



Informing Your Learners of Objectives

Before we get into writing effective learning objectives, let's look at some reasons why we need to include learning objectives in our lessons.

The main goal of objectives is to define the scope of the course and help learners focus on specific outcomes. Prior to writing objectives, you should determine the overall goal for the course. Objectives should always be written after conducting a thorough needs analysis. The main difference between goals and objectives is that goals provide information about the purpose of the course while objectives are measurable instructional outcomes of the course. Objectives describe the knowledge, skills, or attitudes learners should demonstrate after completing the training.

The best practice is to make them S.M.A.R.T. SMART objectives focus on the result rather than the activities and allow learners to measure their own success.

So, how would you build such objectives?

- **Specific** – Objectives should clearly state the knowledge or skill the learners need to demonstrate as a result of training. Specific objectives define what needs to be done by answering the What, Why, and How questions. Even individuals without any background knowledge about the topic should be able to read the objective and interpret it correctly.

Example – *Increase enrollment of ISD learners in X University through participation in the local job fair*

- **Measurable** – Focuses on the evaluation standards and includes some type of quantifiable measurement such as standards or parameters. Instructional designers should be able to evaluate this element through assessment.

Example – *by 15%*

- **Attainable** – Even though your objective can be both specific and measurable, it may not be feasible during the proposed period or with the limited resources available. The attainable part of your objective is responsible for the capability of satisfying the expectation. Action verbs such as observe, identify, participate, demonstrate, and communicate can help represent the behavior the objective is trying to measure.

Example – *Participate in the local job fair*

- **Relevant** – Emphasizes the practicality of the objective and clarifies why something should be done.



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Example – *Increase enrollment of ISD learners in X University over the next three months through participation in the local job fair*

- **Time-bound** – **Identifies the time when something will be done.**

Example – *Over the next three months*

To ensure that your courses meet the desired instructional objectives, start mapping various elements of the course (Modules, Chapters, Lessons, Activities, Assessments) to specific learning objectives.

For each of the learning units that learners will be exposed to, your mapping will offer an overview of the competencies required, the topics to be discussed, and the activities to be performed.

Since learning outcomes must be successfully demonstrated by the learner, you must establish unambiguous pass/fail criteria for quizzes, tests, assignments and other individual or group activities.