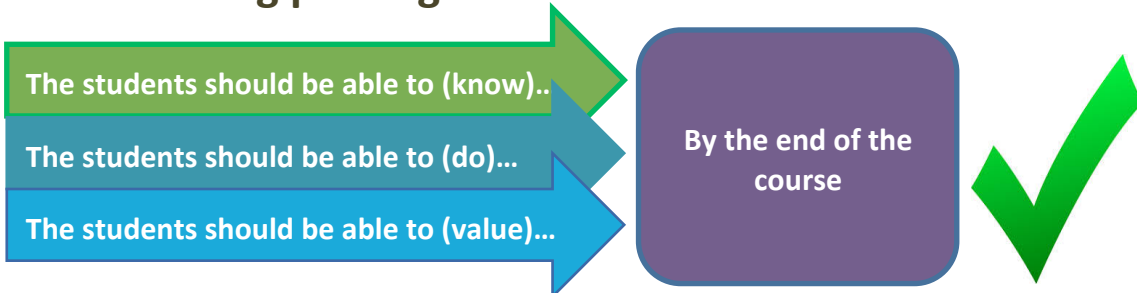


Student Learning Objectives

New teaching paradigm focused on student outcomes



NOTE: In some programs—especially those reviewed by an external accreditation agency—student learning outcomes by course already may be identified. Thus you should check with your department or program chair first. If student learning outcomes are not developed, a stepwise process is outlined below.

Writing a student learning objective or outcome

Part One: Audience



The audience must be identified and that is always the students not what you are going to do. Thus you would never begin a learning objective with “The professor will...” So your learning objectives/outcomes always will begin, “By the end of this course (or module) the students will be able to...”

Part Two: Behavior



Behavior identifies what your students should gain from this course. The verb used in the statement must be measurable (terms like “learn” or “understand” are nebulous; select action verbs that reflect measurable performance—stop by the CETL office for lists of appropriate verbs).

Cognitive outcomes are common—

Students will be able to define...

Students will be able to analyze in writing...

Students will be able to create...

But consider psychomotor ones, for instance, in terms of lab techniques or medical procedures:

Students will be able to administer subcutaneous or intramuscular injections...

And affective, social, and/or ethical ones:

Students will be able to work collaboratively in a group

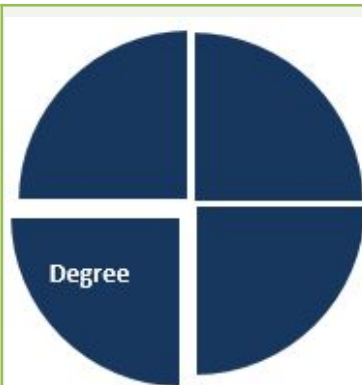


Part Three: Condition—if any exist



If there are any conditions under which the student is to demonstrate the outcome, these should be noted. Such as if the students can use a calculator, you would specify “with a calculator” or if in a clinical setting you would specify “in a clinical setting.” **You may not have any specific conditions in which case a condition may not be present.**

Part Four: Degree—though this part may be handled separately when you describe how assignments will be evaluated later in your syllabus to determine points or letter grade



This fourth part indicates the degree to which the outcome will be measured. Such as “without error,” “without prompting,” “at least 3 differences.” Sometimes the degree will be specified later when you describe an assignment that is used to measure this objective. Thus, you may not include the degree in the initial listing of the student learning objectives, but instead define this later in your syllabus.

Altogether

Audience, behavior, condition, degree generates a clear learning outcome. As mentioned, sometimes there are no special conditions that need to be specified and some departments/programs will feel degree need not be included in the student learning objectives since the degree will be specified later in the course syllabus or a rubric will be utilized that clearly identifies the level at which the learning outcome should be achieved. **Thus, course learning objectives at the very least must specify the audience and the behavior. Also rule of thumb is that most courses need no more than 4 to 7 learning objectives.**



Please feel free to contact the CETL office if you want help in developing your course’s, program’s, or department’s student learning outcomes. We also have books available through our Lending Library.