Writing Effective Operational Outcomes

for Administrative & Academic Units

from The Office of Institutional Effectiveness
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Purpose

Workshop Learning Outcomes

Participants should, upon completion of the workshop, be able to do each of the following:

- Identify the differences between these terms: “effectiveness,” “assessment,” and “outcomes.”
- Identify unit appropriate operational outcomes.
- Write well-formed, “SMART” operational outcomes that are meaningful to the unit and exhibit “best practice” for outcome writing.
- Create measurable expectations for outcome achievement.
Who should be concerned about Operational Outcomes?

All academic programs’ and administrative units’ constituents.

Who needs to know them really well?

- Deans
- Associate Deans
- Administrative Unit Directors/Leaders
- Academic Program Leaders
- Assessment Coordinators
- Faculty with Leadership Roles
Institutional Effectiveness

3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas:

3.3.1.1. educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
3.3.1.2. administrative support services
3.3.1.3. academic and student support services
3.3.1.4. research within its mission, if appropriate
3.3.1.5. community/public service within its mission, if appropriate
Effectiveness Cycle

From the University of Connecticut, Office of Assessment, 2014.
3 Key Terms: What’s the difference?

- **Outcomes** – discrete statements that reveal a backwards design plan for overall improvement processes...the “desired effects” of the improvement planning.

- **Assessment** – a process that provides evidence for the extent to which outcomes were achieved.

- **Effectiveness** – how well an institution is meeting its mission and major goals.
What is an Operational Outcome?

Outcomes are the “desired effects of an intervention or service” or intervention but is more specific than a goal. It is participant focused” (Henning, 2007).

Operational Outcomes (OPOs):
- address regular operational or procedural tasks.
- generally provide services or products.
- develop from direct and indirect effects on students and all other stakeholders.
- are known as “OPOs.”
What is “Assessment” for programs/units?

Assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development (Palomba & Banta, 1999).

“Assessment” sometimes gets confused with “evaluation.” “Assessment” is a set of processes designed to elicit information for analysis and improvement; whereas, “evaluation” is a set of processes designed to determine merit, value, and worth of whatever is under review. The terms are similar in practice but different in purpose.

From the University of Connecticut, Office of Assessment (2014).
Effectiveness

- **Effectiveness** -- a cyclical process showing the extent to which a desired effect (outcome) is met.
  - dependent on how outcomes are written.
  - achieved through planned interventions or initiatives
  - measured and reported annually
- Efficiency -- ratio of outputs to inputs
Unit-Level Effectiveness

What are you, as a leader of the program or unit, trying to do to improve it?

1. How well are you doing it? (Assessing)
2. What might success look like? (Setting an Improvement Target and Crafting OPOs accordingly.)
3. How can you improve the program or unit’s operations? (Implementing Interventions)
4. How do we know if our interventions have improved our unit’s goals? (Measuring Results)
What and Why?

- What are you assessing?
  - Students’ level of satisfaction
  - Efficiency of process
  - Productivity of process

- Why are you assessing? (for internal purposes)
  - To engage in good management
  - To ensure quality motivation
  - To know where you are
  - To know where you have been
  - To know what is possible and how to get there

From whom?

From whom will you collect data?

- Incoming students
- Current students
- Graduating students
- Alumni
- Faculty
- Staff
- Parents
- Other institutions
- Employers of graduates

Adapted from Bell State University’s Assessment Workbook
How will you use the data?
- To make improvements
- For accreditation review
- To fulfill a request by a committee
- To support a proposal
- To recruit new students

When - Frequency
- When will you collect data?
  - Fiscal year?
  - Academic year?
  - Other?
- How often will you collect the data?
  - Weekly
  - Monthly
  - Each semester
  - Annually
  - Each assessment cycle

Adapted from Bell State University's Assessment Workbook
Planning as a Program Leader
Auxiliary Services Example

**Auxiliary Services Mission:** Auxiliary Services facilitates the creation of community, extends the learning environment beyond the classroom, and enhances the quality of campus life through the delivery of quality goods and services.

**What?** Reduce administrative printing costs.

**How well?** Analyze prior year costs OR create the baseline measurement for future assessment efforts.

**What does success look like? How are the results helping students to learn?** Success = Established baseline measure that fully details how much Auxiliary Services is spending on printing.

**How will improvement be measured?** Assess all the costs (ink, paper, copier costs, maintenance, etc.)
Now, you are ready to write!

