

List of Verbs for Formulating Educational Objectives

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

1. Those that communicate knowledge:

Information:

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

Comprehension:

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

Application:

apply	employ	match	relate	sketch	calculate
examine	operate	report	solve	choose	illustrate
order	restate	translate	complete	interpolate	practice
review	treat	demonstrate	interpret	predict	schedule
use	develop	locate	prescribe	select	utilize

Analysis:

analyze	criticize	diagram	infer	question	appraise
debate	differentiate	inspect	separate	contract	deduce
distinguish	inventory	separate	contrast	detect	experiment
measure					

Synthesis:

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

Evaluation:

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

2. Those that impart skills:

demonstrate	hold	massage	pass	visualize	diagnose
integrate	measure	write	diagram	internalize	operate
project	empathize	palpate	record	listen	

3. Those that convey attitudes:

acquire	exemplify	plan	reflect	transfer	consider
modify	realize	revise			

These words are better avoided:

Those that are often used but are open to many interpretations:

<i>appreciate</i>	<i>have faith in</i>	<i>know</i>	<i>learn</i>	<i>understand</i>	<i>believe</i>
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Learning Objectives

Overall program and specific topic learning objectives should be developed based on the needs assessment. When written well, they provide direction for planning, developing content, strategizing delivery and materials/teaching aid selection. In addition, they should inform learners of what they can expect to learn from the specific chosen program content. For evaluation of your program, the degree to which learning objectives were met should be incorporated as one standard to measure the effectiveness of your program.

There should be learning objectives for the **overall** program **and specific** sessions. Learning objectives for the overall program describe the intended **general** outcome(s) or goal(s) of the program.

Learning objectives for specific sessions describe the intended learning outcome from attending a learning session on a specific topic. Each learning objective is short, specific, measurable and focused on a **single** outcome. A well-written learning objective has 3 characteristics:

- **Behaviour** – This is specific and describes what the learner will be able to do.
- **Condition** – This is the condition in which the behaviour will be achieved.
- **Outcome** – This is the criteria for evaluating the expected or desired behaviour.

Example of a learning objective for the overall program:

- As a result of attending this program, the participant will be able to apply (**Behaviour**) current knowledge to treat (**Outcome**) a wide range of respiratory disorders (**Condition**).

Example of a learning objective for the specific session:

- As a result of attending this presentation, the participant will be able to confidently prescribe (**Behaviour**) the best therapy (**Outcome**) for outpatient pneumonia (**Condition**).

The **behaviour** is characterized by the use of an **action word** or verb. Avoid the use of vague verbs such as “understand”, “know”, “appreciate”, “familiarize”, “gain knowledge of”, “grasp”, “be aware of”, “comprehend”, “appreciate”, “study”, “become acquainted with” or “learn about”. **One key question to ask when writing learning objectives is: What will the learner be able to do or expected to do once learning has occurred?**

Examples of specific useful action words include:

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|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| • identify | • demonstrate | • facilitate | • prescribe | • distinguish |
| • integrate | • manage | • define | • assess | • differentiate |
| • treat | • practice | • design | • interpret | • examine |
| • perform | • revise | • determine | • formulate | • implement |
| • recommend | • compose | • critique | • plan | • contrast |
| • prepare | • palpate | • acquire | • reflect | • operate |
| • consider | • list/state | • solve | • describe | • compare |

How to Determine if a Learning Objective is Well-Written

Is it measurable?

Will you be able to determine if the participant achieved the stated learning objective?

Does it address observable, behavioural outcomes?

Is it specific, addressing one aspect of an expected learning outcome?

Is it learner-centred?

Does it use a specific and appropriate action word, targeting the desired learning outcome?

Does it specify appropriate conditions to achieve the desired learning outcome?