

Writing Objectives

Objectives for the program and for individual sessions must be measurable. Behavioral or learning outcome objectives are specific and measurable.

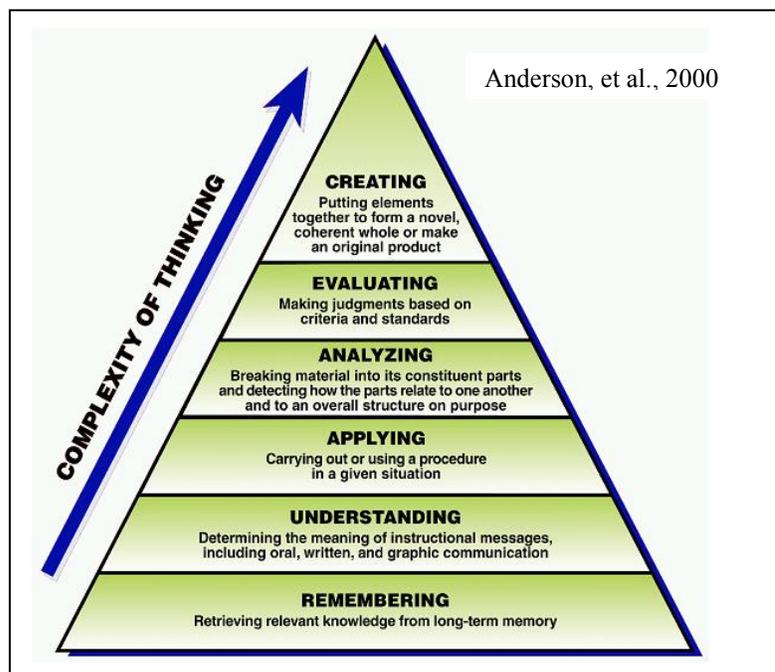
In writing session objectives, use the behavior change theory acronym S.M.A.R.T. to develop your behavioral/outcome objectives:

- Specific – explicitly state what you want to happen, where and to whom as a result of your intervention.
- Measurable – identify the current, or baseline, value and the level or amount of change that is expected.
- Achievable and realistic – especially when you aim to change chronic, addictive behaviors.
- Relevant – logically related to your overall goal(s).
- Time-specific – your interventions are limited in time and space.

In writing a behavioral objective the first step is to start with the key phrase. Use the following objective **template** for creating a quality learning objective:

“By the end of the *session/program* the participant will (be able to) select verb from list below (complete the objective with a measurable element and specifics to your session).”

This is followed by a verb that expresses a level of understanding ranging from the simplest to the most complex. For most health educator continuing education Category I programs, the two simplest forms: remembering and understanding, are probably not appropriate. A level higher on Bloom’s Taxonomy revised 2000 classification is preferable.



These levels would be those of applying, analyzing, evaluating, or creating. The list that follows is not all-inclusive. There are other verbs that also demonstrate application and problem solving.

| Applying | Analyzing | Evaluating | Creating |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Apply | Analyze | Judge | Design |
| Calculate | Contrast | Criticize | Validate |
| Illustrate | Explain | Summarize | Formulate |
| Solve | Outline | Rate | Compose |
| Demonstrate | Distinguish | Defend | Compile |
| Construct | Compare | Evaluate | Plan |
| Articulate | Classify | Critique | Create |
| Sketch | Differentiate | Justify | Rewrite |
| Produce | Categorize | Appraise | Combine |
| Report | Examine | Assess | Collaborate |
| Prepare | Select | Conclude | Intervene |

Need even more verbs to choose from? Then consider these:

Show, complete, implement, advertise, separate, investigate, prioritize, determine, recommend, verify, debate, choose, monitor, test, invent, predict, devise, make, imagine, propose, separate, organize, select

In preparing the application forms, define the key elements that participants should get from the presentation. Then use the above behavioral terms to expand the key sentence. Make sure that you supply enough behavioral/learning objectives so the participant understands what the whole session will include. Remember, each 60 minute session needs only one or two well-written objectives.

Example: (Applying Level): By the end of the session participants should be able to:

1. Apply the stages of change theory concepts for a prevention program described in the session.

Example (Analyzing Level): By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

1. Compare the benefits of the stages of change theory with the theory of reasoned action to the results of the prevention program described in the session

Example (Evaluating Level): By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

1. Assess the stages of change theory to impact of the prevention program described in the session.

Example (Creating Level): By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

1. Formulate the four drawbacks of using the stages of change theory in this particular research design of the prevention program described in the session.

Examples of Entry-level and Advanced-level Objectives

| Entry-level Objectives | Advanced-level Objectives |
|---|--|
| Describe two of the four strategies used to build and sustain cross-sector partnerships in a Complete Streets advocacy campaign. (7.4.1.) | Discuss the evidence-based research used to develop and advocate for policies that promote health and reduce cancer disparities. (7.5.4.) |
| List the key resources and strengths of health education departments at the state and local level needed to develop a data analysis plan for research. (4.1.3.) | Use backward course design as a framework for making informed decisions regarding inclusion and exclusion of course content, learning activities, and methods for assessing learning. (3.3.4.) |
| Describe three strategies used for effectively engaging and mobilizing community partners in a middle school anti-bullying campaign. (5.5.3.) | Evaluate Spanish language pain classes using mixed research methods. (3.3.7.) |
| Tailor non-smoking TV advertisements' to Latino female teens. (7.2.2) | Assess the efficacy of at least three various communication strategies. (2.3.1.) |