



**Learning Objectives:
Why We Need Them,
How to Write Them**

Lori Rhew, MA

*Senior Training Associate, North Carolina Institute for Public Health
Gillings School of Global Public Health, University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill*

1

Objectives

- Explain the role of learning objectives in the development, design and evaluation of training.
- Analyze training goals to determine appropriate learning objectives.
- Write measurable learning objectives.

2

What Are Your Thoughts About Learning Objectives?

"I LOVE learning objectives!"

"Not my favorite thing, but I know I need to do them"

"Ugh! Learning objectives!!!!!"


3

Frame:

“The objective of education is learning, not teaching”

— Russell Ackoff

FOCUS ON THE LEARNER



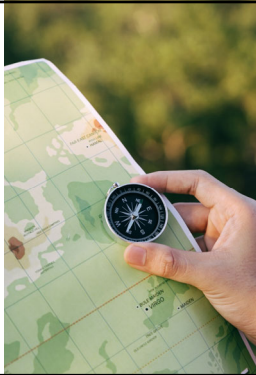
4

Learning Objectives

Well-written learning objectives can be:

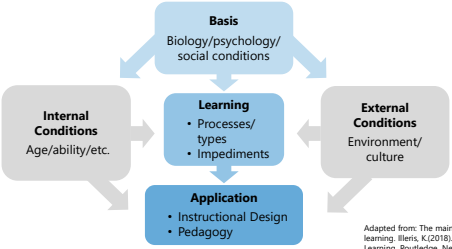
- **A compass for instructors**
- **A map for learners**

Source: <https://ctetresources.bc.edu/documentation/learning-objectives/>



5

Main Areas of Understanding Learning



```
graph TD; Basis[Basis: Biology/psychology/social conditions] --> Learning[Learning: Processes/types/Impediments]; Internal[Internal Conditions: Age/ability/etc.] --> Learning; External[External Conditions: Environment/culture] --> Learning; Learning --> Application[Application: Instructional Design/Pedagogy];
```

Adapted from: The main areas of understanding learning. Illeris, K.(2018). Contemporary Theories of Learning. Routledge, New York, NY.

6

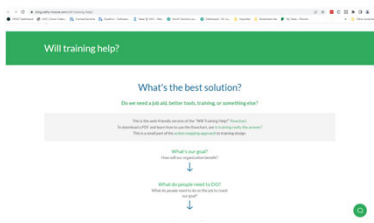
What problem are you trying to solve?

Project Charter for	
Date	
Client Name	
Other Involved Parties	
Problem Definition (why is this training needed)	
Proposed Solution	
Proposed Name of the Course(s)	
Course Goal	
Course Objectives	
Sub Objectives	

10

Will Training Help?

<https://blog.cathy-moore.com/will-training-help/>



11

Getting Started

- What is the goal of the training?
 - What does the learner need to know, believe or do to achieve the goal?



12

For example....

Learners will increase their writing skills.

Learners write a research paper using APA style.

13

For example...

What the does the learner need to know, believe or do?

Learners write a research paper using APA style.

14




For example...

Goal: Learners write a research paper using APA style.

- What does the learner need to know, believe, do?
 - What is APA? (know)
 - Why are style guides used? (know)
 - Consistency in writing is important (believe)
 - Write a research paper using APA (do)

15

Characteristics of Learning Objectives

-  Specific
-  Begin with a verb
-  Measurable

16

Taxonomies of Learning Objectives

- Taxonomies (classifications)
 - Common language
- Bloom's Taxonomy – most widely recognized
 - Cognitive – Thought
 - Affective – Attitudes/Values
 - Psychomotor - Doing

17

Domains in Bloom's

- Bloom's
- Cognitive – Thought
 - Affective – Attitudes/Values



18

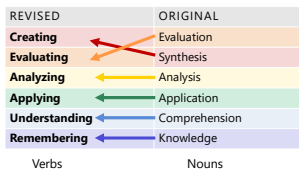
Bloom's Taxonomy*: Cognitive (Thought)

