

Writing Learning Outcomes

What is a learning outcome?

Learning outcomes are statements that indicate what learners will know or be able to do at the completion of a learning experience (program, conference, training session, etc.).

What are the components of a learning outcome?

Learning outcomes can be created by using the ABCD method. First, determine these components of your learning outcome: audience, behavior, condition, and degree.

Audience: Who will be learning? In most cases, this will be students.

Behavior: What new behaviors will the audience learn as a result of this initiative? The behavior should be written as a future tense verb. A list of good verbs for learning outcomes is provided in this packet.

Condition: What conditions are associated with the learning? Commonly used conditions include: attending a particular program, reading a newsletter, or completing training.

Degree: You may include a measurable unit that indicates an acceptable level of performance. Assigning a specific degree typically makes for a more easily assessable learning outcome.

How do I construct a learning outcome?

Once you have determined the various components of the learning outcome you will just need to piece them together to make a complete sentence. The order of the components should be chosen carefully to make the most comprehensive sentence. It is common for the degree and the behavior are intertwined. Take these components for example:

Audience: Students

Behavior: List Cs of the Social Change Model

Condition: Attending the Leadership Academy

Degree: Seven Cs (i.e. the seven Cs of the Social Change Model)

> This learning outcome works well in the **C + A + B & D** format.

After attending the Leadership Academy, students + will be able to list the seven Cs of the SCM.

Condition

Audience Behavior & Degree

> It can be rewritten in the **A + B & D + C** format as well.

The students + will be able to list the seven Cs of the SCM + after attending the Leadership Academy.

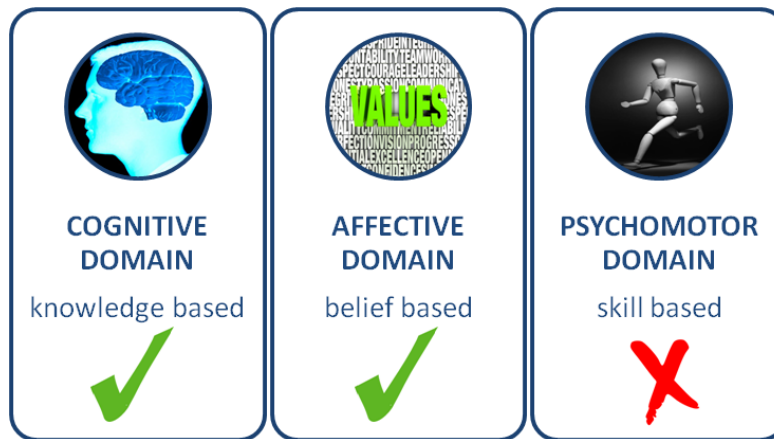
Audience

Behavior & Degree

Condition

How do I choose the appropriate verb for the *behavior* of the learning outcome?

Three learning domains guide the selection of verbs: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor.



Determining the domain of learning you would like to work with will help you determine which verb to use in your learning outcome. For our purposes, we will focus on the cognitive and affective domains. The **Cognitive Domain** involves knowledge acquisition while the **affective domain** involves beliefs, values, and the behavior changes associated with them.

Cognitive Domain Classifications

There are different levels of cognitive learning that can take place as a result of an initiative. Benjamin Bloom created a helpful categorization of cognitive learning levels that educators often use to construct learning outcomes. You needn't memorize any of these definitions, but it may be helpful to consult this taxonomy to determine which level of learning is appropriate for your initiative.

Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will be able to recognize or recall information.
Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will be able to summarize the meaning of the information.
Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will be able to apply the information to new and different situations.
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will be able to analyze the information and understand its various components.
Synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will be able to take various pieces of information (theories, principles and concepts) and synthesize the knowledge into an original product.
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will be able to critically assess the information and make judgments regarding its accuracy.

