

Writing Instructional Objectives for Design

Writing instructional objectives for training design is simple as long as you recognize that an objective must consist of a measurable outcome, conditions may be applied, and performance degree or level may be stated. The following is a summary that you should print and keep in your files. You may have to write corporate training materials sometimes in the future.

Instructional Objectives

An instructional objective describes an intended outcome rather than a description or summary of content.

One characteristic of a usefully stated objective is that it is stated in behavioral, or performance, terms that describe what the learner will be **DOING** when demonstrating his/her achievement of the objective. The following terms may be used:

To write
To recite
To identify
To differentiate
To solve
To construct
To list
To compare
To contrast

The statement of objectives for an entire program of instruction will consist of several specific statements.

The objective that is most usefully stated is one that best communicates the instructional intent of the person selecting the objective.

An objective is meaningful to the extent it communicates an instructional intent to its reader, and does so to the degree that it describes what is expected of the learner, or defines the terminal behavior expected of the learner.

Terminal behavior is defined by:

Identifying and naming the observable act that will be accepted as evidence that the learner has achieved the objective (measurability)

Describing the conditions (given, restrictions) necessary to exclude acts that will not be accepted as evidence that the learner has achieved the objectives.

To describe terminal behavior (what the learner will be DOING):

Identify and name the over-all behavior act.

Define the important conditions under which the behavior is to occur (givens or restrictions, or both). Here are some examples:

Given a problem of the following class...
Given a list of...
Given any reference of the learner's choice...
Given a matrix of relationships...
Given a standard set of tools...
Given a properly functioning...
Without the aid of references...
Without the aid of a calculator...
Without the aid of tools...

For example, instead of simply specifying "to be able to recite the alphabet," a statement can communicate better by reading something like:

Given the time of five minutes, the learner must be able to write the letters of the alphabet in order, from A to Z, without the aid of charts.

Define the criterion of acceptable performance. This means that the level or degree of acceptable performance may be stated. Example: The learners must identify at least 80% of... or The learner must list at least 30 out of forty...

Write a separate statement for each objective; the more statements you have, the better chance you have of making clear your intent.

If you give each learner a copy of your objectives, you may not have to do much else.

Most of the summary is taken from the book, *Preparing Instructional Objective*, by Robert F. Mager, Copyright 1962, by Fearon Publishers, Inc. You can probably find more information in your library or on the Internet.

Steps involved in Instructional Design

Front-end Analysis

- Conduct a needs analysis to determine needs and interests of learners.
- Analyze the population for whom the education program will be created to identify general characteristics that are important when developing instruction.

Gather Subject Information for Design of Instruction

- Design an appropriate unit of instruction using Instructional Objectives.

Planning of Instruction

- Develop a logical scope and sequence for an education program and formulates appropriate and measurable program objectives.
- Understands different learning theories and their applications in instructional settings.
- Apply knowledge of learning theories when selecting instructional strategies that will best assist in the learning process.
- Understand the important elements of the following theories of design: Backwards Design (Understanding by Design), Teaching for Understanding, and Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction.
- Facilitate the development of a variety of techniques, including technology, to assess learning.

Presenting the Instruction

- Determine the mode of presentation: classroom, correspondence, computer-based, Internet/intranet, etc.

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