

Incorporating Learning Outcome Assessments Into Noncredit Education: A Novel Approach

Dr. Sandra von Doetinchem, Department Chair
Continuing & Professional Programs, Outreach College



Abstract & Problem

Assessments in noncredit education typically evaluate:

- Participant's satisfaction with course or instructor
- Class experiences
- Marketing

Learning outcomes typically not assessed because, e.g.:

- Non-traditional course lengths and forms
- Faculty can be field experts from community → no experience with learning outcome assessments (LOA)

LOA in noncredit education is crucial:

- Ensuring quality of courses and programs
- Noncredit education is gaining importance
 - Employers increasingly focus on skills than degrees
 - Changing workforce demands require employees to quickly adapt to changes

Goal

Incorporate LOAs in noncredit education

Problem Identification

- National and international colleagues' feedback
- Conference sessions review
- Literature and web research

Method

- Update LOs for test course with selected faculty
- Incorporate LO-centered questions in existing course evaluation
- Quantitative survey instrument (SurveyMonkey)

Other Options Considered

- Traditional forms or LOAs (e.g., collecting student work)
 - Non-traditional forms of LOAs (e.g., observations)
- Not appropriate because of unique context and forms of noncredit education

Lessons Learned

- Allow time for survey development
- Be mindful to not over-survey people
- Start with interested faculty
- Flexibility is key
- Collaborate with colleagues to gain knowledge and encouragement

Action Plan

