

## Syllabus Help – NSC Assessment Program Information

One of the things that often confounds people about NSC's syllabus is the table for "Assessment Program Information." The purpose of this section is to demonstrate how your class satisfies specific elements of the college's Core Learning Outcomes (listed below). Basically, these learning outcomes represent what we want all students to achieve through their liberal arts and sciences education at NSC. Naturally, no single class is going to satisfy all of the outcomes, but with each class meeting approximately 2-3 outcome levels, students should get extensive training in these core areas across the entire curriculum.

Let's say I'm preparing to teach my statistics class at NSC for the first time. I know what I want the students to learn in the class; these things would be listed in the syllabus under "Course Objectives." Typically, the course objectives are specific to the class at hand (e.g., "Successful students will be able to understand and apply inferential statistics"), not generalized objectives (e.g., "Successful students will learn to think critically," which could apply to any class, not just statistics). Here are some of the course objectives for a statistics course:

*"Overall, successful students should:*

- Understand the basic purpose of descriptive and inferential statistics*
- Understand how we conduct statistical analyses*
- Demonstrate the ability to explain to others the statistical analyses used for research in psychology, medicine, and other fields"*

For the Assessment Program Information, you need to match your Course Objectives with NSC's Core Learning Outcomes, as applicable. Look at the Core Learning Outcomes (listed at the end of this document) and try to determine which of these general outcomes (and associated levels) are consistent with your specific Course Objectives. For example, students in a stats class might need to explain statistical analyses to others in both oral and written form. In doing so, they design a lesson plan in which they teach statistics to others, and this entails multiple revisions and refinements to their project. If you look at the Core Learning Outcomes, these things match up quite well with Level 1 of the "Communication Outcomes." Thus, in the table for NSC Assessment Program Information I would indicate that the course targets Level 1 of the Communication Outcomes, and I would show which Course Objectives correspond to this Core Learning Outcome. In the actual table it looks something like this:

NSC's Outcomes	Level	Course Objectives	Assessments and Key Performances
Develop communication abilities	1	Demonstrate the ability to explain to others the statistical analyses used for research in psychology, medicine, and other fields.	Final Project (teaching the basics of inferential statistics)

Note that the language in the Course Objectives box is taken directly from the Course Objectives section of the syllabus. Also, take note of the box on the far right that reads “Assessments and Key Performances.” Basically, this box is for any key course assignments (i.e., tests, projects, papers) that measure student mastery of a particular Outcome at that level. If you have more than one assignment that fits, you can list them all, but focus on *key assignments*.

As you match your Course Objectives to the Core Learning Outcomes, please don't feel like you need to cover every level of every outcome in your course. Our statistics class is a very rigorous course where students learn quite a lot, yet most instructors only cover three or four levels of the Core Learning Outcomes.

After all of this, most instructors will still have questions. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions (702-992-2645 or [Gwen.Sharp@nsc.edu](mailto:Gwen.Sharp@nsc.edu)).

## **Core Learning Outcomes**

Nevada State College has established an ability-based assessment program which identifies certain educational outcomes that students will achieve through their college career here. The three General Education outcomes are Critical Thinking, Effective Citizenship and Communication as described below:

### *Communication Outcomes*

- Level 1: Clarity
  - State position orally and in written form
  - Include the main idea(s) and purpose
  - Write multiple drafts
- Level 2: Structure
  - Develop a structured argument
  - Substantiate argument with supporting research
  - Establish clear transitions between introduction, ideas, and conclusion
  - Make revisions
- Level 3: Tone and Audience
  - Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality for intended audience
  - Ensure unity, clarity, and coherence in paragraphs
  - Anticipate counter-arguments
  - Accept and profit from criticism
- Level 4: Persuasion
  - Employ emotional and rational persuasion
  - Incorporate a variety of technologies
  - Explore novel means of presentation
  - Understand the social impact of communication
  - Critique own work

### *Critical Thinking Outcomes*

- Level 1: Self-Awareness
  - Discover own personal perspective
  - Ask pertinent questions
  - Understand the difference between facts and opinions
  - Evaluate own personal perspective
- Level 2: Comprehension
  - Accurately summarize information
  - Identify central points in an argument
  - Explore other perspectives
  - Draw conclusions from inferences
- Level 3: Analysis
  - Evaluate the source, context, and credibility of information
  - Defend against logical fallacies
  - Address other perspectives
  - Develop rational arguments
- Level 4: Application
  - Articulate problems clearly
  - Use reason and evidence to generate multiple possible solutions
  - Evaluate the quality of solutions
  - Implement the best solution(s)

### *Effective Citizenship Outcomes*

- Level 1: Social Responsibility
  - Recognize your cultural values, assumptions and knowledge
  - Demonstrate socially responsible behavior
- Level 2: Community Involvement
  - Become involved in community concerns
  - Learn through community involvement and service
- Level 3: Political Literacy
  - Demonstrate an understanding of the problems and practices of democracy
  - Understand the influences and implications of diversity
  - Recognize the interconnectedness among groups, communities and regions
- Level 4: Apply Citizenship Skills and Knowledge
  - Develop skills of inquiry, communication, participation and responsible action
  - Draw on varied perspectives and personal reflection in becoming an informed and interested citizen
  - Create links between class-related academic knowledge and active practice in the broader community