

Writing Effective Learning Objectives

Educational planners are expected to design activities with the intent of changing clinician and healthcare team competence, performance, and/or patient outcomes, as opposed to merely increasing knowledge.

- **competence** (knowing how to do something; having the knowledge/ability to apply knowledge, skills and judgment in practice; new strategies a clinician or healthcare team might consider putting into practice)
- **performance** (what a clinician or healthcare team actually puts into practice)
- **patient outcomes** (patient health status)

Effective learning objectives must therefore be focused on the learners and teams and not the faculty. In other words, think about what behavioral changes will result for learners instead of how the faculty will deliver education.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- What do you want participants or the healthcare team to be able to do as a direct result of participating in this activity (workshop, course, seminar, etc.)?
- What does our audience need to know or be able to do to bridge the gap between where they are today and where we want them to be tomorrow?
- If participants and teams could learn only three things in this session, what would those three things be? What would be your three take-home messages?

Tips for writing

1. Write each learning objective beginning with the phrase “After participating in this activity, clinicians (or the healthcare team) should be able to.....”
2. Make sure that objectives are measureable and relate directly to reducing the identified practice gap
3. State what the clinician or healthcare team might do differently (behavioral change) because of what has been learned
4. Use verbs which allow measureable outcome and thus can then be used in the evaluation process – see next page from the AAMC of verbs from Bloom’s Taxonomy

VERBS that can used to measure changes in **COMPETENCE**

Analyze	Assess	Compare	Contrast	Design	Develop	Differentiate
Distinguish	Evaluate	Formulate	Plan	Recommend		

VERBS that can used to measure changes in **PERFORMANCE**

Apply	Counsel	Diagnose	Employ	Examine	Incorporate	Integrate
Interpret	Manage	Perform	Prescribe	Utilize		

Examples of effective learning objectives – “After participating in this activity:

- “The critical care team will manage severe hypotension using current practice guidelines.”
- “The clinician will differentiate the various presentations of acute hyperthyroidism.”
- “The outpatient healthcare team will employ three communication tools to improve team function.”

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List of Verbs for Formulating Educational Objectives

Remembering

arrange	bookmark	call out	choose	define	describe
duplicate	highlight	identify	label	list	locate
match	memorize	name	omit	order	recite
recognize	relate	repeat	reproduce	retrieve	search
select	state	tabulate	write		

Understanding

annotate	arrange	attach	blog	Boolean search	categorize
classify	comment	compare	discuss	explain	express
extend	give example	illustrate	indicate	infer	interpret
paraphrase	report	restate	review	rewrite	summarize
subscribe	translate	tweet			

Applying

apply	assemble	carry out	collect	compose	construct
demonstrate	develop	dramatize	edit	execute	generalize
hack	illustrate	implement	load	network	operate
organize	play	practice	prescribe	restate	run
schedule	select	share	sketch	solve	

Analyzing

analyze	appraise	attribute	calculate	categorize	classify
collaborate	contrast	criticize	deliberate	differentiate	discriminate
distinguish	examine	experiment	infer	integrate	interpret
manage	organize	question	reverse-engineer	structure	subdivide
survey	tag	test	validate		

Evaluating

coach	critique	debate	defend	detect	develop
evaluate	formulate	hypothesize	judge	manage	mentor
moderate	plan	prepare	prioritize	propose	rate
recommend	re-engineer	review	revise	set up	support
synthesize	test	train	verify		

Creating

argue	assess	brainstorm	budget	build	compose
conceive	conceptualize	construct	create	design	direct/produce
engineer	envision	estimate	formulate	hypothesize	institute
invent	justify	make up	originate	predict	prototype
publish	role play	strategize			

Words to be avoided:

These words are often used but are open to many interpretations:

appreciate *believe* *know* *learn* *understand*

Sources:

<http://edglossary.org/blooms-taxonomy/>

<http://edorigami.wikispaces.com/Bloom's+Digital+Taxonomy>

