

Tips on Writing Learning Objectives

A learning objective is a statement that describes the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes that participants will gain from the educational activity. When developing objectives, ask these questions: What should the result of the educational activity be for participants? What should the participant be able to do? What should the participant know?

How to write a learning objective

For the purpose of ASA CME programs, provide three learning objectives that:

- List each objective in learner-oriented, not faculty-oriented, terms
- List each objective in measurable terms (Use the list of effective verbs for formulating learning objectives provided below.)
- Consist of only one action or outcome
- Identify abbreviations, acronyms or initials, at least once, to facilitate the peer review
- Complete this statement: "Upon completion of this learning activity, participants should be able to...."

Why develop learning objectives?

The ASA is an accredited provider of continuing medical education by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education and all CME programs are required to have learning objectives to guide the educational activity. Learning objectives:

- Help prospective participants determine whether this educational activity meets their needs or interests.
- Guide learning as participants engage in the educational activity, i.e., attend your presentation.
- Help us gauge the success of the educational activity by asking participants to evaluate how well the learning objectives were met.
- Help identify intended results in terms of **knowledge** (*facts and information*) **competence** (*knowing how to do something*), and **performance** (*what one actually does in practice*).

Effective verbs for formulating learning objectives

The following verbs have been found to be effective in formulating learning objectives:

1. Those that communicate knowledge :

INFORMATION (knowledge)

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

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COMPREHENSION (knowledge)

associate
classify
compare
compute
contrast
describe

diagram
differentiate
discuss
distinguish
estimate
explain

express
extrapolate
interpolate
interpret
locate
predict

report
restate
review
translate

APPLICATION (competence)

adapt
apply
calculate
chart
complete
compute
demonstrate
develop

employ
examine
generalize
illustrate
interpolate
interpret
locate
modify

operate
order
practice
predict
prepare
produce
relate
report

restate
review
schedule
sketch
solve
translate
use
utilize

ANALYSIS (competence)

analyze
appraise
break down
categorize
compare
contrast

correlate
criticize
debate
defend
detect
diagram

differentiate
distinguish
experiment
infer
inspect
inventory

question
separate
summarize

SYNTHESIS (performance)

arrange
assemble
collect
compose
construct

create
design
detect
formulate
integrate

manage
organize
plan
prepare
prescribe

produce
propose
specify

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EVALUATION (performance)

appraise	critique	judge	recommend
approve	diagnose	justify	revise
assess	estimate	measure	score
choose	evaluate	prioritize	select
conclude	generalize	rank	test
confirm	grade	rate	validate

2. Those that impart skills (performance):

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

3. Those that convey attitudes:

acquire	exemplify	realize	reflect
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Verbs to Avoid

These verbs are used often but are not measurable:

appreciate	have faith in	learn	understand
believe	know		