- Compliance Assist
- OPO Formula/Template
  - Unit
  - Verb (Bloom’s Taxonomy)
  - Target of Success
  - Time Boundary
  - Assessment Methods
- SMART checklist (Drucker, 1954)
- Exemplars
- Future Considerations
Compliance Assist

Effectiveness Plans are housed in an online repository accessed through the portal. We currently ask planners to enter the operational outcomes in Compliance Assist using two separate fields:

1. Operational Outcomes
2. Assessment Method(s)
OPO Formula/Template

Components of an OPO:

**Unit** + **Verb** + **Target** + **Time Boundaries**

OPO Statement Example:

*The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) will increase the number of filed federal grant applications by 20% by end of the fiscal year 2014.*

NOTE: Consider an Aligned Assessment Method at the same time of outcome creation, but list it separately in a new Compliance Assist field.

+ **Year-to-year comparison reporting**
Start with the Unit.

- Faculty/staff members/office
- Department/College
- Students
  OR
- Course
- Activity
- Program
- Service

*Consider your audience. Spell out acronyms and honor economy of words.*
Add an Action Verb. Consider Bloom’s Taxonomy.

- Will/will be able to
  - Identify/describe/list
  - Increase
  - Describe/demonstrate
  - Develop/design
  - Provide process
  - Conduct
Set an Expectation or Target – The Measurement.

*Establish the program/unit’s desired results.*

- all (subject)/every time
- 70% of respondents
- 80% accuracy
- at least 3 out of 4

*Do not underestimate the importance of establishing a baseline measure.*
Align an Assessment Method.

Establish the method by which you will measure the outcome’s achievement.

- Interview
- Observed behavior/simulation
- Survey
- Scores on a rubric
- Content of an email
- Documentation of meetings
- Attendance sheets
- Prepare reports
Indirect Measures
- Surveys
  - graduate
  - alumni
  - national
  - published
- Case Studies
- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Retention Rates
- Graduation Rates

Direct Measures
- Local tests
  - Posttest
  - Pre/Post
- Embedded Tests
- Rubrics
- Behavioral Observations
Applying Bloom’s Taxonomy to an Assessment Method

This chart is probably more useful for writing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs); however, it is helpful in conceptualizing the relationship of Outcome to Assessment Method.

Check out the Evaluation, Synthesis, and Analysis Domains for OPOs!
Well-written outcomes provide a clear description of who, what, when, and how. Peter Drucker (1954) created the SMART checklist.

**SMART** (Drucker, 1954)
- **S** – Specific
- **M** – Measureable
- **A** – Aggressive but Attainable
- **R** – Results-oriented
- **T** – Time-bound
SMART - Specific

*Tip: Develop clear and definite terms describing expected abilities, knowledge, values, attitudes, and performance (remember Bloom’s).*

**Not Specific OPO Example:**

Students starting the program will complete the program.

**Assessment Method:** The program completion rate will be 75% or greater over a five-year period.

**SMART OPO:**

75% of students who enrolled in the AS-Radiologic Technology Program in the Fall 2009 will graduate by May 2017 (within a five-year period), as required by [accrediting body].

**Assessment Method:** In June 2017, the program completion rate will be computed to determine to what extent the 75% target was met.
SMART - Measurable

Ask yourself: Is it feasible to get the data? Data are accurate and reliable? Should issues be assessed more than one way?

Not Measurable OPO Example:
FYE Information Literacy Workshop: Division of Libraries Faculty member, Ms. Anita Book, will develop Information Literacy Workshops aimed at First Year Students.

Assessment Method: Post-Workshop Survey

SMART OPO:
By the end of the Spring 2017 term, the Hendry/Glades Library Services Program will develop and conduct three (3) Information Literacy Workshops aimed at First Year Students.

Assessment Methods (completion statistics):
1. Workshop Agenda
2. Date of Workshops Held w/Room Locations
3. Publicity for Workshops
Tip: Stretch your targets to improve the program.

Not Aggressive but Attainable OPO:
Upon completion of the College Readiness Conference, K-12 faculty participants will report an increased understanding of preparing students to achieve post-secondary readiness.

Assessment Method: The number of the attendees that will rate the materials and presentations as "good" or "excellent," and who “agree” or “strongly agree” that their knowledge of post-secondary readiness, as indicated on a Likert Scale measure.

SMART OPO:
By [insert date of conference], 85% of K-12 faculty participants at the 2017 College Readiness Conference, sponsored by The Office of Career and College Readiness, will report an increase in post-secondary readiness knowledge as indicated on a Likert Scale survey measure.

