

Student Learning Objectives for Sustainability

Objectives may be

- for a single class
- for an entire program

Goals, objectives, outcomes

- Goals are broad statements of what we want students to learn
 - critical thinking, good writing, etc.
- Objectives are specific statements of what we want students to learn
 - examples coming up!
- Outcomes are products students create (the evidence that the objectives were achieved)
 - writing a scientific paper, designing a wind turbine

What are your objectives?

- What do you want students to know?
- What do you want students to be able to do?
- What do you want students to believe or value?

Objectives should

- Use action verbs
- Be specific
- Suggest ways they can be assessed

Objectives should

- Use action verbs
 - avoid “know” or “understand” – think about how students will show that they know or understand
- weak example: “students will understand systems thinking”
- better: “students will articulate the principles of systems thinking”

Objectives should

- Use action verbs
- Be specific
 - instead of “apply important theories”, “apply theories x, y, and z”
- weak example: “students will articulate the principles of system thinking”
- better: “students will articulate three principles of systems thinking: (1) the behavior of the system may not be predictable from the behavior of its parts, (2) . . .

Objectives should

- Use action verbs
- Be specific
- Suggest ways they can be assessed
 - exam essay question asking students to describe the principles of system thinking
 - this is the associated learning outcome

Choose an objective & improve it

- Pick one of mine that is relevant to your class or program
- Or choose a new one for your class or program
- Identify some stronger action verbs
- Make it more specific
- Suggest some assessments (learning outcomes)