

Learning Objectives – examples and before & after

by jshabatu | Feb 6, 2018 | Best Practices, Course Design |

Examples of learning objectives from existing courses, and how we would recommend revising them



Examples below:

- Original version: *Understand immigration policy.*

How can we improve this? *Understand* is not a measurable verb. A conversation with this instructor revealed that she was really wanting to focus on historical aspects. These are things her students would be able to *describe*, which is measurable.

- Revised version: *Describe the history of American immigration policy.*

- Original version: *Describe and create a marketing plan for your organization.*

How can we improve this? This objective had two verbs. Having two verbs could result in a “split” objective, where a student could potentially meet part, but not all of the requirement. Additionally, the verbs (*describe* and *create*) were at different levels of learning according to [Bloom's Taxonomy](#). Often a quick fix for this situation is to see if in order to complete the higher level verb (*create*) if they would presumably have to be able to also do the lower level verb (*describe*). In this case, if they can create a marketing plan, we will assume they can describe one as well.

- Revised version: *Create a marketing plan for your organization.*

- Original version: *Become familiar with the elements of editing.*

How can we improve this? This objective does not have a measurable verb. It is also too broad. We suggested using the measurable verb *identify*, and also defining the scope of what we want to see from the student.

- Revised version: *Identify elements of editing, including composition, setting and lighting.*

- Original version: *Complete the assignment.*

How can we improve this? This item needs to be a “to-do” list item, not a learning objective. If your assignment helps to support your course level objective, then create a learning objective that describes the purpose of the assignment using a measurable verb.

- Original version: *Explain the benefits of various exercise modalities for an elderly person.*

How can we improve this? This objective is not student centered. The instructor has described what they are going to *teach* in the lesson, not what they wanted the student to be able to do—which was “determine the most appropriate exercise for a patient.”

- Revised version: *Determine the most appropriate exercise modality for health maintenance in the patient who is elderly.*

- Original version: *List types of abnormal pulmonary functions.*

How can we improve this? The verb “list” is in the lowest level of Bloom's Taxonomy, too low for this 3000 level course. When the instructor thought about what she wanted her students *to be able to do* with their knowledge of pulmonary functions, the objective became a higher level verb (determine) that was clearly measurable:

- Revised version: *Given the calculated results of tests compared with predicted normal values, determine the presence or absence of abnormal pulmonary function and classify it as to type and severity.*

- Original version: *Formulate a management plan for each of the above.*

How can we improve this? The instructor intended this objective to be third of fourth on a list. However, each objective must stand alone without reference to other objectives.

- Revised version: *Develop a management plan for the four commonly found greenhouse pests of tomatoes—aphids, fungus gnats, white-flies and scale.*

Some of the above examples were adapted from: <http://www.aafp.org>