

Direct and Indirect SLO Measures

Direct Measures

Learning is assessed through tools that measure direct observations of learning such as assignments, exams, and portfolios.

Direct measures are the most precise and effective tools to understand how well students have learned the competencies you defined in your Student Learning Outcomes. It is crucial to measure learning outcomes by way of at least one direct measure of student learning.

Examples:

- Standardized exams (only when exam items can be mapped to specific competencies)
- Exit examinations
- Portfolios
- Pre-tests and post-tests
- Locally developed exams
- Papers
- Oral presentations
- Behavioral observations
- Thesis/dissertation
- Simulations/case studies
- Videotaped/audio taped assignments

Indirect Measures

Learning is assessed through tools that measure perspectives and opinions such as surveys, interviews, and evaluations.

Indirect measures provide supplemental details that may help your program or department understand your students' impressions, and which strengths or weaknesses in your program help or hinder student learning.

Examples:

- Surveys or questionnaires
- Student perception
- Alumni perception
- Employer perception
- Focus groups
- Interviews

- Student records

Applied Example:

SLO: Students will use critical theory to compare and contrast two specific literary periods.

Direct Measure: Research Paper where students are asked to use critical theory to compare and contrast two specific literary periods

Indirect Measure: Survey on students' perception of the two literary periods