

A GUIDE TO WRITING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

(Adapted from The Continuing Medical Education Handbook, A Resource for CME Practitioners, 1994)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES ARE STATEMENTS THAT COMMUNICATE THE INTENT OF AN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY.

Every CME activity must have one or more learning objective(s). The number of objectives is reflective of the amount and diversity of information obtained from the needs assessment.

Learning Objectives must relate to the needs identified by the planning committee. These needs may include the development of either knowledge (new treatment for head injury), skills (correct technique for splinting fractures) or attitudes (addressing the needs of the terminally ill patient).

Before writing objectives, it may be helpful to ask a few questions of the players involved:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| a. CME Committee: | What course of action or outcome or change is indicated by the needs assessment? |
| b. Intended Audience | What would you like to take away from this presentation?
What do you need that will enhance your practice? |
| c. Proposed faculty | What information can you share to enhance the intended audience's understanding and competency? |

Start your objective with an action verb that specifies what behavior or outcome the learner should have gained after completing this activity. The following list reflects the action verbs typically associated with the development of learning objectives (Rosof, CME Primer)

To formulate educational objectives that:

A. Communicate **INFORMATION** choose:

- | | | | |
|-------------|----------|------------|------------|
| • Count | • Define | • Identify | • List |
| • Recognize | • Relate | • Select | • Tabulate |

B. Communicate **COMPREHENSION** choose:

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| • Classify | • Compare | • Describe | • Estimate |
| • Explain | • Locate | • Restate | |

C. Communicate **APPLICATION** choose:

- | | | | | |
|---------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| • Apply | • Complete | • Develop | • Examine | • Interpret |
| • Order | • Predict | • Restate | • Treat | |

D. Communicate **ANALYSIS** choose:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| • Appraise | • Contrast | • Criticize | • Debate |
| • Differentiate | • Question | • Separate | • Summarize |

E. Communicate **SYNTHESIS** choose:

- Arrange
- Assemble
- Detect
- Formulate
- Generalize
- Integrate
- Specify
- Validate

F. Communicate **EVALUATION** choose:

- Assess
- Critique
- Estimate
- Judge
- Rank
- Rate
- Recommend

G. **IMPART SKILLS** choose:

- Demonstrate
- Diagram
- Hold
- Measure
- Palpate
- Write

H. **CONVEYS ATTITUDES** choose:

- Consider
- Exemplify
- Reflect

Most learning objectives are introduced by stating: “Upon completion of this (lecture, workshop, session, etc.) the participants will be able to”: See below for examples...

Learner Objective Examples:

Upon the completion of this lecture the participants will be able to:

- List four causes of aplastic anemia.
- Give an example of the effect of a strong alkali reacting with human tissue.
- Calculate the amount of AIV fluid necessary to replenish a dehydrated patient.