Some Verbs for Use in Stating **Cognitive Outcomes**

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Cite	Arrange	Adapt	Analyze	Arrange	Appraise
Choose	Associate	Apply	Appraise	Assemble	Approve
Count	Clarify	Catalogue	Audit	Build	Assess
Define	Classify	Chart	Break down	Combine	Choose
Label	Convert	Compute	Calculate	Compile	Conclude
List	Describe	Consolidate	Categorize	Compose	Confirm
Locate	Diagram	Demonstrate	Certify	Conceive	Criticize
Match	Draw	Develop	Compare	Construct	Critique
Name	Discuss	Employ	Contrast	Create	Diagnose
Recall	Estimate	Extend	Correlate	Design	Evaluate
Recognize	Explain	Extrapolate	Criticize	Devise	Judge
Record	Express	Generalize	Deduce	Discover	Justify
Repeat	Identify	Illustrate	Defend	Draft	Prioritize
Select	Locate	Infer	Detect	Formulate	Prove
State	Outline	Interpolate	Diagram	Generate	Rank
Write	Paraphrase	Interpret	Differentiate	Integrate	Rate
	Report	Manipulate	Discriminate	Make	Recommend
	Restate	Modify	Distinguish	Manage	Research
	Review	Order	Examine	Organize	Resolve
	Sort	Predict	Infer	Plan	Revise
	Summarize	Prepare	Inspect	Predict	Rule on
	Transfer	Produce	Investigate	Prepare	Select
	Translate	Relate	Question	Propose	Support
		Sketch	Reason	Reorder	Validate
		Submit	Separate	Reorganize	
		Tabulate	Solve	Set up	
		Transcribe	Survey	Structure	
		Use	Test	Synthesize	
		Utilize	Uncover		
			Verify		

Affective Domain Classifications

Similar to the cognitive domain, different levels of learning can take place within the affective domain.



Some Verbs for Use in Stating **Affective** Outcomes

Receiving	Responding	Valuing	Organization	Internalizing
Accept	Agree	Adopt	Anticipate	Act
Acknowledge	Allow	Aid	Collaborate	Administer
Attend	Answer	Care (for)	Confer	Advance
Follow	Ask	Complete	Consider	Advocate
Listen	Assist	Delay	Consult	Aid
Meet	Attempt	Encourage	Coordinate	Challenge
Observe	Choose	Endorse	Design	Change
Receive	Communicate	Enforce	Direct	Commit (to)
	Comply	Evaluate	Establish	Counsel
	Cooperate	Expedite	Facilitate	Criticize
	Demonstrate	Foster	Investigate	Debate
	Describe	Guide	Judge	Defend
	Discuss	Initiate	Lead	Disagree
	Display	Interact	Manage	Dispute
	Exhibit	Join	Modify	Empathize
	Help	Justify	Organize	Enhance
	Identify	Maintain	Plan	Forgive
	Locate	Monitor	Qualify	Influence
	Notify	Praise	Recommend	Motivate
	Obey	Preserve	Revise	Negotiate
	Offer	Propose	Simplify	Persist
	Participate (in)	Query	Specify	Promote
	Practice	React	Submit	Promulgate
	Present	Respect	Synthesize	Question
	Read	Seek	Test	Reject
	Relay	Share	Vary	Resolve
	Reply	Study	Weigh	Seek
	Report	Subscribe		Serve
	Respond	Suggest		Strive
	Select	Support		Volunteer (for)

Practice Writing Learning Outcomes

Step 1: Determine which program or initiative you will be writing a learning outcome for (this will likely be included in the learning outcome as the *condition*).

Program or initiative

Step 2: Determine your audience, behavior, condition, and degree (if applicable).

Audience

Often "students"

Behavior

Use the verb list

Condition

Often your initiative

Degree

Numerical value associated with behavior

Step 3: Choose the order that works best for your learning outcome.

C + A + B & D:

Condition

Audience

Behavior & Degree

A + B & D + C:

Audience

Behavior & Degree

Condition

Try some other combinations:
