

Westchester Center for Psychological Education

Chartered by the New York State Department of Education
Affiliated with the Westchester County Psychological Association, Inc.

APA and NYSED Guidelines for Writing Behavioral Learning Objectives and Assessments

Insufficient learning objectives successfully articulate the advantages that might accrue to the practitioner, but do not extend these to underscore their value to the clients or the broader society that may follow from the knowledge gains associated with this program. Acceptable learning objectives, by comparison, clearly identify the broader contributions that might support the welfare of the consumer and the society.

Learning objectives, or learning outcomes, are statements that clearly describe what the learner will know or be able to do as a result of having attended an educational program or activity.

Number of *required* learning objectives:
4 hour workshop: 3-4 Learning Objectives
5 hour workshop: 3-4 Learning Objectives
6 hour workshop: 4-5 Learning Objectives
7 hour workshop: 5-6 Learning Objectives
8 hour workshop: 5-6 Learning Objectives

Learning objectives must be **observable and measurable**.

Learning objectives should (1) focus on the learner, (2) contain action verbs that describe measurable behaviors, and (3) relate the benefit to the consumer

Verbs to consider when writing learning objectives:

list, describe, recite, write
compute, discuss, explain, predict
apply, demonstrate, prepare, use
analyze, design, select, utilize
compile, create, plan, revise
assess, compare, rate, critique

Verbs to avoid when writing learning objectives

know, understand
learn, appreciate
become aware of, become familiar with

Examples of well-written learning objectives:

This workshop is designed to help you:

1. Summarize basic hypnosis theory and technique;
2. Observe demonstrations of hypnotic technique and phenomena;
3. Recognize differences between acute and chronic pain;
4. Utilize hypnosis in controlling acute pain;
5. Apply post-hypnotic suggestions to chronic pain; and
6. Practice hypnotic technique in dyads.

Brief Statement of Program Content

The APA and NYSED grants CE credit to programs/workshops that improve service to the public and enhance contributions to the profession. In order to meet the APA and NYSED criteria for an appropriate Continuing Education Program, presenters must provide one of the following (depending on the nature of the workshop):

For presentations of established techniques, treatments, theories, etc.:
Provide one or more citations for publications on the subject of the presentation.

For workshops/presentations of new therapeutic techniques/programs being utilized in clinical practice (but not yet receiving validation in the literature):
Provide the organization, university, or research team implementing the technique.

For programs that educate participants about new guidelines, practice standards, laws, regulatory policies, or ethical standards in the field:
Provide the source of the new standards and the relevant changes you intend to address in the program.

The information above should be supplied in the form of a list, brief statement, bullet points, citations, or document references. This is not intended to be a cumbersome task but to simply substantiate the importance, relevance, timeliness and/or legitimacy of the content of your presentation.