and utilize resources, master and apply knowledge to solve problems, and that students use their learning to think critically. The entire campus works together to support this growth and development of students as independent life long learners.

Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves:

- Making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria
- Systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well outcomes match expectations
- Using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve learning outcomes.

When embedded effectively within our larger institutional system, outcomes assessment not only monitors how well students learn, but it also focuses our attention, examines our assumptions, so we can measure the success of our institution in providing effective learning opportunities and student support strategies in an environment that is dedicated to improving the quality of education on our campus (Angelo).

Outcomes assessment occurs in an academic, counseling (student services), and research (library) settings essential to student learning. An essential component of Southwestern College's assessment process is the emphasis on faculty led, classroom/student service based assessment which ensures a direct focus on learning. The assessment of student learning outcomes is a academic matter, and the Academic Senate has primary responsibility for establishing and maintaining the general guidelines for academic assessment. Specific assessment standards and methods are created by individual departments with all faculty members.

Overall, such an on going student outcomes assessment process works to improve institutional effectiveness. Southwestern College assessment will be based on valid, reliable, and relevant assessment procedures. These will be generated through multiple measures to collect quantitative and qualitative information in an effort to improve courses, services and programs. The data will provide evidence for curriculum reform, student service improvement, allocation of resources, organizational leadership, and staff and student development.