

DRAFT - Learning Objective Job Aid

After analysis is completed, learning objectives must be written to indicate what is intended for the student to achieve. In other words, first you decide where you want to go, and then you create the means of getting there. When clearly defined objectives are lacking, there is no sound basis for the selection of instructional materials.

What is an Instructional Objective?

- Related to **outcomes**, rather than **process** for achieving those outcomes
- **Specific**, rather than broad
- **Measurable**, rather than intangible

Outcomes vs. Process

- Related to an intended outcome of instruction rather than the process of instruction.

For example: A chef adds seasoning to a soup. This is part of the *process* of cooking. The soup itself is the *outcome*, or result of cooking.

Specific vs. General

- Precise; you can immediately determine if you know what performance must be accomplished. On the other hand, general or abstract statements leave you in the dark.

For example:

Specific

- Thread this needle
- Smile when addressing a customer

General

- Understand logic
- Know your enemy

Measurable vs. Unmeasurable

- Describe intended outcomes that you can see, hear, or produce a tangible outcome

For example: "Be able to tie a knot" is measurable because we can see knot-tying behavior and therefore assess whether it meets our expectations.

The Qualities of Useful Objectives

- What should the learner be able to do? (Performance)
- Under what conditions do you want the learner to do it? (Environment)
- How well must it be done? (Measure)

Performance/Action

- States what a learner is expected to be able to do and/or produce to be considered competent.

Example: Be able to ride a unicycle
(The performance stated is *ride*)

- If the statement doesn't include a visible performance, it isn't yet an objective. A performance is described as a DOING word.

Doing words (performances)

- running
- solving
- writing

Being words (abstractions)

- ~~understanding~~
- ~~knowing~~
- ~~happy~~

- Whenever the main intent of an object is covert (i.e. solve problem, recognize specific characteristics, recall procedures), you must add an "indicator" behavior to tell that the covert behavior is occurring to satisfaction.

Example: Be able to discriminate counterfeit money. An indicator could be *sort*. Sorting into 2 piles is a direct way of finding out if the performance is in good shape.

Identify the misspelled word in the sentence. An indicator could be to circle, underline, point to, or re-write the misspelled word.

Environment

- Describes the important conditions, setting, and/or special circumstances (if any) under which the performance is to occur
- By telling people what they will have, what they will not have, and/or special circumstances miscommunication can be avoided.

Example: "Be able to run the hundred-yard dash"
Are the runners tricked by unexpected conditions such as having to run barefoot or up an incline?

- Questions to identifying environment/circumstances
 1. What will the participant be expected to use when performing? (i.e. tools, form, etc)
 2. What will the learner not be allowed to use while performing? (i.e. checklists or other aids)
 3. What will be the real-world conditions under which the performance will be expected to occur (i.e. on top of a flag pole, under water, in front of a large audience, in a cockpit, etc)

Examples: Given a standard set of tools....
Using your number two pencil....
In the presence of an irate customer...
Without the aid of references...

Measure

- Describes the criteria of acceptable performance; that is, it says how well someone would have to perform to be considered competent.
- If it isn't measurable, it isn't an objective.

The measure will:

- Provide a standard against which to test the success of the instruction
- Notify participants when they have met or exceeded expectations
- Give a basis for instructional quality

- Examples of types of criterion:* Speed, Accuracy, Quality

Example: Given a computer with word-processing software, be able to write a letter.
Criteria: All words are spelled correctly, there are no grammatical or punctuation errors, and the addressee is not demeaned or insulted
(In this case the criteria of acceptable performance are labeled as such; often they are not)

Objective Checklist

Your objective will communicate better if you can answer, "Yes" to following questions:

Performance

1. Is your main intent stated?
2. If the main intent is covert (mental), is an indicator behavior stated?
3. Is that indicator behavior the simplest and most direct one you can think of?

Environment

4. Have you described what the learner will be given, or be deprived of, during performance of the objective?
5. Have you described all of the conditions that will influence the shape of the performance?

Measure

6. Have you described how well the learner must perform to be acceptable?
7. Do those criteria describe some aspect of the performance, rather than instructional process or meaningless percentages?
8. Where a percentage is included in a criterion, does it reflect a realistic expectation?