Centre for Teaching and Learning, UBC Okanagan
Workshop on Developing Course Learning Outcomes

Critique of Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, successful students will:

Draft Learning Outcome	Critique	Revised Outcome
Be given opportunities to learn effective communication skills	Describes program content, not the attributes of successful students; thus, this is not an outcome	Communicate effectively in a professional environment through technical reports and presentations
Have a deeper appreciation for good communication practices	Does not start with an action verb or define the level of learning; subject of learning has no context and is not specific; too vague	Evaluate effective written communication through self-critique and peer review of 4 major essays throughout the course
Understand principles of effective communication	Starts with an action verb, but does not define the level of learning; subject of learning is still too vague for assessment	Apply principles of effective verbal communication in giving presentations to different audiences
Become familiar with plant and animal species in Southern Ontario	Level of achievement/sophistication expected unclear	Identify and describe 15 common plant and animal species found in the Carolinian Forest Region through field study and the development of an identification guide
Critique works of art	Additional detail required	Critique contemporary works of art based on an appropriate set of criteria through studio critiques and an independent essay
Be taught various decision-making models	Teacher-centred, level of sophistication expected unclear	Apply appropriate decision-making models in business and marketing through participation in a collaborative group project
Appreciate the ethical responsibilities of social scientists	Too broad, unclear how this can be measured	Assess the ethical implications of research in the social sciences through in-class discussion and an independent written report
Learn about research proposals	Ambiguous, level of sophistication expected unclear	Develop and present a research proposal (including appropriate research methods and a review of literature) on a relevant topic in primary or secondary education, through an independent presentation and written report

Vague Outcome	More Precise Options
I expect students to increase their organization, writing, and presentation skills.	- produce professional quality writing - effectively communicate the results of their research findings and analyses to fellow classmates in an oral presentation
Have a deeper appreciation of literature and literary movements in general.	- identify and describe the major literary movements of the 20th century - perform close readings of literary texts - evaluate a literary work based on selected and articulated standards
Add to their understanding of the complete research process.	- describe the research process in social interventions - evaluate critically the quality of research by others - formulate research questions designed to test, refine, and build theories - identify and demonstrate facility in research designs and data collection strategies that are most appropriate to a particular research project - formulate a complete and logical plan for data analysis that will adequately answer the research questions and probe alternative explanations - interpret research findings and draw appropriate conclusions

Examples of "Good" Course Learning Outcomes

Content/knowledge:
- By the end of this course, students will be able to categorize macroeconomic policies according to the economic theories from which they emerge.
- On successful completion of this course, students will be able to outline significant curriculum and assessment theories, models and research in the higher education sector.
- On successful completion of this course, students will be able to critically analyse disparate sources of information about WWII.
- On successful completion of this course, students will be able to evaluate concepts of race, culture, identify and diversity with regards to indigenous education.
- As a result of completing Ethics and Research I, student will be able to describe the potential impact of specific ethical conflicts on research findings.

Skills:
- By the end of this course, students will be able to ask questions concerning language usage with confidence and seek effective help from reference sources.
- By the end of this course, students will be able to analyze qualitative and quantitative data, and explain how evidence gathered supports or refutes an initial hypothesis.
- On successful completion of this course, students will be able to plan and develop an independent research project that utilises appropriate research methodologies of the discipline.
- On successful completion of this course, students will be able to communicate through oral presentations using visual, verbal and written information.
- On successful completion of this course, students will be able to apply technical skills in creating and formatting digital media content, including 2D animation.
- As a result of participating in Quantitative Reasoning and Technological Literacy I, students will be able to evaluate statistical claims in the popular press.

Application of knowledge and skills:
- On successful completion of this course, students will be able to analyse electrical engineering problems in industrial settings.
- On successful completion of this course, students will be able to critically reflect on their professional knowledge and skills, incorporating broad subject knowledge and perspectives.
- On successful completion of this course, students will be able to communicate architectural and built environment ideas through the media of film.
- As a result of completing Money and Banking, students will be able determine the cost benefits and shortcomings of various cash management strategies.

Values:
- By the end of this course, students will be able to work cooperatively in a small group environment.
- By the end of this course, students will be able to identify their own position on the political spectrum.

Adapted from the following sources:
Thompson Rivers University
www.tru.ca/__shared/assets/examples_of_learning_outcomes_good_and_bad32629.pdf
University of Guelph https://www.uoguelph.ca/vpacademic/avpa/outcomes/coursespecific.php
University of Toronto https://teaching.utoronto.ca/resources/dlo/
University of New South Wales https://www.teaching.unsw.edu.au/examples-learning-outcomes
DePaul University: https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching-guides/course-design/Pages/course-objectives-learning-outcomes.aspx

Contact Barbara Komlos, barbara.komlos@ubc.ca, with any questions regarding this workshop.