

LEARNING OBJECTIVES CHARACTERISTICS

Learning Objectives are specific behaviors (outcomes) that students must exhibit at the end of a segment of learning.

Objectives also need to be written in a way that maps out what learners are expected to do where they will do it and how well.

A learning objective has three major components:

- A description of what the student will be able to do
- The conditions under which the student will perform the task.
- The criteria for evaluating student performance.

Why are Learning Objectives important? Learning objectives are guides to:

- Selection of content
- Development of an instructional strategy.
- Development and selection of instructional materials.
- Construction of tests and other instruments for assessing and then evaluating student learning outcomes.

How do you write a Learning Objective? In writing a Learning Objective:

- Focus on student performance - not teacher performance.
- Focus on product - not process.
- Focus on terminal behavior - not subject matter.
- Include only one general learning outcome in each objective.

Characteristics of Learning Objectives

A learning objective is a statement describing a competency or performance capability to be acquired by the learner. There are three characteristics essential to insuring clear statements of objectives.

Behavior - First, an objective must describe the competency to be learned in performance terms. The choice of a verb is all-important here. Such frequently used terms as know, understand, grasp, and appreciate do not meet this requirement. If the verb used in stating an objective identifies an observable student behavior, then the basis for a clear statement is established. In addition, the type or level of learning must be identified.

Criterion - Second, an objective should make clear how well a learner must perform to be judged adequate. This can be done with a statement indicating a degree of accuracy, a quantity or proportion of correct responses or the like.

Conditions - Third, an objective should describe the conditions under which the learner will be expected to perform in the evaluation situation. What tools, references, or other aids will be provided or denied should be made clear.

Example:

Objective: "Given a set of data the student will be able to compute the standard deviation."

Condition - Given a set of data.

Behavior - The student will be able to compute the standard deviation.

Criterion - (Implied) - the number computed will be correct.