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* |
| choosecitecountdefinedescribedrawidentifyindicatelabellistlocatematchnamepointquotereadrecallreciterecognizerecordrelaterepeatretrievingselectstatetabulatetelltracewrite | associateclarifyclassifycomparecomputecontrastconvertdescribediagramdifferentiatediscussdistinguishdrawestimateexplainexpressextrapolateidentifyinterpolateinterpretlocateoutlineparaphrasepredictreportrestatereviewsortsummarizetransfertranslate | adaptapplycalculatecataloguechartcompletecomputeconsolidatedemonstratedevelopemployexamineextendgeneralizeillustrateinferinterpolateinterpretlocatemanipulatemodifyoperateorderpracticepredictprepareproducerelatereportrestatereviewschedulesketchsolvesubmittabulatetranscribetranslateuseutilize | analyzeappraiseauditbreak downcalculatecategorizecertifycomparecontrastcorrelatecriticizedebatededucedefenddetectdiagramdifferentiatediscriminatedistinguishexamineexperimentinferinspectinventoryinvestigatequestionreasonseparatesolvesummarizesurveytestuncoververify | arrangeassemblebuildcollectcombinecompilecomposeconceiveconstructcreatedesigndetectdevisediscoverdraftformulategenerateintegratemakemanageorganizeplanpredictprepareprescribeproduceproposereorderreorganizeset upspecifystructuresynthesize | appraiseapproveassesschooseconcludeconfirmcriticizecritiquediagnoseestimateevaluategeneralizegradejudgejustifymeasureprioritizeproverankraterecommendresearchresolvereviserule onscoreselectsupporttestvalidate | diagnoseempathizeholdintegrateinternalizemassagemeasurepalpatepasspercussprojectvisualize | acquireconsiderexemplifymodifyplanrealizereflecttransfer | appreciateapproachbe awarebe familiar withbecomebelievecomprehendconceptualizeexperienceexploregrasp the significance ofgrowimproveincreaseknowlearnthinks criticallyunderstand |

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)