WRITING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A learning objective describes what you expect students to be able to do as an outcome of a course, lesson, or activity.

OBJECTIVES SHOULD INCLUDE ABCD ELEMENTS

AUDIENCE
who is the target?

BEHAVIOR
a verb

CONDITION
under which behavior is expected

DEGREE
of expected performance

HOW TO WRITE GOOD OBJECTIVES - AN EXAMPLE

After reviewing this information, instructors will be able to write objectives using ABCD elements.

CONDITION
AUDIENCE
BEHAVIOR
DEGREE (or criteria)

OBJECTIVES SHOULD BE S.M.A.R.T.

S
clear description of expectation
SPECIFIC

M
can be directly assessed
MEASURABLE

A
outcome is realistic
ACHIEVABLE

R
consistent with overall goals
RELEVANT

T
clear end point for achievement
TIME-BOUND

REMEMBER!

Objectives, and what the students are able to do, will need to be directly assessed.

Be sure you are writing objectives you can assess, and that you are assessing them as written.
USING BLOOM’S TAXONOMY TO CREATE OBJECTIVES

Benjamin Bloom (1956) described a classification system for educational goals as they progress in complexity. Each of these taxonomic categories, updated by Anderson et al (2001), is associated with verbs that can be used to create learning objectives.

LOWER ORDER THINKING   HIGHER ORDER THINKING

COURSE OBJECTIVES SHOULD INCORPORATE MULTIPLE LEVELS OF LEARNING.

Strive for higher order thinking (analysis, evaluation, and creation levels) when applicable.

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<th>COMPREHENSION</th>
<th>APPLICATION</th>
<th>CRITICAL THINKING</th>
<th>CREATION</th>
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VERBS TO AVOID
not measurable
understand appreciate demonstrate
know be aware of learn
explore familiar with improve

VERBS TO USE SPARINGLY
lower-level cognition
recall identify
define describe
recognize summarize


HELPFUL RESOURCES

Here are some additional resources on preparing courses, writing objectives, and best practices for teaching.