# Writing Learning Outcomes

### What are Learning Outcomes?
Learning outcomes communicate what knowledge, skills, and attitudes students will develop during a course.

### Benefits to Writing Learning Outcomes
Setting learning outcomes for a course helps:
- Instructors align instructional strategies, learning activities, and assessment measures to achieve desired outcomes.
- Students understand what is expected of them and the purpose of the course in their degree program.
- Colleagues understand how their course might fit into the fabric of curriculum.
- Employers and other stakeholders understand how our students are being educated.

### Characteristics of Well-Written Learning Outcomes
Good learning outcomes display these important characteristics:
- Use verbs to define what a student should *know* and realistically *be able to do* following engagement over time with a specific set of structured learning experiences.
- Outline the *standards, conditions* and *terms* which must be met by students and specify the *degree of sophistication* in learning intended for students.
- Focus on *observable, measurable* behaviours (what a student writes, does, or says) that can be used to gauge students' successful achievement of learning objectives.
- Addresses students' prior or future knowledge.

### Writing Learning Outcomes
Use this formula to assist you in creating learning outcomes for your course.
Below are two examples of learning outcome statements that were created from the formula:

> **SWiBAT** (**S**tudent **W**ill **B**e **A**ble **T**o) + **Active Verb** (shows continued or progressive action) + **Condition** (as a result of) + **Measurement** (as measured by or as demonstrated by…) + **When** (at what timeline).

Example 1: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to evaluate and employ the principles of colour psychology, composition, media application, and drawing, to the process of picture building.

Example 2:
Ideal graduates of the Illustration degree program at OCAD University will be able to investigate, analyze, interpret, articulate and apply in visual, oral, and written form:
- Critically informed ideas regarding the influence of historical periods, styles, techniques of Illustration, and material expressions of design and art.

**Use this chart to assist you in the development of your learning outcomes.**

| DEGREE OF SOPHISTICATION | DOMAINS OF LEARNING | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Knowledge/Cognitive<br><br>Knowing | Attitude/Affective<br><br>Feeling & Appreciating | Skill/Performative<br><br>Doing |
| **Lowest Order Sophistication** | Recall, describe, define, list, label, relate, reproduce, select, state | Receive, listen, focus, do, read, attend, take part, discuss, acknowledge, hear, be open to, retain, follow, concentrate, feel | Imitate, copy, follow, replicate, repeat, adhere |
| **Low Order Sophistication** | Explain, reword, classify, report, summarize, illustrate, review, translate, interpret | React, respond, seek, clarify, interpret, illustrate, contribute, question, present, cite, help team, write, perform | Manipulate, re-create, arrange, build, perform, execute, implement |
| **Mid-Order Sophistication** | Apply, discover, solve, manage, produce, implement, construct, change, prepare, critique, perform, respond | Value, argue, challenge, debate, refute, confront, justify, persuade, criticise | Demonstrate, complete, show, perfect, calibrate, control |
| **High Order Sophistication** | Analyze, compare, quantify, measure, test, examine, experiment, relate, graph, diagram, plot, extrapolate | Organize, conceptualize, build, develop, formulate, defend, modify, relate, prioritise, reconcile, contrast, arrange, compare | Construct, solve, combine, master, coordinate, adapt, integrate, develop, modify, formulate |
| **Highest Order Sophistication** | Synthesize, develop, plan, design, organize, propose, formulate, establish, direct, integrate, modify, evaluate, justify, assess, defend, argue, investigate, project-manage | Internalize, act, display, influence, solve, practice | Design, specify, build, create, organize, manage, invent, project-manage |

Once you have developed your learning outcomes, you can align your learning outcomes to your teaching methods, learning activities, and assessment methods.

| Learning Outcomes | Teaching Methods |
|---|---|
| Learning Activities | Assessment Methods |

The teaching methods and learning activities introduce students to the content and provide students with the opportunity to develop and practice their knowledge, skill, and attitudes. The assessment methods check how well students are meeting the learning outcomes.

## Important Considerations Checklist

It is best to review each of the learning outcomes you have created in order to ensure that you have created well-written and well-aligned learning outcomes. Use this checklist to review the learning outcomes you've created.

| Question | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Does the outcome define what students should *know* and realistically *be able to do* following engagement over time with a specific set of structured learning experiences? | | |
| Is the learning outcome observable and measurable and clearly related to a specified standard or set of conditions? | | |
| Is the learning outcome attainable by intended learners with their prior knowledge and skill? | | |
| Does the learning outcome matter? Is it associated with greater curriculum aims? | | |
| Is the learning outcome statement structure following the formula? (SWiBAT (Student Will Be Able To) + Active verb + Condition (as a result of) + Measurement (as measured by or as demonstrated by…) + When (at what timeline) | | |
| Do the learning outcomes align to the teaching methods, learning activities and assessment methods for the course? | | |

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