

## Program Goals, Objectives, and Competencies, and their Outcome Measurement: A Participatory Workshop (Doctoral)

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To begin, it is important to  
understand the difference  
between

**Individual Student  
Assessment  
and  
Programmatic Outcome  
Assessment**

## Individual Student Assessment

- Requires the tracking of each student through the program to provide advisement, mentorship and, if necessary, remediation
- Ensures that each student meets the “minimal level of achievement” of each requirement
  - i.e., Practicum, internship, dissertation, competency exams, courses, etc

## Individual Student Assessment

- Programs must define their “minimum level of achievement” in clear, concrete terms so they may reliably determine when a level has been met
  - i.e., A score of 4 out of 5 on all practicum evaluation items, a grade of B or above in these classes, a rating of “Pass” on the competency exam
- Minimum level of achievement for each requirement must be specifically defined in the self study

## Programmatic Outcome Assessment

- Program gathers aggregate data to demonstrate the achievement of its goals, objectives and competencies across the last 7 years
- This allows the program to assess performance patterns across student cohorts and gather data to demonstrate that the program is producing the kinds of students and graduates it says it is

## Programmatic Outcome Assessment

- Programs collect individual student assessment data (i.e., grades practicum evaluation ratings, competency exam scores), aggregate that data and use it to assess programmatic outcomes
- To ensure the smoothest system, programs should align their goals, objectives and competencies with the student assessment data they collect

## Self Study Hints

- Describe the process you use to monitor individual student progress
- Describe each requirement (i.e., practicum, coursework, dissertation), any assessment tool used to evaluate the requirement and include a copy of each tool
- Specifically state the “minimum level of achievement” to successful complete each requirement
- Include aggregate data to demonstrate achievement of expected program outcomes

## 3 Levels of Structure Used to Describe Program's Intended Outcomes

Level 1: Goals

Level 2: Objectives

Level 3: Competencies

## Goals (Level 1)

- In broad strokes, a program's goal describes fundamental aspects of the graduate the program wishes to produce
- Examples:
  - To produce graduates prepared for entry level practice with diverse clientele who regularly integrate research into their professional activities
  - To produce graduates who integrate social justice principles and client advocacy into all professional activities
  - To produce scientists who can integrate in-depth knowledge of psychotherapeutic process into rigorous scientific research

## Objectives (Level 2)

- Objectives are more specific than goals
- They articulate specific components or areas of learning emphasis within a program
- For example:
  - The creation and maintenance of interpersonal relationships
  - Application and evaluation of therapeutic interventions
  - Ability to conduct, evaluate and apply research
  - Ethical and professional behavior
  - Culturally adept service provision

## Competencies (Level 3)

- Competencies are specific skills that demonstrate the achievement of objectives
- For example:
  - Develops strong rapport with clients
  - Designs and implements theoretically consistent treatment plans
  - Digestion and titration of the professional literature in the area of assessment
  - Identifies and correctly interprets ethical dilemmas in research
  - Demonstrates awareness of own cultural background and personal biases

## Goals, Objectives & Competencies (GOC)

- Ensure goals are well aligned with objectives, and objectives are well aligned with competencies
- Make them
  - Measureable
  - Achievable
- Ensure they ultimately support the mission and the educational model of the program
- Well designed GOC form a foundation upon which the "house of data" is built

## Align Data Collection With GOC

- Measure what you say you will measure
- Design your measurement tools and approaches to capture data on each competency; data can then be compacted/combined to measure each goal and objective

## GOCs

- Examine your program GOCs
- Are they
  - Clear and concise or overstated
  - Measureable or vague
  - Achievable or all-encompassing
  - Clustered or scattered

## Types of Outcome Data

- Proximal, Distal
- Qualitative, Quantitative
- Formative, Summative
- Internal, External

What Data Sources Do  
You Currently Have?

What Data Sources Do  
You Currently USE?

## Creating New Assessment Approaches and Instruments

- Common assignments
- Portfolio creation/analysis
- Grant funding/publication tracking
- Simulated clients
- Articles/professional presentations
- If money and time were no object, what could you do? Is there an achievable derivative of that?

## Choosing Points of Assessment for GOC in Your Program

- Where in the program do you want to measure each GOC?
- Do you want multiple measurement points to assess the development of some of your GOC across time?
- Who will assess and what tool or technique will you use?

## Creating a Strategic Plan

- Plan Your Assessment Points Using a Program Grid to Graph Your Assessment Plan
- Create a manageable plan that balances thoughtful measurement points for objectives and competencies, that will flow up into goals...and then, ultimately, up into an institutional assessment plan (but that's another workshop)

## Actually Using Data to Improve Your Program

- Create a process to systematically examine and use your data
  - When will you do it?
  - Who will review it?
- Take action based on data patterns
- Assess impact of actions by collecting and examining more data

## Conclusions

- Outcome measurement can be woven smoothly into regular programmatic activities with planning
- Data collection can be manageable and coherent with planning
- Using your data to inform program revisions benefits all program stakeholders
- Additional comments or questions

## Thank you for your attendance and participation

- We would be glad to forward a copy of the power point presentation and/or an electronic copy of the program grid
- This information will be posted on the CoA web site within the next month or two

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