

What are Effective Learning Outcome Statements?

Components of learning outcome statements

A learning outcome statement specifies what students should be able to do when they have completed the learning experience (whether it is a lesson, a course, or a program). A learning outcome statement has three major components:

- **Behaviour**: A description of *what* students will be able to do.
- **Context**: Motivation or conditions under which the student will complete the learning experience, or *why* the learning outcome is important.
- **Criteria**: The criteria for evaluating student performance, or *how* the learning outcome will be achieved.

Possible Structure

Outcomes start with a **measurable action verb** and are followed by a **content statement** that outlines the knowledge, skill, and/or attitude within a broad but discipline specific setting, which constitutes the **behaviour** component. The **context** specifies the **criteria** and the intent or “why” of the learning (why the outcome is important, how the knowledge/skill will be applied, how learning will be assessed, or what is expected to be produced by the students). A possible outline to follow is

By the end of this course, students will be able to...

(Measurable action verb) + (content) + by/for/to (context and criteria)

EXAMPLE:

- By the end of this course, students will be able to **design lesson plans** to **teach in their own course** that are **expressed in writing, via audio, or visually and incorporates learner-centred, inclusive practices in a variety of ways.**

Avoid vague learning outcomes

It is important to avoid using vague action verbs that could be subject to multiple interpretations. Examples of these vague action verbs include:

Know, understand, learn, appreciate, see, perceive, get, accept, master, grasp the significance of, be aware of, be familiar with, comprehend, participate in, realize, be involved in, feel

Bloom's and **Fink's** (Docx.) Taxonomy are tools to identify **behaviour** and level of complexity or **context**, as well as action verbs to choose from.



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