

## AVC OUTCOMES COMMITTEE GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Academic Cycle-** Academic cycle refers to the assessment cycle documented in WEAVEonline that begins with the Summer semester of a given year and continues through the Spring semester of the following year.

**Affective Outcomes-** Affective outcomes relate to the development of values, attitudes, and behaviors.

**Alignment-** Alignment is the process of analyzing how explicit criteria line up or build upon one another within a particular learning pathway.

When dealing with outcomes and assessment, it is important to determine that the course outcomes align or match up with program outcomes; that institutional outcomes align with the college mission and vision.

In student services, alignment of services align with such areas as financial aid deadlines and instructional calendars.

**Action Research** – Action research consists of a family of research methodologies that pursue action and research outcomes at the same time. It therefore has some components that resemble consultancy or change agency, and some which resemble field research.

Action research tends to be...

cyclic -- similar steps tend to recur, in a similar sequence;

participative -- the clients and informants are involved as partners, or at least active participants, in the research process;

qualitative -- it deals more often with language than with numbers; and

reflective -- critical reflection upon the process and outcomes are important parts of each cycle.

The steps are: plan --> act --> observe --> reflect (and then --> plan etc.)

**Assessment** - The evaluation of the Learning Outcomes Data for use in creation of Action Plans

Assessments are done according to the Academic Cycle and are done in a way as to satisfy the Assessment Cycle.

Assessments may be done for each SLO and PLO each Assessment Cycle. However, assessment of at least one SLO and PLO MUST be done each Assessment Cycle.

**Assessment Cycle-** Assessment cycle refers to the process called “closing the loop.”

**Cognitive Outcomes-** Cognitive outcomes relate to the development of mental processes such as memory, comprehension, evaluation, reasoning, analysis, calculation, and planning.

**College Operations-** College operations refers to indirect support services to the campus such as maintenance and operations, auxiliary services, budget and accounting, information technology services, research and planning, police and safety, and marketing.

**Continuous Improvement-** Continuous improvement reflects an on-going, cyclical process to identify evidence and implement incremental changes to improve student learning.

**Critical Thinking-** "Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.

In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.

" A statement by Michael Scriven & Richard Paul {presented at the 8th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform, Summer 1987}.

**Culture of Evidence-** The phrase “culture of evidence” refers to an institutional culture that supports and integrates research, data analysis, evaluation, and planned change as a result of assessment to inform decision-making (Pacheco, 1999)5.

A culture of evidence is characterized by the generation, analysis and valuing of quantitative and qualitative data in decision making.

**Curriculum Mapping-** Curriculum mapping supports unified coordination of ILOs, PLOs, and coursework, provides visual representation of course alignment within a program, and promotes increased understanding of the relationship between programs and the institution’s mission.

Example of mapping: If the faculty determines that SLO #1 fits with PLO #1 then that SLO is “mapped” to the PLO. When gathering Outcomes Data for that PLO, the SLO Outcomes Data will be used directly as part of the PLO Outcomes Data.

**Data Collection** – The process of collecting data for SLOs and PLOs so they can be properly assessed.

Data Collection shall take place for every SLO by every instructor for each class. The data collected is aggregated for later assessment.

Data Collection for PLOs shall take place by the discipline, department or division for each course mapped to the PLO or other data gathering method approved by the Outcomes Department.

**Effectiveness Criteria-** Effectiveness criteria is a standard of judgment that assesses the “added value” based on evidence.

Evidence of Program and Institutional Performance- Program or institutional evidence includes quantitative or qualitative, direct or indirect data that provide information concerning the extent to which an institution meets the goals it has established and publicized to its stakeholders.

General Education (G.E.) Program Learning Outcomes- General Education PLOs are closely related to ILOs and are the skills and abilities a student is expected to be able to use after completing a general education course of study.

This knowledge is used when students evaluate themselves and appreciate the physical environment, culture, and society in which they live.

**Institutional Learning Outcomes-** Institutional Learning Outcomes are observable characteristics that ensure students will succeed through the assessment of the goals as outlined in the college mission.

**Learning Outcomes Data** - Numerical data collected with regard to each SLO and PLO.

The data consists of: number of students who successfully achieve the SLO or PLO and the number of students attempting to achieve the SLO or PLO.

For instance, in a class 14 students may have achieved the SLO out of 20 students attempting to achieve it.

The 14 and 20, in addition to the percentage created (number of students who successfully achieve the SLO or PLO divide by the number of students attempting to achieve the SLO or PLO) is then used for assessment purposes. In this case: 14/20 or 70 percent.

**Operational Outcomes (OOs)-** Operational Outcomes are overarching specific observable characteristics developed by staff in the institution's non-instructional and operations areas that allow them to determine or demonstrate evidence that learning has occurred as a result of a specific program, activity, or support.

**Program-** An educational or instructional program is an organized sequence of courses leading to a defined objective, a degree, a certificate, a diploma, a license, or transfer to another institution of higher education.

**Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)-** Program Learning Outcomes are overarching specific observable characteristics developed by faculty and staff that allow them to determine or demonstrate evidence that learning has occurred as a result of a specific course of study, activity, or service throughout the completion of a Program.

**Program Review-** Program Review ensures that every program and service area will experience a systematic evaluation cycle consisting of a self-evaluation process, which includes employee, student, and community evaluation, and an institutionally based peer-team review.

The information gathered during this process will provide a basis for cooperative and informed decision-making regarding the future of the institution.

**Psychomotor Outcomes-** Psychomotor outcomes relate to the development of specific motor skills and movement functions along with related mental processes.

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)-** Student Learning Outcomes are overarching specific observable characteristics developed by faculty that allow them to determine or demonstrate evidence that learning has occurred as a result of a specific course, program, activity, or process in a specific class.

**Student Services-** Student Services is a comprehensive system of programs and opportunities that enhance student success and facilitate achievement of education, career, and life goals.

**WEAVEonline-** WEAVEonline is a software application that allows the institution to develop and maintain continuous improvement processes for academic, service, and administrative structures.

WEAVE serves as a repository for assessment data and guides the alignment of assessment, planning, budgeting, and institutional priorities.

For additional definitions, please refer to—Academic Senate for California Community Colleges: Glossary of Student Learning Outcomes: