

EO

Edit Objectives

The objective explicitly states what the learner will need to do to demonstrate competency and to what standard of performance.

Objective

Given a collection of poorly stated objectives, be able to re-word them so that they are well stated. Criteria: The objectives describe a performance, the conditions that affect the performance, and the criteria by which acceptable performance will be judged.

Skill Check

(Sample Test Item)

The learner knows up front what s/he will be required to do to demonstrate competency in the skill. Note that the skill check matches the objective.

The following objective may or may not have the characteristics of a well-stated objective. If it does not have these characteristics, change it so that it is acceptable.

Demonstrate an ability to internalize a growing functional awareness of tennis.

Module Resources

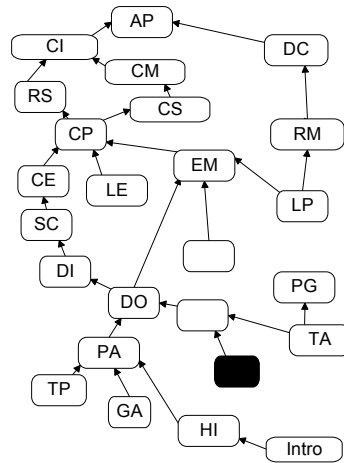
To complete this module you will need:

Book: ***Preparing Instructional Objectives***

Book: ***Measuring Instructional Results***

EO

Edit Objectives



Where we are:

You (or someone else) have drafted some objectives. You need to edit (re-word) them so that they meet the requirements of a well-stated objective.

Describes the relevancy of the skill to the learner.

Why it's important

A performance objective describes what a student will be able to do *when competent*. It's your instructional target. Unless you know how to recognize a good (usable) objective, you won't know when one might need fixing. Even more important, if you can't change loose statements into a clear objective, you won't know where your instruction is headed, or be able to tell when you're done.

What to learn

Before you can begin to fix a poor objective, you need to know what a good one looks like. So the first part of this module is about how to recognize well-stated objectives.

Enough instruction is provided so that the learner can begin to practice.

Here's What to Do

1. If you've already had experience at writing objectives, just review Chapter 8 in **Preparing Instructional Objectives**.
2. If you haven't, read **Preparing Instructional Objectives**, pp. 1-154. (It won't take long.)

Note how much of the module is focused on providing the learners with practice and feedback.

Practice

Here is some practice in recognizing well-stated performance objectives. You'll find a commentary to help you evaluate your answers on page 4.

Place a check mark in front of any of the following objectives that meet the criteria of a well-stated objective.

- 1. Have a good understanding of the principles of learning.
- 2. Be able to demonstrate total dedication to Total Quality Management. Criterion: Satisfaction of the instructor.
- 3. Given a functioning, but poorly adjusted, amplifier, be able to adjust it within five minutes so that it tracks and locks properly.
- 4. Given a Macintosh computer, compatible printer, and software of your choice, be able to type a letter.
- 5. Be able to explain to your peers why many adults are unable to read.
- 6. Be able to draw your service revolver from a belt holster, and fire at least five rounds within three seconds.
- 7. While observing a manager interviewing a job applicant, be able to point to instances where the manager's behavior is inconsistent with behaviors listed in the Personality Characteristics Checklist. Responses must match those of the Performance Evaluation Model Checklist.

Check your answers on page 3.

Responses

1. Unacceptable. This has none of the characteristics of a useful objective. It states no performance, doesn't describe the conditions that affect the performance, and doesn't describe how to tell when the unstated performance is acceptable. (A goal analysis is needed before the objective can be edited. This comment applies also to Items 2 and 3.)
2. Unacceptable. "Demonstrate" is not a specific performance, and "satisfaction of the instructor" is not a criterion: it says nothing about the quality of the performance. It's arbitrary and depends on who's instructing, rather than on the quality of the performance.
3. Acceptable. (If persons qualified to grasp the writer's intent had problems in defining "poorly adjusted," the writer would have to be more explicit about this meaning.)
4. Unacceptable. Though this objective describes a performance and conditions, it doesn't say anything about the required quality of the letter. A more informative criterion could be added. For examples, must the letter be free of spelling errors, or conform to a specified format?
5. Unacceptable. Conditions? OK. (A conversation with your peers.) Performance? OK. (Explain why people are unable to read.) Criteria: None.
6. Acceptable.
7. Acceptable.

If you haven't already done so, and feel you need more practice at recognizing objectives, work through the practice items in Chapter 9 of ***Preparing Instructional Objectives***.

Editing Objectives

When drafting or editing objectives it is especially important to be sure that the criteria make sense. Here are some statements of criteria that tell you nothing explicit about the characteristics of the performance that would make it acceptable:

- Criterion: To the satisfaction of the instructor.
- Criterion: To match community standards of conduct.

And be suspicious whenever you see “100% accuracy” offered as a criterion. Though it is easy to write this percentage into an objective and believe that a high criterion has been described, the meaning of the number may be unclear. For example, what does it mean to say:

“Given a human skeleton, be able to name each of the bones of the body with 100% accuracy.”

Is the performer expected to point to the bones being named? Must the pronunciation of the bones be correct? And if the performer is simply expected to recite all the bones, where does “accuracy” enter the picture?

When you see a percentage criterion, either ask for an explanation from the person who drafted the objective, or replace it with a description of the quality of the desired performance. In other words, expect evidence that a percentage criterion makes sense or get rid of it. It’s just too easy to write a number into a criterion without thinking about whether it’s realistic and without describing clearly what the number means. Remember that when you see a “100% criterion,” it implies that (a) people actually get fired for making a single error, and (b) competent performers actually exhibit perfect performance.

Now it is time to increase the ease with which you “tighten up” a poorly stated objective. At this point our concern is with the form of an objective, not its content, so feel free to invent conditions and criteria as needed. (Later on we’ll be concerned with the *substance* of your objectives.)

Additional opportunities for feedback give the learner the skills **and the confidence** to perform.

Here's What to Do

1. For some specific guidance to help you with the task of objective editing, read pp. 17-47 of ***Measuring Instructional Results***. Complete the practice items found in those pages.
2. Complete the practice items found on the following page.

NOTE: When editing, it is sometimes easier to rewrite the material than to agonize over existing words someone else has written. Feel free to start with words of your own.

Practice

Look at each of the following objectives and decide if it has the characteristics of a well-stated performance objective. If it does not, change it so that it is acceptable.

1. Given a purchase order and the required information for purchase of a large quantity of a specific item, the purchasing clerk will know how to complete the purchase order without error.
2. Given a forty-minute lecture, the trainees will be able to take a blood sample from any patient five years or older, when given the necessary equipment. The sample must be taken while making only one puncture.
3. After completing a course in nuclear safety, 80% of the class will be able to put on the protective clothing appropriate for their job assignment.
4. Given a group of six works of art, the student will know the artist associated with each work.

Compare your work with the comments on the next page.

Responses

A well-stated performance objective will describe (a) the action (main intent) to be performed, (b) where necessary to clarify your intent, the conditions or “givens” under which the action is to take place, and (c) the criteria by which to judge successful performance. In the examples below, these elements of an objective are shown separately. In each case, your answer need not precisely match the wording we have used, provided you have edited the objectives so that the characteristics are acceptable.

1. Conditions: Given a purchase order and the required information for purchase of a large quantity of a specific item,
Action: complete the purchase order
Criteria: without error.

We’ve simply deleted “know how to,” and “the purchasing clerk.” Words such as “know” and “understand” have to be translated into observable actions. “Purchasing clerk” was deleted to de-clutter the objective; naming one target population restricts the usefulness of the objective. Here, the best evidence of whether people “know how to complete” an order is to have them do it. (When you are unsure of the meaning of a “fuzzy,” do a goal analysis.)

2. Conditions: Given a patient aged five years or older, and the necessary equipment,
Action: take a blood sample.
Criteria: a. all equipment sterilized according to specifications, and
b. correct blood vessel entered on the first attempt.

