Quick Tips for Writing Goals and Objectives

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Goals:

There is a difference between goals and objectives. An educational goal states the purpose of the educational event in a general way. It addresses who might be interested in attending and why. A goal could also be referred to as a "statement of purpose" - a very useful tool in encouraging participation.

A statement of purpose helps you set the general goals for your program and clarify the scope of the program you intend to offer. This guides you as a planner to keep on track when writing objectives and, later, choosing learning methods. It also has a secondary effect which helps you attract people to your program and that is clarifying relevance for the learner. In viewing your brochure or invitation, seeing themselves in the statement of purpose, a participant should be able to say immediately -"this program is for me!!"

A statement of purpose identifies broadly:

- General area and level of content

- Participants in terms of general role

- What the participants should be able to do on completion of the program

For instance: "**This program will focus on the assessment and treatment of foot disorders in adults and children. Topics will include both conservative and surgical management of foot pathology with emphasis placed on audience participation...**"

"Orthopaedic surgeons, surgeons, podiatrists, chiropodists, rheumatologists, plastic surgeons and other health care professionals working in the research and treatment of foot and ankle pathologies will enhance their knowledge and skills by attending this symposium."

Objectives:

Developing focused learning objectives follows conducting needs assessments as one of the first steps in developing effective CHE. Well written learning objectives are a value to Participants, Presenters and Course Directors:

For participants objectives:

- Clearly identify what participants will accomplish or will be able to do after attending an educational session

- Help them choose which session to attend

For presenters objectives:

- Clarify content they will include in their session

- Clarify essential vs. peripheral information

- Establish a framework for evaluating effectiveness and outcomes

Learning Objectives ARE NOT:

1. An agenda or list of topics which will be covered in an educational session.

   For example:

   - Pathophysiology of …

   - Diagnostic tests for…..

   - Treatment choices for….

2. The objectives of the teacher or presenter in the session - what the presenter will do.

   For example:

   - Review pathophysiology

   - Present new data

   - Explain new theory

Learning Objectives ARE:

1. Learner centered - describe what the learner or participant will do.

2. Specific and **active** description of what participants will be able to do in practice after active engagement in education program. (See Table 1)

3. Focused and specific. Learning Objectives have three parts. (See Table 2 on next page)

4. Logically built throughout the program. (See Tables 3a and 3b on next page)

5. Measurable

Learning Objectives - Table 1

USE Action verbs such as:	*AVOID Non-specific verbs such as:*
To write	To know
To recite	To enjoy
To list	To appreciate
To identify	To understand
To compare	To grasp
To contrast	To realize
To construct	To concentrate
To match	To be aware of
To describe	To recognize
To explain	To be familiar with
To operate	To believe
To complete	To be more confident
To select	
To choose	
To differentiate	

Learning Objectives - Table 2

Focused and specific Learning Objectives have three parts:

A. Active, specific verb which describes a practice behaviour

B. Identified criteria (i.e. for specific patient, treatment, disease state)

C. Defined context (i.e. in a specific practice setting, or for a specific patient type)

For example:

"After active participation in the workshop, participants will be able to:"

"After this educational session, participants will be able to:"

- Assess respiratory distress in pediatric patients

- Manage acute respiratory distress in the emergency setting

- Establish home care protocols to help prevent pediatric respiratory emergencies

Learning Objectives - Table 3a

Objectives (usually about three to five) logically build throughout the program.

If the goal of the program is primarily cognitive change, you may want to choose verbs defined by Bloom's Cognitive Taxonomy below. Levels of cognitive skill progress from basic (knowledge) to complex (synthesize, evaluate). Look at the skills (column 1) you would like participants to exhibit as a result of participating in your educational event. Then choose the action verb appropriate to demenstrate that skill (column 2).

e.g. Skill - knowledge of dates, events and places = action verb - list.

