



**Langone Medical Center**

NYU POST-GRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL  
Continuing Medical Education Department  
New York University School of Medicine

# Writing Better Learning Objectives

A learning objective describes to the learner a change that will take place in his/her competence, performance or patient outcomes based on a need in either his/her knowledge, competence or performance in a specific field



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**Every CME activity  
must have one or more  
learning objectives!**



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# Learning Objectives Defined

- Clear statement of anticipated results from the learner's perspective
- Focus primarily on what participants will do/learn as a result of attending the activity
- Relate to the needs identified in the course proposal
- Best when measurable and realistic
- Link to Outcomes Questions



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# Important Questions to Ask Before Getting Started

- **Desired Results**

- What course of action or outcome or change is indicated by the needs assessment?

- **Intended Audience**

- What would you like the audience to take away from this program?

- What do they need to know that will enhance their practice?



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# Types of Learning Objectives

- Improvement in Competency
  - Knowing how to do something– what a physician would do if given the opportunity but has not been put into practice yet. (Ex. Describe the factors involved in developing cultural competence and how to address these clinically.)
- Enhanced Performance
  - The skills, abilities and strategies a physician implements into practice. (Ex. Implement strategies that address cultural competence (specifically linguistic, cultural and social issues that affect mental health and mental health care in the Latino community) in your clinical practice.)
- Change in patient outcomes
  - Direct positive, results to your patients (Ex. Reduce morbidity and mortality rates of the latino population by addressing linguistic, cultural and social issues that affect mental health and mental health care of this community.)



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# Importance of Words

- Verbs that relate to specific actions or behaviors are critical to writing objectives
- Some verbs are better choices for some objectives than others
- Verbs that relate to specific actions or behaviors are critical



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# Words to Avoid When Writing Learning Objectives

- Know
- Learn
- Increase
- Become
- Understand
- Appreciate
- Improve
- Grow



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# Words to include When Writing Learning Objectives



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## Behavioral Verbs: Cognitive

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Define	Discuss	Compute	Distinguish	Diagnose	Evaluate
List	Describe	Demonstrate	Analyze	Propose	Assess
Recall	Explain	Illustrate	Compare	Design	Justify
Name	Identify	Perform	Contrast	Manage	Judge
Recognize	Translate	Interpret	Categorize	Summarize	Rate
State	Restate	Apply	Appraise	Plan	Choose
Repeat	Express	Use	Classify	Formulate	Decide
Record	Convert	Practice	Outline	Arrange	
label	Estimate	Predict	Differentiate	Organize	



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# Behavioral Verbs: Affective

Receiving	Responding	Valuing	Organization	Value Complex
Sit erect	Answer	Join	Adhere	Act
Reply	Greet	Share	Integrate	Practice
Accept	Read	Complete	Organize	Discriminate
Show	Report	Follow		Influence



## Behavioral verbs: Psychomotor

Perception	Set	Guided response	Mechanism	Complex	Adaptation	Origination
Identify	React	Display	Display	Display	Adapt	Create
Detect	Respond	Manipulate	Manipulate	Manipulate	Revise	Compose
Differentiate	Start	Work	Work	Work	Change	Arrange
		Perform	Perform	Operate		



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# Examples of Well Written Learning Objectives

**“Upon completion of this activity, the participants will be able to...”**

- List the routine vaccines for a healthy, two year old that are current recommended by the CDC
- Direct a team through the appropriate ACLS protocol in a simulation of ventricular fibrillation until the mannequin shows a normal cardiac rhythm

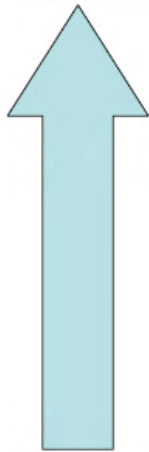


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## Cognitive Pyramid

Higher



Lower

Evaluation

Synthesis

Analysis

Application

Comprehension

Knowledge