“Given a 40-minute lecture” was deleted. It describes a way for getting trainees to the desired competence. An objective describes only the outcome, not the process. If people can do it without the lecture, they are no less competent. Check by asking yourself if a competent performer would get that 40-minute lecture each time the task was performed on the job. Since the answer is obviously “No,” the spurious given doesn’t belong. “Given,” as the word usually appears in a performance objective, should describe the conditions that influence the performance, not the way in which the performance is developed.

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3. Conditions: Given protective clothing appropriate for your job,
Action: put on the clothing
Criteria: without damaging the clothing.

Again, the original objective contained a “given” not related to the action to be performed, namely, a course.

And here is an example of a percentage (80% of students) that doesn’t make sense as a criterion since it does not refer to the quality of the performance desired; it tells us only how many trainees are expected to master the skill. We have added a criterion that says something about the performance itself.

4. Conditions: Given works of art by the following six artists (list attached),
Action: name the artist for each work
Criteria: correctly.

The “given” here contains an interpretation of the intent of the course. It assumes that the course covers the work of only six artists. There’s room for further clarification. To say to a student “Given a group of six works of art” is to say practically nothing. What kind of art? Painting? Sculpture? Music? And from where and when? Tenth-century bottle etching? Modern jazz? Antarctic ice carvings? The instructor may know what this is all about, but he or she certainly isn’t letting anyone else in on the street.

If you feel that you need more practice, we suggest that you complete the practice items on pp. 167-171 in ***Preparing Instructional Objectives***. Edit some or all of these objectives, then check your work with a colleague or the course manager.

NOTE: In these examples the elements of an objective have been shown separately. We suggest you use this format during course design. It makes it easy to find each part of the objective without having to plow through a mass of words, and you can make changes (as inevitably you will) without the need for rewriting the whole thing. Unless the objective is long or complex, however, it is unlikely that this format will be appropriate for people taking your courses.

ANOTHER NOTE: Any time you are not sure precisely what the criterion should say, write in your best guess and then circle it to indicate that it is “negotiable,” subject to revision. Besides indicating that the criterion is open to be changed, it will help you in discussing course design with colleagues to avoid arguments about the criterion when your real agenda is to discuss the performance and conditions.

Helps the learner determine if s/he is ready for the skill check.

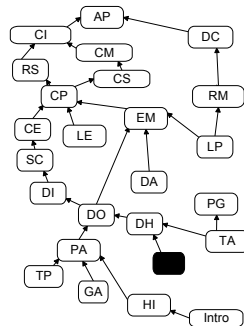
Skill-Check

When you feel that you have had enough practice, and can answer the following questions *without references or hesitation*, you should be ready for the Skill Check.

1. What are the three main parts of an objective?
2. Why are words such as “know” and “understand” unacceptable in an objective?
3. Why are phrases such as “Given a 30 minute lecture” unacceptable in an objective?
4. Why is the phrase, “XX percent of the students must be able to...” unacceptable in an objective.

There are skill checks for each module of the course. **Each** learner must demonstrate competency in **every** skill of the Workshop before moving on to the next module.

Skill Check



EO

Edit Objectives

Edit (or rewrite) each of the following statements so that they meet the criteria of a well-stated objective; that is, they contain a performance, any important conditions under which the performance takes place, and the criteria by which acceptable performance will be judged.

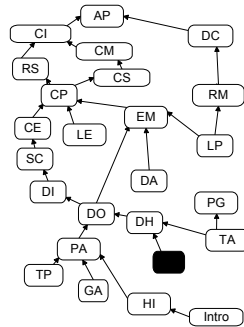
1. Each student will study the names of each of the parts of a carburetor.
2. Eighty percent of the students will be expected to demonstrate their ability to fix a faulty thermostat.
3. Demonstrate an ability to make a butt weld, using the proper electrodes, to the satisfaction of the instructor.
4. Know the names and locations of any two hundred bones of the body, with 100% accuracy.
5. Identify a poison ivy plant.
6. Demonstrate good management by knowing how to carry out a performance review using the proper form and procedure.