Assessment Method: Year-to-year comparison
SMART – Results Oriented

*Tip:* Describe what standards are expected for success.

**Not Results-Oriented OPO Example:**
The Office of Communications & Public Information will distribute 225 Florida SouthWestern State College press releases by June 30, 2017. Since the department has increased in staff, this will be approximately a 90% increase over press releases distributed in the previous fiscal year of July 1, 2015 through June 31, 2016.

**Assessment Method:**
The assessment method will be the number of actual hard copy, scanned copy, and e-mails of the press releases that are being tracked within the department log. *The measure of success will be the positive exposure given to FSW in print, radio, television, and online.*

**SMART OPO:**
By June 30, 2017, The Office of Communications & Public Information will develop a baseline measure to determine the ratio of positive publicity to negative publicity that the institution receives annually.

**Assessment Method:**
To create a baseline measure, Communications & Public Information will need to systematically review and rate all publicity about the institution. The establishment of a rubric may be necessary to aide in this assessment.
SMART – Time Bound

Tip: Describe where you would like to be within a specific period of time. Identify your assessment cycle beginning/ending points. (Fiscal Year? Academic Year?)

Not Time Bound OPO Example:
Government Relations will develop a communications plan to advocate for the adoption in state statute the name change for Florida SouthWestern State College.

Assessment Method: Communication plan document; copies of emails explaining process

SMART OPO
By November 2013, the Office of Government Relations will develop a communications plan to advocate for the adoption in state statute the name change from Edison State College to Florida SouthWestern State College.

Assessment Method: Communication plan document; copies of emails explaining process
☑ Is it SMART?

OPO:

In order to promote viable testing for the students of FSW, Testing Services will continue to track the number of P.E.R.T. tests administered by each of the Testing Centers college-wide in order to monitor the effects of SB1720 on PERT testing.

Assessment Method:

From October 2016 until October of 2017, a comparison will be taken each month of the number of PERT exams administered to determine the significance of the effects that SB1720 has on PERT testing.

☐ Not specific.
☒ Somewhat measurable.
☐ Not aggressive.
☐ Not results-oriented.
☒ Yes, time-bound.
By end of October 2017, Testing Services will establish baseline measures of the number of students at each campus location who take the Postsecondary Education Readiness Test (PERT) annually.

Monthly stats from PERT administration records at each campus location: (Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry/Glades).

*The assumed intention behind the tracking is to confirm a predicted decrease in PERT testing due to Florida State Bill 1740. How else might this program track this?
## SMART Examples

| Unit                                           | OPOs (without assessment methods)                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|
| Application Development & Integration (Office of IT) | **Modernize and Streamline SIS Application Modification Procedures**  
By implementing modern source control and change control processes, Application Development will decrease the turn-around time for SIS application modifications by a minimum of 3 days by March 31, 2014. | | |
| Office of Student Services: Enrollment & Student Success; Leadership & Civic Engagement | **Retention Baseline**  
The Office of Student Leadership and Civic Engagement will establish a baseline to assess student retention within program cohorts during the 2013-2014 academic year.                                                                                                                                              | | |
| Foundation | **Institutional Need and Metrics**  
The Foundation will develop metrics and case statements for each of the College priority areas and include purpose, philanthropic goals and timelines for funding by the end of the fiscal year.                                                                                   | | |
| AS – Accounting Technology                      | **Develop and Introduce New Accounting Courses**  
By the start of the Fall 2014 term, the AS-Accounting Technology will develop and introduce a new course – ACG2021 – to combine ACG1001 and ACG2011 for transfer ease to accounting degree programs elsewhere.                                                                                   | | |
Future Considerations…

What happens after the OPO is created?

- The OPO is uploaded into *Compliance Assist* as part of the program/unit’s annual Effectiveness Plan.
- Program/unit leaders put interventions in place to make strides towards achieving the outcome.
- At the end of the chosen assessment cycle (fiscal/academic), program/unit leaders measure the extent to which the outcome was met.
- Program/unit leaders report these “results” to appropriate stakeholders.
- Program/unit leaders begin to consider how these results will inform the next year’s improvement program.
Planning Resources

- The Office of Institutional Effectiveness
  - [https://www.fsw.edu/effectiveness](https://www.fsw.edu/effectiveness)
- Using Compliance Assist
  - [https://www.fsw.edu/effectiveness/assessment/complianceassist](https://www.fsw.edu/effectiveness/assessment/complianceassist)
- OPO Component Parts Handout
- Developing OPOs Worksheet
References


