

“What do I want students to be able to do?”

Learning Goals vs. Objectives

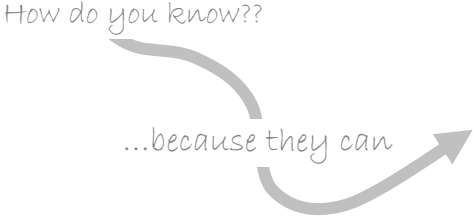
One of the most important questions to ask as you plan a class session, course, or develop a teaching project is to ask yourself: “*What do I want students to be able to do by the end of ...?*” [... today’s class, my course, this activity, our project, etc.]

In answering this question, most of us use general verbs that loosely define the learning, but which are difficult to observe. For example, “I want my students to understand key events in late 20th c. European history” or “I want my students to know the principle factors of soil formation.” These goals are a great place to start and they are extremely useful when thinking about the purpose and importance of a course, topic, or project.

However, phrasing your expectations only in general terms creates challenges. How will students know what is sufficient for demonstrating mastery and or achievement? What evidence would be sufficient for them to show you they *know, understand, and have learned?*

Writing clear objectives not only makes assessment easier they can also help ensure that students reach course goals. Documenting change and achievement is easier if you first consider what you want students to do (behavior), to what extent and under what conditions. In a course, ask yourself what you expect students to *do* with the course content. In the right column below are examples of verbs that involve specific actions, observable behaviors, and products.

I want students to be able to:

General Goals		Specific Objectives
Know	<i>How do you know??</i>  <i>...because they can</i>	Analyze
Learn		Solve
Understand		Compare
Appreciate		Critique
Value		Respect
Perform		Diagnose
Create		Evaluate

Once you have a list of 4-6 primary objectives, you can use them to guide decisions about course content, assignments, and grading. The next two pages provide an extensive collection of verbs that are specific, observable, or measurable.

Modified from original by Linse 2016, 2011, Lane, J. 2008, Linse 2007, Linse 2004, Linse 2000
Original: Walvoord, B., 1998, Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Knowledge Domain Action Verbs

Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Acquire	Arrange	Apply	Analyze	Appraise	Alter
Attend	Categorize	Calculate	Appraise	Argue	Calculate
Choose	Chart	Change	Breakdown	Assess	Categorize
Collect	Cite	Choose	Categorize	Compare	Change
Complete	Classify	Classify	Classify	Conclude	Classify
Copy	Compile	Compute	Combine	Consider	Combine
Define	Conduct	Conduct	Compare	Contrast	Compile
Describe	Convert	Construct	Conclude	Critique	Compose
Detect	Demonstrate	Demonstrate	Contrast	Decide	Conduct
Differentiate	Determine	Develop	Criticize	Defend	Constitute
Distinguish	Diagram	Discover	Deduce	Discriminate	Construct
Duplicate	Differentiate	Employ	Defend	Explain	Create
Find	Distinguish	Generalize	Detect	Interpret	Deduce
Identify	Document	Manipulate	Diagram	Judge	Derive
Imitate	Draw	Modify	Differentiate	Justify	Design
Indicate	Edit	Operate	Discriminate	Recommend	Devise
Isolate	Estimate	Organize	Distinguish	Relate	Develop
Label	Explain	Predict	Evaluate	Standardize	Discover
List	Extend	Prepare	Formulate	Summarize	Discuss
Mark	Extrapolate	Produce	Generate	Validate	Document
Match	Fill in	Relate	Identify		Expand
Name	Follow	Restructure	Illustrate		Explain
Order	Formulate	Show	Induce		Formulate
Outline	Gather	Solve	Infer		Generalize
Place	Generalize	Transfer	Outline		Generate
Recall	Give	Use	Paraphrase		Modify
Recognize	example		Plan		Organize
Reproduce	Illustrate		Point out		Originate
Select	Infer		Present		Paraphrase
State	Interpolate		Question		Plan
Underline	Interpret		Recognize		Predict
	Itemize		Relate		Produce
	Locate		Save		Propose
	Make		Select		Rearrange
	Organize		Separate		Reconstruct
	Paraphrase		Shorten		Relate
	Predict		Structure		Reorganize
	Prepare		Subdivide		Revise
	Quote				Rewrite
	Read				Signify
	Rearrange				Simplify
	Record				Specify
	Relate				Summarize
	Rephrase				Synthesize
	Represent				
	Restate				
	Summarize				
	Translate				
	Update				

Verbs from Bloom, B. S. (editor), 1984, Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook 1: Cognitive Domain. Longman, New York. Categories from Krathwohl, D. R., 2002, A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy: An Overview, Theory into Practice, 41, 4, 212-218.

Attitudinal Domain

Receive	Respond	Value	Organize	Characterize
Listen to	Reply	Attain	Organize	Believe
Perceive	Answer	Assume	Select	Practice
Be alert to	Follow along	Support	Judge	Continue to
Show tolerance of	Approve	Participate	Decide	Carry out
Obey	Continue		Identify with	

Skills Domain

Each objective under the skills domain can be assessed at different levels of mastery. For example:
 Level 1: Imitation Level 2: Manipulation Level 3: Precision Level 4: Articulation Level 5: Naturalization

Assemble	Attach	Balance	Build	Bundle	Calibrate
Care for	Clean	Code	Collate	Collect	Conduct
Conserve	Construct	Control	Design	Diagram	Dictate
Direct	Dismantle	Document	Draw	Duplicate	Edit
Execute	Fix	Format	Gather	Grade	Grid
Harvest	Highlight	Implement	Inspect	Instruct	Interview
Lift	Line	Load/reload	Locate	Log	Make
Manage	Measure	Mix	Mount	Operate	Organize
Package	Perform	Plant	Portion	Position	Prepare
Press	Process	Program	Proofread	Propagate	Prove
Provide	Prune	Raise	Recheck	Refill	Regulate
Renovate	Repair	Replace	Reproduce	Retrieve	Route
Save	Search	Secure	Select	Separate	Sharpen
Simplify	Simulate	Sketch	Sort	Splice	Stratify
Sterilize	Tape	Terminate	Transfer	Transplant	Treat
Trim	Troubleshoot	Verify	Wash	Write	