
SHOW NOTES

10-Minute Topic: Tips on Creating Learning Objectives

Suzanne Edmonds, MA; Randy Clinch, DO, MS

Why focus on this topic?

- Ensuring we have well-designed learning objectives is foundational for any educational activity we develop for any type of learner.

What is a learning objective?

- A description of what a learner needs to be able to do upon completion of a learning activity.
- They are guiding statements that can be thought of as a roadmap to your activity or course, in general.

“[Learning objectives] are kind of like a roadmap to either your activity or to your course in general.”

Suzanne Edmonds, MA

Why are learning objectives important?

- They are the foundation for a course or learning activity.
- They communicate to the learner specifically what is going to be attained by the end of the learning activity.
- They add value to the curriculum and the learning.
- They help the instructor guide what they are creating, including the course content, learning activities and even the assessments.

Example of a “good” learning objective

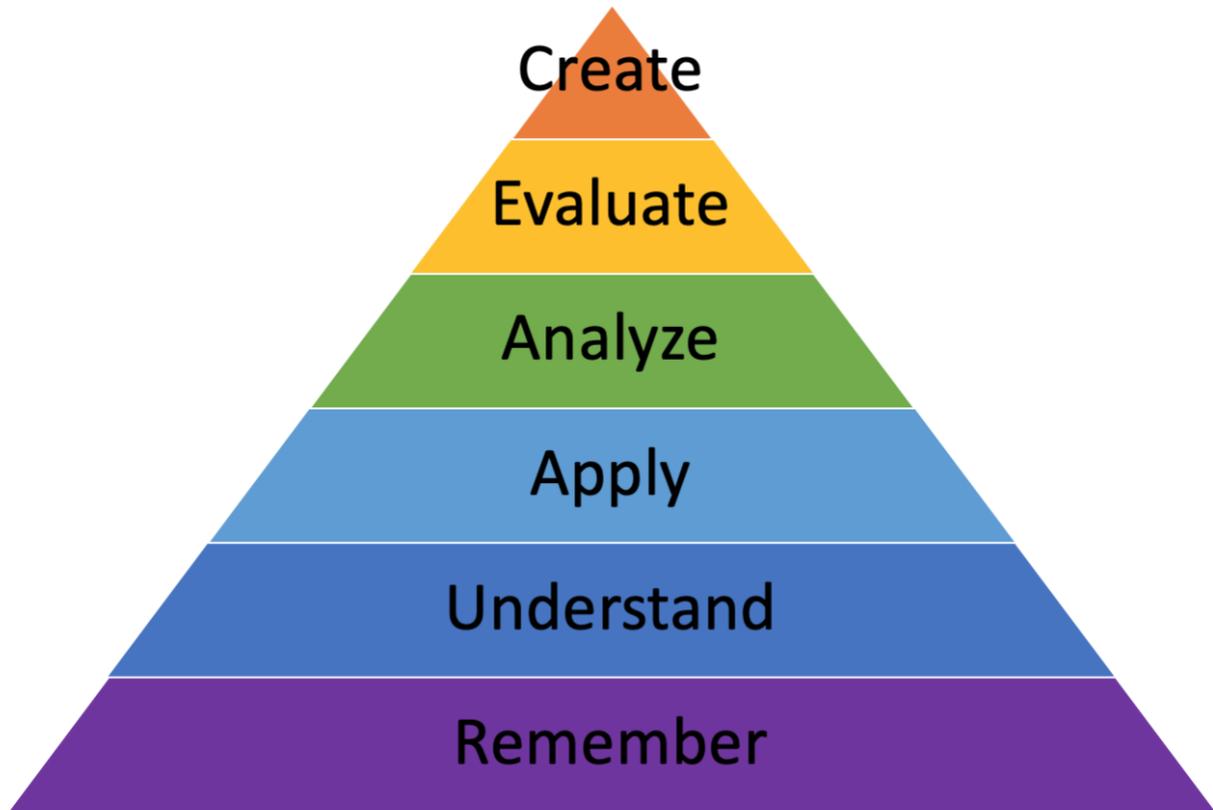
- “The learner will employ a systematic search pattern for interpreting chest x-rays.”
- Components of a “good” objective:
 - Who – the learner
 - How – the action verb
 - What – the content

Guidance on the development of learning objectives

- Determine your overall goal for the learning activity.
- Break down your overall goal into components.
 - Don't include too much in one learning objective.
- Focus on measurable outcomes.
- Use a variety of “action verbs” when creating your learning objectives
 - Examples of “action verbs” from Drexel University
- Use **SMART goals** (example from University of California)
 - **S**pecific
 - **M**easurable
 - **A**ttainable or **A**chievable
 - **R**elevant
 - **T**ime-bound

- **Specific**: what action will be performed and who will be performing it.
- **Measurable**: how will you measure the success of the objective.
- **Attainable or Achievable**: can this objective be achieved within a given timeframe utilizing the available resources.
 - If you don't have the available resources, you need to either gain the resources or change the objective.
- **Relevant**: are the objectives aligned with the instructional methods, activity, assessment, etc.
- **Time-bound**: when will this objective be achieved (e.g., by the end of the course, the end of the specific learning activity, etc.)

Utilize Bloom's Taxonomy – 6 levels of learning (think of a pyramid – see “Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Write Effective Learning Objectives” for details and examples of action verbs for each level)



- Consider where *your* learning activity fits in the overall scheme of the course.
 - This can help you determine if you'll target the more foundational learning levels or if you can include objectives that target the higher levels of learning.

Work Backwards

- “Begin with the end in mind” – think about what students are going to gain after interacting with your learning activity
- Set up your objectives to provide evidence that your students have learned your goals

Additional Resources:

- [Learning Objectives: Where We Start and Where We End](#)
- [Designing Meaningful and Measurable Outcomes: A First Step in Backwards Design](#)
- [How to Write Well-Defined Learning Objectives](#)