Guideline for Writing Learning Objectives for Scholarly Work

NEON and Department of Family and Community Medicine

All scholarly abstracts must be submitted with 2 to 3 learning objectives. According to Association of American Medical Colleges, "establishing learning objectives to guide the design, content, and conduct of an educational program is an important principle supported by educational theory and practice". In addition to CME, learning objectives will help the audience evaluate your presentation. A Learning Object is a clear, concise and **specific statement** of behaviors that can be evaluated at the conclusion of the learning activity. The learning objective should:

1) Describe to learners what the content is valued and what is expected

2) Specifies the desired outcomes

3) Assesses the learners' performance and if the presentation was effective

When writing a Learning Objective focus on learner performance aimed at the terminal behavior that is expected and it should have one learning outcome. The Learning Objective generally begins with an introductory stem ("At the conclusion of this presentation") followed by bulleted statements starting with a verb followed by specific outcome.

Example:

At the conclusion of this presentation, you will be able to:

- Recognize the reasons for writing a learning objective
- Identify the components of a learning objective

By writing learning objectives the presenter is selecting the content, guiding the presentation, assessing learner performance and evaluating the presentation. A clear learning object identifies the desired outcome of the educational offering and stresses the 'take-away message'.

Below are sample verbs that can be observed and measured:

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Define	Classify	Apply	Analyze	Arrange	Assess
Identify	Compile	Calculate	Calculate	Assemble	Compare
Label	Conclude	Demonstrate	Categorize	Compose	Critique
List	Discuss	Develop	Classify	Construct	Decide
Recognize	Describe	Interpret	Contrast	Diagnose	Evaluate
Select	Summarize	Predict	Examine	Propose	recommend

Words to Avoid:

Appreciate	Believe	Improve	Learn
Approach	Increase	Become	Grow
Know	understand		

References:
Anderson, BM. *Report I Learning Objectives for Medical Student Education-Guidelines for Medical Schools* Washington, DC: AAMC 1998.
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