

Suggestions on How to Use Surveys for Student Learning Outcomes

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Surveys can be an effective way to assess student learning outcomes within a course, program or department. The De Anza College Office of Institutional Research and Planning can:

- Help you develop a survey that you administer
- Help you develop a survey that we administer online to your survey population
- Help you analyze the results
- Analyze the results for you

The following article addresses some questions you may have about conducting your own survey to assess student learning outcomes.

**Why should I use a survey?** Surveys are one way of capturing the opinions of respondents. Survey questions can be used for:

- Quantitative measurement –where respondents answer closed-ended questions based on a specific scale. Closed-ended questions may be the easiest way of capturing information and summarizing the results and can be used to compare historically.
- Qualitative measurement –where respondents answer open-ended questions where they write in their opinions. Open-ended questions can provide more information but may take longer to analyze. Both types of questions can be combined in the same survey and compared.

**How do I ensure my survey is valid?**

Validity refers to how well your survey accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept you are trying to measure. Try to:

- Determine what information you would like to get from the survey
- Assess whether the questions you use will get you that information
- Determine who your population needs to be to solicit this information, is it students in one course, a series of courses, a program or a department?
- Determine if your questions are aligned with your SLO's, program objectives or accreditation standards. If your SLO's are aligned with your program objectives and accreditation standards, you will capture all three in one survey.
- Ask someone to take the survey and see if their answers align with your intended outcome.

**What do I do with the results?**

- Determine how the results can be used to make improvements regarding student learning and program objectives
- Share the results with your colleagues, department and others to create a dialogue about linking the results to actions by fostering a culture of inquiry.
- Use the data as of the documentation of a cycle of learning outcomes assessment.
- If you choose to conduct an online survey through the Research Office, the results are tabulated and returned to you within a few weeks.

You can always learn from your experiences and make changes the next time around.

For more information or survey help, contact the Research Office at x8777 or [www.deanza.edu/ir](http://www.deanza.edu/ir).