

WRITING COURSE OBJECTIVES

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OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

What are course objectives?

Course objectives directly state what the students will know or be able to do by the end of the course. They ensure the instructor and students have a clear path through the course. All learning experiences and assessments should align to the course objectives.

Course objectives are:

- » Specific
- » Concise
- » Student-centered
- » Measurable
- » Student-friendly
- » Aligned with program objectives/goals

What does a course objective look like?

Example

The students will determine the developmental needs of children across all domains.

- » Student-centered—it states specifically what that students will be able to do.
- » It includes a measurable action verb
- » It identifies the content aligned with program goals.
- » Student friendly—it isn't overly technical, and is easily understood by students.

A program goal/outcome from which this course objective is derived may look like:

How are course objectives different from individual session objectives?

The learning objectives for an individual course session are at a more granular level than an overall course objective and lead the student toward the corresponding course objective.

For example:

Course Objective— The students will determine the developmental needs of children across all domains.

- » Session Objective—The students will recall the developmental domains. (knowledge)
- » Session Objective—The students will list the common characteristics of the stages of cognitive development. (knowledge)
- » Session Objective—The students will recognize developmental delays. (evaluate)
- » Session Objective—The students will create a therapy plan for a child with developmental delays. (synthesis)

Note: the action verb guides assessment. For example, knowledge-level learning can be measured through limited-response quizzes or tests; while higher level learning can be measured with constructed response and projects.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Although there are several taxonomies for learning, Bloom's is the most widely known and used. Bloom's Taxonomy serves as a useful resource for identifying the action verb needed for writing effective objectives. The following chart provides the six learning levels and examples of aligned performance verbs.

Learning Level	Associated Action Verbs
Knowledge	define, describe, state, list, name, write, recall, recognize, label, underline, select, reproduce, outline, match
Comprehension	identify, justify, select, indicate, illustrate, represent, name, formulate, explain, judge, contrast, classify
Application	predict, select, assess, explain, choose, find, show, demonstrate, construct, compute, use, perform
Analysis	analyze, identify, conclude, differentiate, select, separate, compare, contrast, justify, resolve, break down, criticize
Evaluation	judge, evaluate, determine, recognize, support, defend, attack, criticize, identify, avoid, select, choose
Synthesis/ Create	combine, restate, summarize, precise, argue, discuss, organize, derive, select, relate, generalize, conclude

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