How to Write Program Learning Outcomes

West Chester University Division of Student Affairs

Learning outcomes should start with "As a result of this experience, students will be able to..." or "After attending this program, students will be able to...". This should be followed by explicit, practical, often quantifiable things students will be able to do during or shortly after the program. Examples include things like:

- As a result of participating in this program, students will be able to identify the correct definition for the term co-curricular (in this case the quantity isn't listed but it's clear that it is 1 definition).

- As a result of participating in this program, students will be able to describe two programs offered through the Ram Plan: Co-curricular Transcript.

- As a result of participating in this program, students will be able to write a personal plan for their co-curricular education (quantity: 1 plan).

- As a result of participating in this program, students will be able to list at least one benefit of a program they attended.

- As a result of participating in this program, students will be able to recommend one improvement they can make in their life.

- As a result of participating in this program, students will be able to propose at least one title for a new Ram Plan program.

As you can see above, the learning outcomes follow Bloom's Taxonomy in that students must achieve the first learning outcome in order to be able to effectively complete the other learning outcomes. While this is often the case, it is not always true. Sometimes students enter learning at a higher level and go backward or forward based on their own personal journey. Learning models also exist that are not hierarchical in nature.

It is worth noting that programs may have many learning outcomes. Across the assessment field, practitioners often recommend focusing on the three most important learning outcomes. If you need help narrowing your list, think about these questions:

- If students learn nothing else from this program, I hope they walk away knowing or being able to do _____.

- What are the three takeaways or action items from the program materials (e.g., program slides)?

- What skills or knowledge are being evaluated in the assessment?