Creating	Create a new product or point of view	Assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, write
Evaluating	Justify a stand or decision	Appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, evaluate
Analyzing	Distinguish between different parts	Appraise, compare, contrast, criticize, examine, experiment, question, test
Applying	Use information in a new way	Choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write
Understanding	Explain ideas or concepts	Classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate, paraphrase
Remembering	Recall or remember the information	Define, duplicate, list, memorize, recall, repeat, state

*Revised Version

19

Revised



20

Bloom's Taxonomy: Affective (Attitudes/Values)

Characterizing	Acting consistently in accordance with the values and beliefs that you have internalized
Organizing	Create a value system by integrating new information with existing values and beliefs
Valuing	Seeing the value or worth of something
Responding	Actively participating
Receiving	Being aware

21

For example...

Goal: Learners write a research paper using APA style.

- What does the learner need to know, believe, do?
 - What is APA? (know)
 - Why are style guides used? (know)
 - Consistency in writing is important (believe)
 - Write a research paper using APA (do)
- What objectives would you write to meet this goal?

22

Bloom's Taxonomy

Cognitive		Affective	
Creating	Assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, write	Characterizing	Acting consistently in accordance with the values and beliefs that you have internalized
Evaluating	Appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, evaluate	Organizing	Create a value system by integrating new information with existing values and beliefs
Analyzing	Appraise, compare, contrast, criticize, examine, experiment, question, test	Valuing	Seeing the value or worth of something
Applying	Choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write	Responding	Actively participating
Understanding	Classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate, paraphrase	Receiving	Being aware
Remembering	Define, duplicate, list, memorize, recall, repeat, state		

23

For example

Goal: Learners write a research paper using APA style.

Objectives: Learners will:

- Explain the purpose of a style guide (**know**)
- Describe the benefits of using a style guide (**believe - value**)
- Develop a research paper that applies at least three principles from the APA style guide (**do**)

24

Goal

Webinar attendees will write measurable learning objectives that define affective, cognitive and/or behavioral outcomes that will be achieved during a training.

What do the learners need to know, believe, do to meet this goal?

- Define what a learning objective is
- Explain how Bloom's Taxonomy is used to define learning outcomes
- Describe the value of using learning objectives
- Write measurable objectives

28

Learning Objectives

- Explain the role of learning objectives in the development, design and evaluation of training.
- Analyze training goals to determine appropriate learning objectives.
- Write measurable learning objectives.

29

Summary

Learning objectives:

- Learner focused
- Outcome driven
- Measurement directed

30

References

Center for Teaching Excellence. (2023). Learning Objectives. <https://ctresources.bc.edu/documentation/learning-objectives/>

Fink, L.D. (2013). *Creating significant learning experiences*. Revised and updated. An integrated approach to designing college courses. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA

Illeris, K. (2018). *Contemporary Theories of Learning*. Routledge, New York, NY.

Krathwohl, D.R. (2002). A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy: An overview. *Theory Into Practice* 41(4), 212-18. <https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip410>

McNulty, Niall. (2019). Learning Stuff Online. <https://www.niallmcnulty.com/2019/12/introduction-to-blooms-taxonomy/>

Moore C. (2023). Action@work. <https://blog.cathy-moore.com/#gref>

The Peak Performance Center. (2023). Affective Domain of Learning. <https://thepeakperformancecenter.com/educational-learning/learning/process/domains-of-learning/affective-domain/>

Travers, R.M W. (1980). Taxonomies of educational objectives and theories of classification. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 2(2), 5-23.

Welter CR, Bekemeier B, McKeever J. (2021). Results and Recommendations From a National Public Health Workforce Development Systems Assessment Conducted in the United States. *Pedagogy in Health Promotion*, 7(3):272-279. doi:10.1177/2373379920907640
