

A Quick How to on Writing Learning Objectives

Begin with the end in mind... An *objective* is a description of a performance you want learners to be able to exhibit before you consider them competent.

An objective describes an intended *result* of instruction, rather than the *process* of instruction itself. (Mager, p. 5)

ABCDs of Writing Objectives:

- **A-Audience:** The who. "The nurse manager will be able to..."
- **B-Behavior:** What a learner is expected to be able to do – This is an action VERB = "Define a balanced budget"
- **C-Condition:** The conditions under which the performance is to occur. "At the end of the presentation or discussion..."
- **D-Degree:** The description of acceptable performance. How well the learner must perform in order for the performance to be considered acceptable. – This describes the specifics of the action or behavior (from B) – "In 50 words or less" or "With 90% accuracy.." or "In 10 minutes"

Putting the A-B-C-D together the objective would look like this:

"At the end of the presentation, the nurse manager will, define a balanced budget in 50 words or less."

For the Nurse Leadership Conference - All of the objectives will start with this phrase: "After attending this presentation/discussion, the conference participant will ... " -

This covers the A and the C - Now, all that is left are parts B and D – The behavior and the degree

DEGREE

Degree is the easy part – It is the "measureable" part of the objective – For example, how many words a student must define, what grade they must achieve, etc.

BEHAVIOR –

Depending on the presentation, you will choose the type of learning you hope to achieve.

There are three levels of learning:

1. Cognitive domain that emphasizes thinking;
2. Affective domain highlighting attitudes and feelings; and
3. Psychomotor domain featuring doing.

There are also three levels of cognitive behavior:

- **Recall objectives** are at the most basic level and involve recall or description of information.
- **Interpretation** is a higher level of learning and involves application and examination of knowledge.
- **Problem-solving skills** test the highest level of learning and involve construction and assessment of knowledge.

Here are some sample VERBS for writing Cognitive Behavior Objectives

	<u>COMPREHENSION</u>	<u>APPLICATION</u>	<u>ANALYSIS</u>	<u>SYNTHESIS</u>	<u>EVALUATION</u>
<u>KNOWLEDGE</u>	Arrange	Adapt	Analyze	Arrange	Appraise
Choose	Associate	Apply	Appraise	Assemble	Approve
Define	Clarify	Catalogue	Audit	Build	Assess
Label	Classify	Chart	Break down	Combine	Choose
List	Convert	Compute	Calculate	Compile	Conclude
Locate	Describe	Demonstrate	Categorize	Compose	Confirm
Match	Diagram	Develop	Certify	Conceive	Criticize
Name	Draw	Employ	Compare	Construct	Critique
Recall	Discuss	Extend	Contrast	Create	Diagnose
Recognize	Estimate	Extrapolate	Correlate	Design	Evaluate
Record	Explain	Generalize	Criticize	Devise	Judge
Repeat	Express	Illustrate	Deduce	Discover	Justify
Select	Identify	Infer	Defend	Draft	Prioritize
State	Locate	Interpolate	Detect	Formulate	Prove
Write	Outline	Interpret	Diagram	Generate	Rank
	Paraphrase	Manipulate	Differentiate	Integrate	Rate
	Report	Modify	Discriminate	Make	Recommend
	Restate	Order	Distinguish	Manage	Research
	Review	Predict	Examine	Organize	Resolve
	Sort	Prepare	Infer	Plan	Revise
	Summarize	Produce	Inspect	Predict	Rule on
	Transfer	Relate	Investigate	Prepare	Select
	Translate	Sketch	Question	Propose	Support
		Submit	Reason	Reorder	Validate
		Tabulate	Separate	Reorganize	
		Transcribe	Solve	Set up	
		Use	Survey	Structure	
		Utilize	Test	Synthesize	
			Uncover		
			Verify		

Level 1: Recall

Level 2: Interpretation

Level 3: Problem-solving

VERBS TO AVOID - Nonfunctional Verbs -- The following verbs cannot be measured or are redundant. They should be avoided when writing objectives.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• shows interest in• appreciation for• knows• awareness of• has knowledge of	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• comprehend• memorizes• conscious of• understands• capable of• learns
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Examples of Objectives:

Poor To increase the student's ability to visually identify white cells on a differential.
Better The student will identify correctly all white cells on a differential.

Poor The student will be familiar with red blood cell maturation in the bone marrow.
Better The student will diagram the three steps in the maturation of red blood cells.

Poor The student will understand the interpretation of hemoglobin patterns.
Better Given a set of four electrophoretic scans, the student will correctly diagnose each normal or abnormal hemoglobin pattern with 100% accuracy.

References:

1. Mager, R. F. (1984). Preparing Instructional Objectives (2nd edition). Lake Publishing Company: Belmont, California
2. http://meded.ucsd.edu/faculty/writing_instructional_objectives.pdf
3. <http://www.naacls.org/docs/announcement/writing-objectives.pdf>