

## How Do I Use Objectives and Assessment in My Teaching Design?

**Overall:** Most teachers only consider their impact as instructors when they are face-to-face teaching in class. A thoughtful approach starts with your goals (objectives) and finishes with your assessment to determine if students “got” your message.

- Writing good learning objectives is one of most direct ways to improve your overall teaching. A learning objective is a statement that describes what students will be able to do and under what conditions;
- Become familiar with [Bloom's Taxonomy](#) which is a way to **classify instructional goals** according to the level of expected learner cognition and use. Learning goals and expectations range from acquiring basic information and displaying it (knowledge and comprehension) to higher levels of integration and use (analysis, synthesis, evaluation);
- In general terms, sketch out **what you expect students to be able to do** following the completion of your instruction. Rewrite these goals using the level of student performance you expect;
- **Pay close attention to the verbs** you use as indicators of successful achievement, e.g. describe, list, summarize, apply, solve, analyze, plan, assess, recommend, discriminate;
- You should **prioritize your learning objectives** so that you have a clear understanding of your major teaching goals. See sheet #2;
- Try to include some **higher cognitive goals** in Bloom's Taxonomy rather than those relating to just comprehension of factual knowledge;
- The **verbs that you use** in your objectives should be ones for which you can devise an assessment or a measurement. For example it is less useful to say that you expect students “to understand...” than to say “to list four ways...”
- **Write at least one assessment question** for each of your learning objectives. If you are unable to devise a question consider re-writing that objective;
- Do not exclude an objective just because a multiple choice question cannot easily be designed for it! There are other ways to test – see below.
- Use **interim formative questions** (quizzes and tests for which marks are not assigned) in your teaching. Such formative (as opposed to summative, i.e. marks) testing enables students to see how you test and shows you the gaps in student understanding;
- Become familiar with assessment methods. For example, multiple choice questions can be carefully designed to test achievement of higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy;
- When you want to test problem solving, clinical understanding or situations where there is more than one correct answer, consider the use and design of “**key feature**” problems or “**script concordance testing**” – see STC for more information;
- **Guidelines** for the construction of valid assessment questions are available from STC.



Schulich  
MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

Please address any comments, questions or requests for support to:

[stc@schulich.uwo.ca](mailto:stc@schulich.uwo.ca)