Setting Assessment Targets:

It's not a guessing game;

It's a thoughtful process!

- "Setting a target is not about **_guessing_** what you can achieve. It involves knowing where you are now, what you are trying to achieve, and determining challenging but realistic amounts of improvement needed to get there" ~ Gallaudet University

Setting Reasonable Targets

- Establishing target percentages allows faculty to determine whether the program has successfully produced student learning. The most important stage in establishing targets is to consider the level of performance that will allow program faculty to confidently determine students are achieving the intended outcomes. Consider the following questions.
  - What is acceptable evidence of understanding?
  - What is acceptable evidence of demonstration?
  - What specific characteristics of mastery do you expect? *What does mastery look or sound like?*

Set Rigorous But Achievable Targets

If you have a small amount of data you can prepare it by hand. Otherwise, you will probably want to enter the results into a computer to make them easier to summarize and analyze.

Definition	Characteristics
Targets: the desired level of performance you want to see, as measured by indicators, that represents success at achieving your outcome. **Stretch Target:** challenging but realistic target should be able to reach with some effort	• **S**pecific: what you plan to achieve is clear • **M**easurable: there is a way to determine whether or not you have achieved it • **A**chievable • **R**igorous • **T**imeframe is specified

Method 1 — Use Historical Data

It can be helpful to use data that your unit has already gathered to establish a baseline, or starting point, for your target.

Student Learning Outcome Target
All students are expected to achieve a **Proficient level** on at least **four of the five categories** of the Critical Thinking VALUE Rubric.

80% of graduating students will **score a 20** (out of 25) **or higher** on the **Organization criteria of the English rubric.**

90% of students will achieve a score of **at least 3.5** (out of 5) **in all seven** of the subscale criterion areas on the **Lab Report Rubric** their junior year.

Students entering their senior year will achieve a mean score **at or above 80%** of the discipline's content test subscales. |

Method 2 — Use External Sources

When you do not have historical data, you might consider using information from outside data sources to benchmark, or compare your performance data with those of other comparable universities / departments / programs (an accrediting agency's standards, IPEDS, etc.). Then set targets that seem reasonable in light of the benchmarking information you've gathered.

Student Learning Outcome Target
The ABC Association wants member institution's to have at least 80% pass rate on the section ralated to this SLO for graduates taking nationally-normed licensing examination.
ABCU, one of our benchmark universities, indicated that 75% of students in the XYZ certificate program scored 3.5 or better on the Information Literacy VALUE rubric their senior year. In light of this information, WKU XYZ certificate program faculty set "75% scored 3.5 or better" as the target for this SLO.

Define what you want to achieve and by when

Remember, you want to have a delicate balance between challenging and realistic. A *stretch target* is intended to "raise the bar" enough to inspire your people. But targets must be set at a level that is attainable.

"Stretch" targets usually requires significant effort to achieve. Ask yourself how much of a stretch will motivate without causing people to become overwhelmed or demoralized.

Scenario 1: Rubric scores on capstone papers have increased an average of 4% over the past three years	Scenario 2: 80% of graduating seniors currently can interpret and analyze a text using different theoretical
Possible Targets for next year: 5% increase might be a **Minimal** Target 6% increase might be a **Moderate** Target 7% increase might be a **Stretch** Target 10% increase might be an **Unrealistic** Target	Possible Targets for next year: 82% increase might be a **Minimal** Target 85% increase might be a **Moderate** Target 88% increase might be a **Stretch** Target 100% increase might be an **Unrealistic** Target

Target Alignment

Performance targets describe the percentage of student work that will meet the SLO/PLO for a given assessment. Make sure they align with the artifact or evidence you collected as well as the performance standards set for by the program - Setting a target that doesn't match the artifact will result in students not meeting the target.

SAMPLE: Alignment of Program Standards and Targets to SLOs/PLOs (https://assessment.ucdavis.edu/get-curious/standards-and-targets)

PLO	Evidence	Performance Standard	Performance Target	Considerations
1	Scores from items on culminating exam	Graduating seniors must answer at least 80% items correctly.	At least 80% of work sampled from graduating seniors meets standard.	In order to yield valid evidence of learning, items must be clearly aligned to at least one PLO (or its associated learning indicators)
2, 4	Scores from analytic rubrics used to assess written work	Graduating seniors must score at least a 3 for *each criterion* on a 4-point analytic rubric.	At least 80% of work sampled from graduating seniors meets standard.	You may identify different performance standards & targets for each criterion.

SET TARGETS AS A TEAM!

- Assurance of Student Learning, again, requires the participation of multiple faculty members in the program. It is not something the Department Head or even the Program Coordinator does in a vacuum. Input of all program faculty is critical to a successful assessment program. At the very least, faculty members may need to identify and/or retrieve artifacts from a course or courses that they teach. Assessment is a team effort.

If you need help...

Contact your assessment rep on the ASL committee – or any other member! We are all here to help…

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