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American Psychological Association

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Verb Selection Guide to Writing Performance-Based Learning Objectives

The following is a quick tool for faculty to use when writing learning objectives that allow the participant to demonstrate the depth to which they can apply their new knowledge. The higher the level, the more rigorous the cognitive demand, so we encourage high level objectives. An effort has been made, in this document, to consolidate Bloom's Taxonomy with Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Taxonomy to accommodate those who are familiar with either guideline. The associated verbs provided below are a partial list and do not constitute an official AAFP list. They are meant to provide examples for those unfamiliar with either taxonomy.

Consolidated Bloom's & Webb's Taxonomies					
Bloom's Level 2: Knowledge	Bloom's Level 2: Comprehension	Bloom's Level 3: Application	Bloom's Level 4: Analysis	Bloom's Level 5: Synthesis	Bloom's Level 6: Evaluation
DOK Level 1 Activities (Recall):		DOK Level 2 Activities (Skill/Concept):	DOK Level 3 Activities (Strategic Thinking):	DOK Level 4 Activities (Extended Thinking):	
Brief example: Recall elements and details of a diagnosis. Conduct calculations. List typical symptoms. Identify scientific concepts/relationships. Perform routine procedures. Describe treatment options.		Brief example: Summarize a patient's history. Solve routine multiple-step problems. Relate the cause and effect of a particular event. Identify patterns in behavior. Interpret data.	Brief example: Support ideas with details and examples. Develop a scientific model for a complex situation. Assess by exam. Determine a patient's motivation for treatment and describe how it affects the interpretation of a diagnosis.	Brief example: Apply new concepts to a current problem or situation. Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources. Design resource tools to inform patients and solve practical or abstract problems. Critique literature and formulate an opinion.	
Associated Verbs		Associated Verbs	Associated Verbs:	Associated Verbs	
Arrange Calculate Define Describe Identify Label List Match Match Measure Memorize Name Quote Recall Recite Recognize Repeat Report Review State Tabulate Tell Use		Categorize Cause/Effect Classify Collect Compare Construct Determine Display Distinguish Estimate Graph Identify Patterns Infer Interpret Make Observations Modify Organize Perform Predict Relate Separate Show Summarize	Apprise Assess Cite Evidence Construct Coordinate Care Critique Develop a Diagnosis Diagnose Differentiate Draw Conclusions Explain Concepts Formulate Hypothesize Improve Investigate Prescribe Revise Solve a Problem Use Concepts to	Analyze Apply Concepts Connect Choose Confirm Counsel Create Critique Design Determine Establish Evaluate Integrate Manage Prove Rate Recommend Select Synthesize Validate Verify	
Reference: Webb, Norman L. and others. "Wed Alignment Tool" 24 July 2005. Wisconsin Center for Educational Research. University of Wisconsin-Madison. 2 Feb. 2006. http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/WATindex.aspx . Bloom, Benjamin S. & David R. Krathwohl. (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals, by a committee of college and university examiners. Handbook 1: Cognitive domain. New York , Longmans. http://www.nova.edu/hpd/testing/ctl/forms/bloomstaxonomy.pdf					



Guidance for Writing Behavioral Learning Objectives

There are key components of well-written behavioral learning objectives that – when incorporated – allow for an optimal, articulated experience for learners. Consider using the below checklist when developing your objectives.

Are my learning objectives:

- **observable and measurable** (i.e., use action verbs that describe measurable behaviors)?
- statements that clearly describe what the learner will know or be able to do **as a result** of having attended an educational program or activity?
- focused on the learner?
- appropriate in breadth (not too few *or* too many – e.g., 3-4 objectives for a four-hour program)?
- sufficient in depth (at the **postdoctoral** level for psychologists and **clearly articulated** – e.g., does the *whole* of the objective make sense and is it appropriate for CE)?
- fully linked to: (a) the program narrative, (b) adequate references that support content, & (c) are listed on promotional materials?

Verbs to consider when writing learning objectives	Verbs to avoid when writing learning objectives
✓ list, describe, recite, write, identify	⊗ know, understand
✓ compute, discuss, explain, predict	⊗ learn, appreciate
✓ apply, demonstrate, prepare, use	⊗ become aware of, become familiar with
✓ analyze, design, select, utilize	
✓ compile, create, plan, revise	
✓ assess, compare, rate, critique	

Example of well-written learning objectives for a 4-hour CE session on hypnosis and pain:

At the end of this workshop, the learner will be able to:

1. Describe 3 key aspects of basic hypnosis theory and technique;
2. Explain differences between demonstrations of hypnotic technique and phenomena;
3. Identify 2 differences between acute and chronic pain; and
4. Demonstrate effective use of hypnosis in controlling acute pain.

Notes: For additional guidance on learning objectives, refer to the Standards and Criteria ([Standard C, Educational and Technical Assistance](#)). And, for further clarification on linking objectives, content, and promotional materials please refer to our [“What Should I Know about Standard D?”](#) resource.