

TLOS: TOTAL LEARNING OUTCOME SCORE

A Brief OVERVIEW for MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT using REAL COURSE CONTENT

Do you feel overwhelmed with Academic Assessment and Accreditation?

Do you find the formation and measurement of Student and Program Learning Outcomes artificial and statistically invalid?

Do you often get complaints that a faculty member's entire course content represents what is intended for students' learning – NOT 5 – 7 Outcome Statements?

With growing concern for quality in the classroom, colleges today are plagued with worry over the assessment of Student and Program Learning Outcomes. Because of this, start-up companies and computer-based programs have sprung to the market claiming to centralize, organize, and categorize data more efficiently than their competitors. However, these marketing strategies typically assume the participating college understands outcomes assessment, and can fashion meaningful, measurable outcomes, themselves. More troubling, though, is that most programs require constant subscription maintenance, and force college faculty to artificially select items from tests (or simply use one final exam) in the measurement of Student Learning Outcomes. **The TLOS Standardized Assessment Procedure framework is set up to avoid these issues by providing insight to faculty in the formation of meaningful outcomes and by completely embedding itself in a faculty member's existing class curriculum – no standardized final exams, artificially selected items from a test, or lengthy tabulations required.**

TLOS engages Faculty in Outcomes Assessment by:

1. Helping faculty fashion Learning Outcomes which represent their entire course.
2. Allowing faculty freedom to use any set of pre-existing material in their course to measure outcomes.
3. Providing the opportunity to trace an individual student's Learning Outcome trajectory from course to program to mission statement.
4. Using a statistically-informed, repeated-measures design so faculty can really determine where a student or outcome was problematic in the course.
5. Protecting academic freedom by preventing the introduction of artificial tests and test items.
6. Saving faculty the laborious time of computing data estimates, independently fashioning standards, and interpreting benchmarks.

THE RATIONALE OF THE TLOS STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE:

Oftentimes, when professors are pressed to fashion Student Learning Outcomes, there is a struggle which typically ends in a frustrated professor saying, “But I expect my students to learn everything – everything is a Student Learning Outcome!” **TLOS attempts to rectify this problem by utilizing (potentially) any number of pre-existing assignments a professor uses in his or her class.** This saves the professor time (because there are no additional, by hand calculations to perform), but also makes the measure of a Learning Outcome more valid because it includes items as they were presented in class – not artificially parsed out – and, it does so in a statistically reliable, repeated-measures design whereby a professor can have multiple measures of the same Learning Outcome. While measuring a Learning Outcome may seem like a static estimate (indeed, most assessments outside of TLOS do utilize static estimates; that is, only one item or set of items on one test measure one Student Learning Outcome, one time), this is often artificial, and may be the reason why so many faculty complain that 5-7 Learning Outcomes simply do not represent their course learning expectations. **A Learning Outcome fashioned within the TLOS framework is generally not something tested only once, but over and over again throughout the course both *directly* and *indirectly*.**

::CONSIDERING TLOS? HERE’S WHAT TO EXPECT::

A New Understanding:

The adoption of TLOS is not a computer program, though, one can be used. It is, instead, a more-informed, natural, and holistic assessment of Student Learning Outcomes that is geared to change faculty perspectives about assessment. **If adopted, you and your faculty will be shown a new way to think of fashioning learning outcomes which allows for the use of all content in a course for its assessment and with LESS WORK.**

Standards & Benchmarks:

The TLOS score is rendered upon a 100pt scale; so, the determination of Standards and Benchmarks is not only intuitive and inherent in the design, but also, externally validated as nearly all student’s grades across college campuses are understood according to the same 100pt scale. **TLOS maximizes this potential, and in its rationale, envelopes a clear standard/benchmark orientation easily adoptable for any course or program.**

Results:

The procedure itself will render a ‘TLOS score’ (on a scale of 0-100) for each course Student Learning Outcome submitted. **For example, if you provide 5 Learning Outcomes, you will receive 5 TLOS scores – one for each Learning Outcome – as a result of the procedure. Each of these scores will be comparable (i.e., on the same 100pt scale) to scores in other courses, and can be tabulated together to assess Program Outcomes and, even, the college mission statement.**

Interpretation:

The interpretation of each TLOS score should be intuitive as you would interpret it the same way you would interpret a student’s score on a test. *For example, if a student scored a 75 on a test, you would assume that student performed at about a C-level of understanding – or, just enough to be considered satisfactory (or, in some cases, just below satisfactory).* Similarly, if a TLOS score for one of your Learning Outcomes was a 75, this Learning Outcome may benefit in the future with a different assignment, more thorough teaching, or, really, whatever the faculty member determines. **This makes understanding a TLOS score for a Learning or Program Outcome immediately accessible to faculty, and even, transparent to students.**