



The University
of Vermont

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION

Guidelines for Writing Educational Objectives

Educational objectives are typically short, specific statements that describe what the learner will be able to obtain from a presentation or course. Objectives describe the planned outcome of the presentation or the course.

Educational objectives should be written with action verbs that are precise and are measurable. Eg. ask yourself, “what will the participant **be able to do** when the objective has been achieved?” The statement, “The participant will be able to understand the five key principles of infection control” is not an adequate objective, because it is open to interpretation and is not quantifiable. On the other hand, the statement, “The participant will be able to outline five key principles of infection control” is a satisfactory objective.

A well-stated behavioral objective contains three key elements:

1. **Statement of outcome:** “Participant will be able to predict the route of metastatic spread.”
2. **Conditions or circumstances under which the statement is to be achieved:** “Given a pediatric patient with surgical condition.....” or “based on the preliminary diagnosis of”
3. **Level of achievement:** “List three factors leading to coronary disease” or “Given five possible therapies for hypertension, outline at least three of them” or “Be able to diagnose with 85% accuracy....”

Vocabulary Examples:

Communicate Knowledge: describe, identify, define, indicate, state, recognize, assess, classify, apply, differentiate, formulate, specify, integrate, etc.

Impact Skills: demonstrate, diagnose, measure, practice, project, visualize, etc.

Convey Attitudes: consider, modify, plan, revise, transfer