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Analyze, Revise, or Develop Course Outcomes and Learning Objectives (Part 1)

Hugh Broome, PhD; Associate Teaching Professor; School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences; The University of Southern Mississippi [00:00:14] Making the decision about which learning outcomes to include in my course is one that causes me a great deal of angst. But it's a decision that I make by talking to other faculty, by being in tune with what my students need, and by having that anecdotal knowledge myself as a chemist about what information can be applied to the real world around you.

Mwauna Maxwell; 2020-22 Faculty Fellow for the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning; Faculty, Department of Psychology; Dallas College [00:00:37] I think about what's the big picture of what it is that I'm teaching. If I only have them for a 16-week semester, I have to prioritize in terms of thinking about what is it that I really want them to take away? And for me, and for psychology, it's all about understanding human behavior. I have to think about those big ticket items that when they walk away from my course, they may not remember the details, but if they can remember some really major concepts. And I think using the student learning outcomes is the best way to do that, because those outcomes are telling us what it is that the student needs to understand or be able to do in the end of the course.

Steven Mintz, PhD; Professor; Department of History; University of Texas at Austin [00:01:20] Most students spell history B-O-R-I-N-G, and the word they use to describe history is "irrelevant." My job is to convince them that history is anything but irrelevant.

Steve Mintz, PhD [00:01:32] We remember backward, but we live forward. If you think back to March of 2020, no one on March 1 imagined that all of our classes would go online. Different world. Right? So we remember backward, but we live forward. So that's one of our challenges, and it very much applies to what we're talking about right now, the coming of the American Civil War. We know it looms ahead. They didn't.

Steve Mintz, PhD [00:02:16] If I don't connect past to present, I will lose every student in my classroom. They will turn off. But if I can show them how the topics that we're discussing right now speak to issues that are at the forefront of their own minds, then they turn on.

Jeff Suarez-Grant; Senior; Instructional Designer; Center for Effective Teaching and Learning; California State University, Los Angeles [00:02:39] I think if you're teaching a gateway course, it's good to kind of isolate the essential pieces of information, the essential skills that students should be able to practice from that discipline that will serve students in any career, any academic field they plan to go in in the future.

Naat Jairam; Instructional Designer; Center for Effective Teaching and Learning; California State University, Los Angeles [00:02:55] So you can think about what skills they need in the workplace, what skills they need to succeed in the next course in the curriculum. You can talk to industry experts. You can talk to your fellow faculty to find out what they need from students before they take a future course. It's not strictly speaking about the subject matter, but how the subject matter can expand their world as students.

Deninne Pritchett, PhD; Chairperson and Faculty Member; Department of Psychology; Central Piedmont Community College [00:03:22] So in order to make the course student-centered or focused on what students should know that is transferable to the real world, you need outcomes that translate to more than just psychology. So, for example, one specific learning outcome that we have now is to have students understand and interpret the processes of the nervous system. Absolutely relevant, except it doesn't connect to the larger learning outcomes of psychology in general.



So a better idea would be to apply psychological principles, concepts, theories in relation to biology and behavior. For psychology, you want students to have a knowledge base of psychology. You want them to be able to think critically. But you would also like your students to understand how to find information or "research," if you will. Even for students who never plan to move on to a four-year degree, you still want those students to know how to locate information for the purpose of justifying their own thinking or reasoning.

Steve Mintz, PhD [00:04:31] Many of our students are convinced that the humanities are box-checking requirements that are simply obstructing their progress to their degree in business, or engineering, or computer science. And it's my job to convince them that they're completely wrong, that to be a well-rounded person, to be able to rise up in bureaucracies, they're going to need to be culturally literate. And history is teaching them cultural literacy. We need to understand people who hold alien ideas from us. Who see the world in a fully different way. If we just look towards our friends, that's easy. It's understanding the world through our adversaries that's the challenge. That was the challenge during the 1850s.

Steve Mintz, PhD [00:05:31] I'm also going to teach them how to research. I'm going to teach them how to analyze evidence. I'm going to show them how to present their findings and how to engage in debates. And by doing that, I'm gonna make them successful, not just in a history class, but long after they graduate from college.