

FAQ: How do I write an effective learning objective for a course?

Rule 1.4.AA states: “Learning Objective” means a description of the performance which a learner should be able to exhibit, the conditions in which the performance will take place, and the depth and breadth of the expected performance before the learner is considered competent. These objectives may include and are not limited to cognitive, psychomotor and behavioral learning.

The learning objective is a statement of what the student is able to do following the instruction; it does not describe how the instructor will teach.

The first part of the learning objective is “the conditions in which the performance will take place.” These are the circumstances, commands, materials, directions, etc., that the student is given to initiate the behavior.

Examples include:

- Without using the class notes...
- After observing the instructor’s demonstration...
- Upon questioning by the instructor...
- Based on a client’s intake history...

The second part of the learning objective is “the performance which a learner should be able to exhibit.” The verb is in the second part of the learning objective – it is an action word that connotes an observable behavior.

Examples include:

- ...the student will describe and demonstrate draping protocols...
- ...the student will palpate...
- ...the student will list three purposes for draping...
- ...the student will perform a post isometric muscle release technique...

The third part of the learning objective is “the depth and breadth of the expected performance.” Examples include:

- ...with the client in both a prone and a side-lying position for each of the three techniques covered in the course.
- ...all of the bony landmarks on the posterior ilium that were covered in the course.
- ...contained in the MSBMT code of ethics.
- ...on four neck muscles, while communicating to the client how the client is to participate in the technique.

Verbs that are appropriate for a learning objective include, but are not limited to:

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| • Compare | • Demonstrate | • List |
| • Contrast | • Evaluate | • Locate |
| • Define | • Explain | • Palpate |
| • Describe | • Identify | • Perform |

Do not use verbs that are too “fuzzy” or ambiguous in a learning objective (because they do not reflect an effective way to assess the student’s knowledge). Examples include, but are not limited to:

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| • Appreciate | • Feel | • Review |
| • Comprehend | • Learn | • Understand |
| • Discover | • Realize | |