	SKILLS DEMONSTRATED	ACTION VERBS
KNOWLEDGE	• Observation and recall of information. • Knowledge of dates, events, places. • Knowledge of major ideas. • Mastery of subject matter.	List, define, tell, describe, identify, show, label, collect, examine, tabulate, quote, name, who, when, where, recall, recognize, record, relate, repeat, and underline.
COMPREHENSION	• Understanding information. • Grasp meaning. • Translate knowledge into new context. • Interpret facts, compare, and contrast. • Order, group, and infer causes. • Predict consequences.	Summarize, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, distinguish, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extend, choose, cite examples of, demonstrate use of, determine, differentiate between, discriminate, explain, express, give in own words, identify, locate, pick, report, restate, review, recognize, select, tell, translate, respond, practice, and simulate.

	SKILLS DEMONSTRATED	ACTION VERBS
APPLICATION	• Use information. • Use methods, concepts, and theories in new situations. • Solve problems using required skills or knowledge.	Apply, demonstrate, calculate, complete, illustrate, show, solve, examine, modify, relate, change, classify, experiment, discover, dramatize, employ, generalize, interpret, operate, practice, schedule, shop, use, utilize, and initiate.
ANALYSIS	• Seeing patterns. • Organization of parts. • Recognition of hidden meanings. • Identification of components.	Analyze, separate, order, explain, connect, classify, arrange, divide, compare, select, explain, infer, appraise, calculate, categorize, conclude, contrast, correlate, criticize, deduce, debate, detect, determine, develop, diagram, differentiate, distinguish, draw conclusions, estimate, evaluate, examine, experiment, identify, inspect, inventory, predict, question, relate, solve, test, and diagnose.
SYNTHESIS	• Use old ideas to create new ones. • Generalize from given facts. • Relate knowledge from several areas. • Predict, and draw conclusions.	Combine, integrate, modify, rearrange, substitute, plan, create, design, invent, what if?, compose, formulate, prepare, generalize, rewrite, arrange, assemble, collect, construct, develop, formulate, manage, modify, organize, plan, produce, propose, predict, reconstruct, set-up, synthesize, systematize, and devise.
EVALUATION	• Compare and discriminate between ideas. • Assess value of theories, presentations. • Make choices based on reasoned argument. • Verify value of evidence. • Recognize subjectivity.	Assess, decide, rank, grade, test, measure, recommend, convince, select, judge, explain, discriminate, support, conclude, compare, summarize, appraise, choose, critique, estimate, evaluate, rate, revise, score, validate, and value.

If goal of program is to translate knowledge to practice, develop skills, or evaluate attitude toward practice change, you may choose to use verbs in the knowledge, skill, and/or attitude domains.

KNOWLEDGE	**Remember/comprehend:** Compare, contrast, define, describe, discuss, distinguish, identify, illustrate, label, list, recognize, repeat, report **Interpret - apply - analysis:** appraise, classify, compare, compute, determine, differentiate, judge, predict, estimate **Solution - synthesize - evaluate:** assess, calculate, choose, decide, design, examine, formulate, invent, plan, propose, select, speculate
SKILL	**Copy:** adjust, measure, demonstrate, diagram, record **Control:** make, locate, separate, prescribe, handle, palpate, perform, diagnose, listen, percuss **Act:** operate, build, integrate, project, advise, counsel, choose
ATTITUDE	**Receptive:** accept, agree, allow, volunteer, approve **Respond:** build on, co-operate, criticize, defend, encourage, endorse, help, recommend, advocate, formulate, empathize, evaluate, justify, judge, reassure, question. **Internalize:** choose, decide to, lead, empathize, adopt, exemplify, manage, recommend, collaborate, acknowledge.

A note on attitudes:

Attitudes are often ignored in educational planning because they are hard to define and even harder to measure. However, it is also very evident that attitudes directly influence choices learners make. No change in practice is possible without a positive attitude towards that change.

Should you wish any further assistance or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact one of our Educational Consultants:

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