# **Setting Objectives**



A training objective clearly and simply states what the learner will be able to do as a result of participating in the program.

Effective objectives are measurable and observable.

Avoid objectives that aim to improve an internal state of mind; for example-to "understand" or to "know" are not measurable or observable

An objective is the intended result of the training – not a description of the training process.

# Stating an Objective

Your objectives should list each of the distinct items that will be taught; each beginning with an action verb. The easiest way to determine if you are beginning with an action verb is to ask yourself, "can I DO that?"

Objectives that begin with "know" or "understand" (two common mistakes) cannot be demonstrated. How will I know if you *know* the alphabet? Because you will *recite* it.

Trick: At the end of this training program, participants will be able to...

The decisions you make in selecting content, methods, media and evaluation are all based on your objective statements.

For the participant, a well written objective answers the question: \_\_\_\_\_\_?

# **Objectives Define:**

- ✓ What learning needs to take place
- ✓ Criteria or conditions
- ✓ The level of training involved

# Knowledge and Skill Objectives

Knowledge objectives start with:	Skill objectives start with:	
Classify	Align	Arrange
Describe	Assemble	Budget
Define	Build	Classify
Discuss	Conduct	Construct
Explain	Design	Develop
Interpret	Draw	Erect
Label	Evaluate	Facilitate
Name	Forecast	Implement
Recognize	Inspect	Install
Select	Instruct	Justify
Write	Negotiate	Organize
	Perform	Plan
	Recommend	Repair

#### **Rules of Thumb and Common Errors**

### Two Objectives in One

Do not combine two objectives into one, such as: *Participant will locate air filter and determine if it should be replaced.* What if your participant can locate the filter but cannot determine if it should be replaced? Did he pass the objective or fail it?

### Knowing and Understanding

Avoid objectives that aim to improve an internal state of mind; for example - to "understand" or to "know" are not measurable or observable. In addition, since most learning in the workplace is to achieve a performance outcome, these two terms truly are inapplicable – there is almost always an action word that describes what your trainees will leave knowing or being able to do.

#### Too Narrow or Too Broad

You don't want your objectives to be so broad that three different instructors, given your objective, could effectively teach three different classes. For example: *Participants will be able to read financial statements*. Nor do you want your objectives to be so narrow they practically become the text of your training, such as: *Participants will be able to identify uses of cash and lines of credit used by corporations via cash flow statements*. Ideally, an appropriately stated objective would be: *Participants will read and interpret cash flow statements*.

#### Stating a Topic as an Objective

Many times a designer will state a topic, such as: *Participants will learn the principles of electricity*, rather than a learning objective, which might be stated: *Participants will be able to wire an electric engine*. In this case the principles of electricity would be inherent in learning how to wire an electric engine.

### Teaching vs. Performance

Similar to stating a topic as an objective, many times objectives are erroneously stated in the form of what is being taught, rather than in the form of what the trainee will be able to do. *Reading financial statements* is what is being taught but *Identifying uses of cash and cash reserves* is what you want the trainee to be able to do as a result of your training.

### **Conditions or Criteria**



Is it necessary that trainees be able to use their new knowledge or skill within certain constraints or under certain <u>conditions</u>? If so, be sure to include those conditions in the statement of the objective(s).

If the performance of the objectives must comply with certain <u>criteria</u> – those criteria need to be clearly stated as well.

The trainee must know what they are expected to do in order to achieve objective-success.

For example, must they –

Type 60 wmp with no errors? or Type 60 wpm with one hand?

(criteria) (condition) (criteria) (condition)

## The Level of Training Involved



Will trainees simply need to be familiar with a new skill or will they have to *master* it? Will they have to recognize a 747 jetliner or assemble one? Do you expect it will take a half-day to teach, or six weeks?

There always seems to be much more information than there is time or the resources to teach it.

- Start with a "think big" approach. List everything that could possibly be relevant to the objective(s).
- Narrow the list by indicating which topics are essential.
- Include only those topics that are essential to the program objectives.
- The "nice to know's" can be provided in an appendix or other resource area.

# **Additional Resources**

# **Websites**

http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/

# **Books**

How to Write and Use Instructional Objectives, by Norman Gronlund Preparing Instructional Objectives, by Bob Mager