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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>cite</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>indicate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>recite</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>state</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>write</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Those that impart skills:

| **Assess** | **contrast** | **distinguish** | **interpolate** | **restate** | **associate** |
| **Demonstrate** | **estimate** | **interpret** | **review** | **classify** | **describe** |
| **Estimate** | **interact** | **review** | **translate** | **compare** | **differentiate** |
| **Express** | **predict** | **compute** | **discuss** | **select** | **utilize** |

3. Those that convey attitudes:

| **Analyze** | **criticize** | **diagram** | **infer** | **question** | **appraise** |
| ** Debate** | **differentiate** | **inspect** | **separate** | **contract** | **deduce** |
| **Distinguish** | **measure** |

| **Evaluation:** | **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:**

- **appreciate**
- **have faith in**
- **know**
- **learn**
- **understand**
- **believe**

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:

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