A First Step in Linking Learning Outcomes to Assessment Activities

There should be a direct link between assessments, learning outcomes and learning activities.

Student learning outcomes are a key foundation of successful assessment; they drive and focus assessment. Therefore, assessment activities should align with learning outcomes—should go hand-in-hand with outcomes—should clearly answer the question: how can we check that this learning outcome is being met?

How to ensure a good fit between Learning Outcomes and Assessment Activities

A good first step in finding a good fit is to hold a faculty meeting on outcomes assessment in your program. Have faculty members bring syllabi from the core courses in the program. As a department:

1. Identify (or review) the student learning outcomes for your program.
2. Identify the courses in which each outcome could be appropriately measured using existing class assignments.
3. Choose the course-embedded assignments to use as assessment activities.

In the end, this faculty-driven exercise should result in something like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course in the major (with potential for use in program SLO assessment)</th>
<th>Critically analyze political information given an issue important in modern U.S. society.</th>
<th>Differentiate the theoretical, structural, historical, and scientific dimensions of politics.</th>
<th>Communicate effectively orally and in writing.</th>
<th>Demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance of racial, cultural, and other human differences.</th>
<th>Demonstrate commitment to being a politically responsible citizen.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSci 180</td>
<td>Test (Pre?)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSci 310</td>
<td>Research paper</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>PSci 460</td>
<td>Test (Post?)</td>
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<td>PSci 493</td>
<td>Student Evaluation of Internship</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>PSci 498</td>
<td>Portfolio</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
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