How to Work with Learning Outcomes?

Once you have course learning outcomes, whether you've written them, or have been given learning outcomes for your course, how do you use them in course design and teaching? Engage in the following questions and analysis for each learning outcome.

Guiding question: What does the learning outcome mean?

Identify the components of the learning outcome and what they mean or note if any are missing.

- Behaviour: A description of *what* students will be able to do.
- Context: Motivation or conditions under which the student will complete the learning experience, or *why* the learning outcome is important.
- Criteria: The criteria for evaluating student performance, or *how* the learning outcome will be achieved.

For any missing or vague components, consider what you would add to make the learning outcome more meaningful.

OUTPUT: LEARNING OUTCOME STATEMENTS THAT ARE MOST MEANINGFUL TO YOU

Action: Analyze the behaviour component of the learning outcome

What evidence will help you determine how well students are exhibiting the expected behaviour? How can you obtain this evidence? What kind of assessment tasks will help students demonstrate the expected behaviour?

ALIGNMENT CHECK: ANALYZE THE ASSESSMENT TASKS CONSIDERED

What learning will be demonstrated by the assessment tasks? Does this evidence match what is required for the expected behaviour? What changes, if any, can you make?

Output(s): Assessment tasks aligned with potentially revised learning outcome statements

Ideally the alignment check confirms your chosen assessment tasks are appropriate. However, during your alignment check you may have realized concrete assessment tasks that better inform your expectations and learning outcomes. Hence, this may prompt you to revise your learning outcome statements, if possible. Alternatively, during your alignment check you may have discovered that the assessment tasks you initially chose do not align with your expectations and learning outcomes. Thus, you make changes to your assessment tasks and perform the alignment check again for these new assessment tasks. This step may be iterative until alignment is sufficiently achieved.

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Action: Analyze the criteria component of the learning outcome

How does the criteria relate to the behaviour and assessment tasks identified in previous steps of this analysis? What changes, if any, can you make? What details, like instructions, components, expectations, etc. will you add to the assessment tasks? What grading criteria will you consider?

OUTPUT: REFINED ASSESSMENT TASKS WITH IDEAS FOR INSTRUCTIONS, EXPECTATIONS, AND GRADING CRITERIA.

Action: Analyze the context of the learning outcome

What are the learning conditions for the learning outcome? What support will students need during the learning process to be successful on assessments and achieve the learning outcome? How can you provide this support? What resources, activities, and experiences will help students access, engage with, and practice what is needed for the assessment tasks?

ALIGNMENT CHECK: ANALYZE THE RESOURCES, ACTIVITIES, AND EXPERIENCES CONSIDERED

What will students learn from the resources? What knowledge, skills, or values will students experience and practice from the activities? Do the knowledge, skills, and values from the resources, activities, and experiences connect to and ultimately prepare students for the assessment tasks? What changes, if any, can you make?

Output(s): Resources, activities, and experiences that will prepare students for assessment tasks and to achieve the learning outcomes

Guiding Question: How will you communicate and engage students in the learning outcomes?

Some ideas to consider below. What are your thoughts? What would you add to this list?

- Frame learning outcomes as questions to explore and answer
- Create meaningful visual representations of learning outcomes
- Involve students in co-creating the learning outcomes, or adding their own goals as learning outcomes
- Engage students in discussion about the learning outcomes, or pre-assess students' knowledge or confidence in the learning outcomes
- Make explicit connection between lessons, activities, assessments and the corresponding learning outcomes. For example, Transparent Assignment Design by TILT Higher Ed

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