



## Expert Insights

**Thomas A. Angelo, EdD; Clinical Professor; Educational Innovation and Research; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** [00:00:00] Student learning outcomes are what students can demonstrate that they know and are able to do by the end of a course or the end of a program. And we might even think about, you know, after three months when they've forgotten the details, what would we hope that students would remember and still be able to do three months, six months after.

**Narrator** [00:00:20] Designing a learner-centered course is like planning a group journey. In both cases, you need to identify the final destination and then think about where have members of this group already been? What milestones along the way do I want to be sure to visit? Does this journey serve as a stepping stone to future more challenging trips? Start by making the final destination clear and compelling. You may want students to learn how experts think and solve problems in your discipline, or you may want to organize the course around a major theme or concept prevalent in your discipline.

**Aaron M. Pallas, PhD; Professor of Sociology and Education; Education Policy and Social Analysis; Teachers College, Columbia University** [00:01:02] Different disciplines have different ways of thinking that are rooted in the features of the discipline. Instructors can draw on a variety of tools to model discipline ways of thinking. Among the best is revealing their own thinking and talking about their own experiences when they were learners, first encountering the material that the students are. It's difficult sometimes because experienced instructors have deep attachments to the subjects they study and teach, and they may forget what it's like to learn that the first time. So, going back thinking about that, reflecting on it and being brave enough to reveal it to students can help students learn about discipline ways of thinking.

**Michelle Miller, PhD; Professor and President's Distinguished Teaching Fellow; Department of Psychology; Northern Arizona University** [00:01:48] I know for me as a as a psychologist, it's wonderful if people can remember terminology about unconditional and conditioned stimuli and so on. But what I really want more than anything at the end of the day is for my students to think more like a psychologist, a little bit more like I would, when they look at any kind of a problem involving human behavior in the mind. That's what I want, and I think that that is common across disciplines. So, I think it speaks very deeply to our academic values. Now, from a practical perspective, this is also what it all comes down to, right? If we are graduating students who cannot take the skills for applying the knowledge they've acquired, it's like starting all over after they're out.

**Narrator** [00:02:40] Also, make sure the outcomes are learner friendly, specific and measurable sharing outcomes in terms students can easily understand promotes equity, offering them a clear picture of where they are headed and what they can expect to do once there. Like a tour guide creating a path designed to ensure they reach the final destination, your job is to plan. Which roads should they take to develop and practice the knowledge and skills they will need while always keeping the final destination in mind?

**Tracie Addy, PhD; Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning; Director, Center for the Integration of Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship; Lafayette College** [00:03:14] I think sometimes we have to think about, like, less also being more for learning for students. There are often are many things that we want our students to learn in the course, but we really have to think about what are the essential things like when we think about and take this course as a whole, what what are the things that we absolutely want students to get out of this? And we'll probably have to kind of reduce those other ones to some degree for, for the course, depending on how many goals that we have. So, I'd say it's, it is important to prioritize your goals and also to really consider fleshing out and having students, having more opportunity to work longer on particular goals rather than going through everything really quickly. Because we know that students will actually have a better learning experience if they have less than more in general and go more in depth with that learning and later they'll take more with them.



**Narrator** [00:04:13] Begin mapping out the path by breaking down course outcomes into more specific and well-sequenced learning objectives. Taking this step helps you identify milestones along the route to measure progress and when needed, to reteach or offer additional resources and supports to ensure students are prepared to reach that final destination. Just as successful tour guides share the itinerary with their travelers, share your plans with students. You can provide an overview of the plan with important milestones or learning objectives on the course syllabus.

**Linda Nilson, PhD; Higher Ed. Education Expert and Author; Clemson College** [00:04:49] The syllabus communicates how well-organized you are, how carefully you have designed this course and where your, where your emphasis is.

**Narrator** [00:05:01] In weekly announcements at the beginning of class sessions and in assignment guidelines, be explicit about which learning objectives their work is helping students to achieve and show them how these accomplishments move them closer to their final destination. It's also helpful to track progress to any destination. And you can help students do this by providing opportunities for them to reflect on their progress in meeting learning objectives that build to the mastery of course outcomes. You may provide them with an itinerary that allows them to check off each milestone and take more ownership of their own learning, using the process to determine when they need to seek out additional supports and when they can celebrate having reached a key milestone. Each of these processes helps them develop a growth mindset about their own learning capacity.

**Tracie Addy, PhD** [00:05:54] It's really important for students to reflect on their learning, and we know from the research that that is actually key to actually kind of advancing learning in the long run. So, students can know where they're at and what they've accomplished, and they can actually kind of reinforce that with themselves and actually take that time to really process it. That's actually going to lead to kind of deeper learning and more enduring learning in the end. So, when we give students opportunities to reflect on their learning, we might think it takes time and it does. It does absolutely take time. But in the long run, it's, it's most beneficial to students because they're taking that time to really think about it rather than kind of continuing, continuing, continuing, trying to build, build, build, but not really thinking about what have I already learned, what do I still need to know, you know? And so, they're going to actually better build their, their conceptual frameworks when they actually have time to process where they're at to build up, right, rather than to keep going and going. And, you know, not actually have that time to actually go through that process.

**Narrator** [00:06:59] Planning a journey, whether it's literary trek through the country or a semester's trip through your course takes thought, time, effort and field experience. And once on the journey, communicating the path, the meaning of milestones and making necessary adjustments as challenges arise ensures that the entire group has the resources and support to stay the course. Taking these steps ensures your students are able to successfully arrive at the destination, fully equipped with the content and skills to enjoy both the journey and the destination.