Be sure to review the SELF-EVALUATION sheet before **going to your course manager for a review.**

SIGN-OFF
 Colleague
 ✓ Course Manager

The learner is given the opportunity to be certain that s/he has really acquired the skill being taught before requesting course manager sign-off.

Sample Excerpt



Self-Evaluation

EO

Edit Objectives

For each objective, we have provided a comment and an edited version of the objective. Your objective should resemble ours in that it should describe a performance, any important conditions under which the performance takes place, and the criteria by which acceptable performance will be judged.

1. This statement describes a part of the learning process — “study the names.” Presumably, students will be able to name the parts of a carburetor when they are through. But how will you know? What will they have to do to show that they can perform? Recall a list of names? Make a drawing, correctly labeled? Or will they be shown a drawing and asked to label the parts? Are we talking about a specific kind of carburetor or carburetors in general? What level of proficiency is acceptable? If we stick with “naming parts,” then your objective might look like this:

Given a disassembled XYZ-type carburetor, be able to name each part correctly within ten minutes.

Is this something that technicians do on the job? Yes. It may be a small skill, but competent technicians are expected to be able to refer to their tools and equipment by more appropriate names than “thingamabob.” Those who ask their colleagues to, “Hand me the watchamacallit,” don’t endear themselves to the professionals.

2. First, this is an objective for a class, not for an individual. In this course, we’re concerned with the performance of each individual student. As the objective is stated, presumably one in five students could fail in the task and still move ahead in the course. This makes no sense in criterion-referenced instruction.

(OVER)

SIGN-OFF Colleague ✓ Course Manager

Edit Objectives

Course Manager Guidelines

The following general guidelines are designed to help you facilitate the Edit Objectives module and to respond appropriately to skill check inquiries.

Objectives are intended to describe an outcome to be achieved and should be clear to anyone qualified to understand them. Thus, whenever you encounter disagreement about what an objective means, the correct path is to fix it. It is not productive to argue about the merits of the words or format; if it isn't clear, change it.

It's ok to include specialized vocabulary in an objective, so long as the TPop can be expected to understand it.

A few comments about the Skill Check items:

1. The typical problem is forgetting to specify which type of carburetor is involved. They can be quite different. Participants who know nothing of carburetors should be encouraged to invent a model type or number (to provide more practice in being specific).
2. Here again, the objective should be specific about the device(s) to be repaired, and participants should be encouraged to invent the name of a device or range of devices, to be repaired.
3. Many people don't know what a butt weld is; that's OK. Omission of any of the three characteristics of an objective is not OK. By now, you shouldn't have to do more than point to a weakness or omission in this objective; the participant should know what to do to fix it.
4. If a participant asks how many bones there are in the human body, the answer is 206. For the purpose of this particular objective, knowledge of 200 was adequate.
5. Students may complain that we're being fussy about details of what's seen as a lightweight skill, "Identify poison ivy plant." But they quickly see the value of such a skill if you ask them how they would feel if marijuana were substituted for poison ivy. Marijuana identification is serious business in law enforcement. Officers about to arrest someone for cultivating illegal vegetation need to be pretty darn sure about this identification. Their competency test would call for tight standards and would probably include "look-alikes" for marijuana, not just a single example. It would call for plants, not pictures of plants. Anything less than 100% correct would probably not be acceptable.
6. What's often overlooked is that in objectives saying, in effect, "Process data," it's necessary to provide the data – it has to be a given. In this example, we need an

employee and the interaction between employee and reviewer if we are to tell whether someone can actually handle a review.

As noted in the Self-Evaluation, it's acceptable to refer to criteria spelled out elsewhere, avoiding the need to put every detail into the objective. The important thing is that criteria be in writing, preferably in a form that permits no differences of opinion about what is intended.

CEP's highly trained performance consultants can help you correctly implement this or any other performance improvement process needed in your organization. If you're not sure of your exact need or if you'd like additional information about CEP's consulting services please contact Paula Alsher at (770) 458-4080.