A **learning objective** is a statement that describes the *knowledge, skills, and/or abilities* that participants *will gain* from the educational activity.

**WHEN DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES, ASK THESE QUESTIONS**

1. What should the result of the educational activity be for participants?
2. What should the participant be able to do?
3. What should the participant know?

**HOW TO WRITE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Learning objectives should:

* Be congruent with the identified gaps
* Reflect the mission of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine-Montefiore Medical Center, Center for Continuing Professional Development (CCPD), with a minimum of *improving competence*
* Be in a learner-centric format versus a faculty- or instruction-centric format
* Be measurable *(e.g., do not use “understand,” “know,” etc., as these are not measurable verbs)*
* Consist of only one action or outcome
* Follow the Kern and Thomas Approach[[1]](#footnote-1): WHO WILL DO HOW MUCH (HOW WELL) OF WHAT BY WHEN?
* Who = The participant, learner, provider, physician, etc.
* Will do = What do you want them to do? Describe the expected, observable action/behavior.
* How much (how well) = How well should the action/behavior be done? *(if applicable)*
* Of what = What do you want them to learn? Describe the knowledge that should be gained.
* By when = End of the course, etc.

Examples

*Upon completion of this learning activity, participants should be able to:*

* Assess a patient’s condition accurately and in a timely manner.
* Identify the correct sequence of priorities used when assessing a traumatically injured patient.
* Demonstrate central venous catheter placement at a mastery level.
* Identify all essential equipment needed when managing a patient with a difficult or potentially difficult airway.

**WHY DEVELOP LEARNING OBJECTIVES?**

Through the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the CCPD is an accredited provider of continuing education. As an accredited provider, *CCPD is responsible for ensuring that all continuing education programs have learning objectives to:*

1. Guide the design and development of the educational activities
2. Provide clear expectations for the educational activity to the learners, and
3. Provide measurable outcomes in terms of *knowledge, competence (knowledge in action)*, and/or *performance (what one does in practice).*

**VERBS TO USE: BLOOM’S TAXONOMY**

The verb list below has been found to be effective in formulating learning objectives; it is from Bloom’s Taxonomy by Benjamin S. Bloom, originally published in *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (1956).[[2]](#footnote-2)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowledge** | | **Competence** | | **Performance** | | **Evaluation** | | **AVOID USING THESE**  **[Unmeasurable Verbs]** |
| *Information* | *Comprehension* | *Application* | *Analysis* | *Synthesis* | *Evaluation* | *Skills* | *Attitudes* |
| choose  cite  count  define  describe  draw  identify  indicate  label  list  locate  match  name  point  quote  read  recall  recite  recognize  record  relate  repeat  retrieving  select  state  tabulate  tell  trace  write | associate  clarify  classify  compare  compute  contrast  convert  describe  diagram  differentiate  discuss  distinguish  draw  estimate  explain  express  extrapolate  identify  interpolate  interpret  locate  outline  paraphrase  predict  report  restate  review  sort  summarize  transfer  translate | adapt  apply  calculate  catalogue  chart  complete  compute  consolidate  demonstrate  develop  employ  examine  extend  generalize  illustrate  infer  interpolate  interpret  locate  manipulate  modify  operate  order  practice  predict  prepare  produce  relate  report  restate  review  schedule  sketch  solve  submit  tabulate  transcribe  translate  use  utilize | analyze  appraise  audit  break down  calculate  categorize  certify  compare  contrast  correlate  criticize  debate  deduce  defend  detect  diagram  differentiate  discriminate  distinguish  examine  experiment  infer  inspect  inventory  investigate  question  reason  separate  solve  summarize  survey  test  uncover  verify | arrange  assemble  build  collect  combine  compile  compose  conceive  construct  create  design  detect  devise  discover  draft  formulate  generate  integrate  make  manage  organize  plan  predict  prepare  prescribe  produce  propose  reorder  reorganize  set up  specify  structure  synthesize | appraise  approve  assess  choose  conclude  confirm  criticize  critique  diagnose  estimate  evaluate  generalize  grade  judge  justify  measure  prioritize  prove  rank  rate  recommend  research  resolve  revise  rule on  score  select  support  test  validate | diagnose  empathize  hold  integrate  internalize  massage  measure  palpate  pass  percuss  project  visualize | acquire  consider  exemplify  modify  plan  realize  reflect  transfer | appreciate  approach  be aware  be familiar with  become  believe  comprehend  conceptualize  experience  explore  grasp the significance of  grow  improve  increase  know  learn  thinks critically  understand |

1. Ken DE, Thomas PA, Hughes MT, eds. *Curriculum Development for Medical Education: A Six-Step Approach.* 3rd ed. Johns Hopkins University Press; 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Bloom BS. (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. New York, NY: Longmans, Green. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)