

Learning Objectives

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Continuing educational activities must include learner objectives written in behavioral terms defining specific learning outcomes the participant is expected to accomplish at the completion of the learning activity. Well-written objectives also provide a mechanism for a measurable and observable evaluation of learning. *The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, (Bloom 1956, and Krathwoh, 1964) is a valuable resource in identifying and defining learning objectives. The taxonomy provides a classification of educational objectives and is useful in curriculum development, teaching and testing, and consists of general and specific categories that include all types of outcomes. *Preparing Instructional Objectives*, (Mager, 1962) is another excellent resource that describes HOW TO specify and communicate the learning objectives to the learner.

Guidelines for Writing Learning Objectives

1. Begin the objective with a measurable verb, such as define, classify, calculate, design, discuss, etc.
2. State the objective in terms of *learner performance*, not instructor performance. The emphasis is on what the participant will be able to do or know, not what the instructor does.
3. State the objective as a learning product, not a learning process.

CORRECT: “explains assigned reading material”

INCORRECT: “gains knowledge of”

4. State each objective to include only one outcome, not several.
5. Write a separate statement for each objective; revise and refine for clarity and understanding.
6. The following verbs have been found to be effective in formulating educational objectives.

A. Those that communicate knowledge. (Cognitive Domain)

Information

cite	identify	quote	relate	tell
count	indicate	read	repeat	trace
define	list	recite	select	write
describe	name	recognize	state	
draw	point	record	tabulate	

Comprehension

associate	describe	explain	locate	translate
classify	differentiate	express	predict	
compare	discuss	extrapolate	report	
compute	distinguish	interpolate	restate	
contrast	estimate	interpret	review	

Application

apply	employ	locate	relate	sketch
calculate	examine	operate	report	solve
complete	illustrate	order	restate	translate
demonstrate	interpolate	practice	review	use
dramatize	interpret	predict	schedule	utilize

Analysis

analyze	debate	distinguish	inventory	
appraise	detect	experiment	question	
contract	diagram	infer	separate	
criticize	differentiate	inspect	summarize	

Synthesis

arrange	construct	formulate	organize	produce
assemble	create	generalize	plan	propose
collect	design	integrate	prepare	specify
compose	detect	manage	prescribe	

Evaluation

appraise	determine	judge	recommend	test
assess	estimate	measure	revise	
choose	evaluate	rank	score	
critique	grade	rate	select	

B. Those that impart skills. (Psychomotor Domain)

diagnose	integrate	measure	percuss	
empathize	internalize	palpate	project	
hold	massage	pass	visualize	

C. Those that convey attitudes. (Affective Domain)

acquire	exemplify	realize	reflect	
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These verbs are better avoided; they are often used but are open to many interpretations:

appreciate	have faith in	know	learn	understand	believe
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