Writing Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are clear, concise statements that define the expected goal of a curriculum, course, lesson or activity, and describe observable skills or knowledge that will be acquired by a student as a result of instruction.

Why bother?

1. Writing effective learning objectives will
   a. Help you clarify the goals and objectives of your course
   b. Help the student understand what is important and valued by the course director.
   c. Facilitate objective and effective evaluation of students

2. The LCME requires it. “The faculty of a medical school define its medical education program objectives in outcome-based terms that allow the assessment of medical students’ progress in developing the competencies that the profession and the public expect of a physician.”

Tips for writing learning objectives:

1. Focus on student performance, not teacher performance.
2. The ABCD method of writing Learning objectives
   a. A is for Audience — who are the students?
   b. B is for Behavior — what is the observable and measurable behavior the learner is expected to attain?
   c. C is for Condition — what is the context or situation in which the learning will occur? What do they need?
   d. D is for Degree — what is the extent or level of expected performance? How well will the learner need to perform the learning objective?
3. Use active verbs—see handout next page
   a. Special attention to replacing “understand”—ask yourself, “What should the student be able to do if the students understands the content?”
      i. Describe the mechanism
      ii. Determine the correct method to evaluate
      iii. Identify the pertinent positives and negatives
      iv. Explain the pros and cons of
4. Think about where you are aiming on Bloom’s taxonomy. Aim for higher order thinking.

Helpful References:


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# Bloom’s Taxonomy Action Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sample verbs</th>
<th>Sample behaviors</th>
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<tr>
<td>KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>Student recalls or recognizes information, ideas, and principles in the approximate form in which they were learned.</td>
<td>arrange, define, describe, label, list, match, memorize, name, order, outline, recognize, recall, repeat</td>
<td>The student will define the 6 levels of Bloom's taxonomy of the cognitive domain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMPREHENSION</td>
<td>Student translates, comprehends, or interprets information based on prior learning.</td>
<td>explain, summarize, paraphrase, describe, illustrate, classify, defend, describe, discuss, distinguish</td>
<td>identify, indicate, infer, locate, paraphrase, predict, recognize, rewrite, review, select, summarize, translate</td>
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<td>APPLICATION</td>
<td>Student selects, transfers, and uses data and principles to complete a problem or task with a minimum of direction.</td>
<td>use, compute, solve, demonstrate, apply, construct, change, choose, compute, demonstrate, discover, dramatize</td>
<td>practice, predict, prepare, produce, relate, schedule, show, sketch, solve, use, write</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANALYSIS</td>
<td>Student distinguishes, classifies, and relates the assumptions, hypotheses, evidence, or structure of a statement.</td>
<td>analyze, categorize, compare, separate, apply, change, discover, choose, compute, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, manipulate, modify, operate</td>
<td>practice, predict, prepare, produce, relate, schedule, show, sketch, solve, use, write</td>
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<td>SYNTHEsis</td>
<td>Student originates, integrates, and combines ideas into a product, plan or proposal that is new to him or her.</td>
<td>create, design, hypothesize, invent, develop, arrange, assemble, categorize, collect, combine, comply, compose, construct, create, design, develop, devise, explain, formulate, generate, plan</td>
<td>rewrite, set up, summarize, synthesize, tell, write</td>
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<td>EVALUATION</td>
<td>Student appraises, assesses, or critiques on a basis of specific standards and criteria.</td>
<td>Judge, Recommend, Critique, Justify, Appraise, Argue, Assess, Attach, Choose, Compare, Conclude, Contrast, Defend, Describe, Discriminate, Estimate, Evaluate, Explain, Judge, Justify, Interpret, Relate</td>
<td>Predict, Rate, Select, Summarize, Support, Value</td>
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