

Writing Effective Learning Objectives

CME providers are expected to design activities with the intent of changing physician competence, performance and/or patient outcomes, as opposed to merely increasing knowledge. Objectives must be behavioral rather than instructional:

- **Competence** (knowing how to do something; having the knowledge/ability to apply knowledge, skills and judgment in practice; new strategies one might consider putting into practice)
- **Performance** (what one actually puts into practice)
- **Patient Outcomes** (impact on patient health)

Tips for Writing Objectives

- Objectives should address these questions:
 - What should the result of the educational activity be for participants?
 - What should the participant be able to do after attending the activity?
- Make sure that objectives are measurable and relate directly to reducing the identified practice gap
- State what the learner might do differently (behavioral change) because of what has been learned
- Use verbs which allow measurable outcome and thus can then be used in the evaluation process

VERBS that can used to measure changes in COMPETENCE

Analyze	Compare	Design	Differentiate	Evaluate	Plan
Assess	Contrast	Develop	Distinguish	Formulate	Recommend

VERBS that can used to measure changes in PERFORMANCE

Apply	Diagnose	Examine	Integrate	Manage	Prescribe
Counsel	Employ	Incorporate	Interpret	Perform	Utilize

Avoid words or phrases such as think, understand, know, appreciate, learn, comprehend, be aware of, be familiar with, etc. These are not measurable actions.

Examples of Well Written Objectives

- Critically review and analyze cases to improve quality and safety of patient care in management of hyperglycemia (competence)
- Manage patients diagnosed with ovarian cancer incorporating stage grouping, evidence-based evaluation management guidelines and clinical trial data (performance)
- Differentiate the clinical presentations of acute rhinosinusitis vs acute bacterial rhinosinusitis to develop treatment plans (competence)
- Diagnose possible life-threatening arrhythmias in adolescent athletes based on patient/family history, physical exam and ECG (performance)