CLO (Course Learning Outcome) - Overview

Definition and Description

A **course learning outcome (CLO)** is an affirmative statement of core student knowledge, values, habits or traits. CLO achievement is measured at the course level. Along with the corresponding assessment tool (the work the students perform that is used to measure achievement of the CLO) and the rubric (the scoring scale that quantifies student performance), these three components form an “assessment” for the course.

The CLO statement begins with “The student will...,” followed by a SINGLE action verb and concludes with modifiers, creating a concise, measurable statement of student achievement. The CLO should not measure too much knowledge, should describe an outcome rather than a process or completion of a task, and should be clear to the student. The CLO statement should provide the student clear direction and guidance in terms of what to study and know so that following the appropriate course learning experience(s) CLO achievement is maximized. For additional guidance when writing CLOs, and to make sure the CLO is a “course learning outcome” rather than a “course learning objective” (from a course outline of record, for example), please review “When a CLO is Not a CLO!” and CLOs – Writing and Revising.

CLO scores are entered in our assessment software eLumen. They are due no later than the semester course grades. The following semester, analysis of this data is captured in a course improvement plan (CIP). Via program review, the improvements driven by the CIP are documented and shared. They inform planning and, when appropriate, drive budget allocation. They are implemented the next time the course is offered.

Visuals

Assessment is the foundation of a learning culture. Therefore our improvement visuals start with assessment. Our first visual depicts annual improvement in a linear fashion. Starting with assessment, followed by the analysis of data which in turn drives the identification and prioritization of needs in program review and culminating with funding allocation when needed, here is the location of "CLOs" in the assessment/program review improvement process:

![Assessment Process Diagram]

Assess CLOs (collect data) → CIPs (Analyze Data) → Program Review (Identify/Prioritize Innovations) → RAPs (Aquire funding)
That is, CLOs are the foundation of instructional assessment, and assessment is the foundation of continuous improvement. With the advent of performance based funding, utilizing CLOs to maximize student learning (and funding) is now more important than ever!

How does the assessment and its data analysis lead to the identification, funding, implementation and adjustment of improvements to student success over the long term? Consider the second visual. Note that it starts (at the top) with outcomes assessment (“Collect Assessment Data”) and then progresses *clockwise*. In terms of this *continuous improvement cycle*, here is where the CLO “lives”:

Here is a brief overview of the cycle. Since CLOs are utilized each time the course is assessed, they show up twice in the cycle above. There are typically two course assessments each three-year program review cycle.

**Links:**
- [Learning Outcomes Assessment webpage](#)
- [CLO Data and Rubric](#)
- [Rubrics](#)
- [Learning Outcomes and Mapping](#)
- [Bloom’s Taxonomy](#)
- [eLumen – Login and Tutorials](#)