

## MODULE 3

# Developing Learning Objectives



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## Why Are Learning Objectives Important?



Learning objectives ensure that you and your student are "on the same page" about what is to be learned and achieved during the placement

Without clear and detailed objectives, assessment and evaluation of the student are very challenging

Learning objectives should be discussed and agreed on by the Clinical Educator and the student at the start of the placement

## Steps to Creating Learning Objectives



### Step 1: Consider Possible Learning Experiences at Your Site



- Take a moment to ask yourself:  
*What are some of the most important things a student can learn in this area of clinical practice?*
- Brainstorm the kinds of learning opportunities available in your clinical setting
- Make a list so you can discuss them with your student at the start of placement

[< Click on the video to hear more from Nadine](#)

## Steps to Creating Learning Objectives



### Step 2: Get to Know Your Student

- Students are required to send an introductory letter to each Clinical Site at least four weeks prior to commencing a placement
- The letter should summarize the student's past clinical or other relevant experiences, and identify personal strengths and learning needs.
- For placements 1B-3B your student should include a print out of "Summary of Diagnostic Experience" and "Summary of Treatment Experience" from T-Res (their clinical reporting software), for your reference



## Steps to Creating Learning Objectives



### Step 3: What Skills and Knowledge Will My Student Have?



Learning objectives should be appropriate to the student's level—both academic learning and clinical skills.

[< Click on the video to hear more from Phil](#)

Check out the [Student Academic/Clinical Training per Placement](#) document that Phil mentions. It will give you a detailed outline of what stage of academic and hands-on training a student will be at in each placement level. [Click the icon for info.](#)

Keep in mind that each student's competence and skill level may vary depending on a variety of factors.



Step 4: Develop Objectives Together



- To maximize learning, adult learners need active involvement in the learning process
- Discussion and mutual agreement on the learning objectives at the start of the placement set the tone for a learning experience which is collaborative and encourages active student participation

< Click on the video to learn some tips from Clinical Educators Aart and Phil

Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Objectives

**taxonomy**  
[tak-son-uh-mee]  
noun.

1. The science or technique of classification.
2. A classification into ordered categories:  
A proposed taxonomy of educational objectives.

**Bloom's Taxonomy** is a classification of the different objectives and skills that educators set for their students (learning objectives). The taxonomy was proposed in 1956 by educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom. The terminology has been updated to include the following six levels of learning: *Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, Creating*. Like other taxonomies, Bloom's is hierarchical, meaning that learning at the higher levels is dependent on having attained prerequisite knowledge and skills at lower levels.

**Bloom's Taxonomy** is a useful tool to help develop learning objectives, because it explains the process of learning:

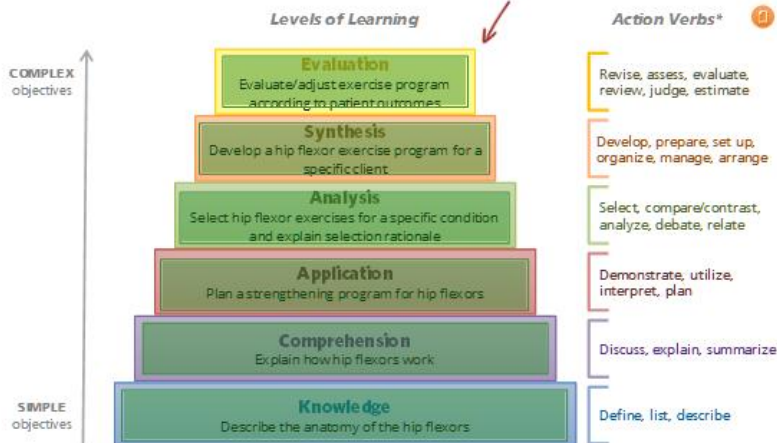
- Before you can understand a concept, you must remember it
- To apply a concept you must first understand it
- In order to evaluate a process, you must have analyzed it
- To create an accurate conclusion, you must have completed a thorough evaluation

Source: University of Arkansas (<https://ark.edu/learning/blooms-taxonomy/>)

Bloom's Taxonomy

See all levels

Click on a specific level to see an example, as well as some sample Action Verbs



\*These verbs are only a few samples. Also of note, Action Verbs can often be used for more than one level depending on the structure of the overall objective.

## Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Objectives



Learners don't always start at lower order skills and step all the way through the entire taxonomy, so consider the level of student in your placement.

### • Is the student at a beginner level?

If so, many of your learning objectives may target the lower order Bloom's skills, because your student is building foundational knowledge. However, even in this situation you should strive to move a few of your objectives into the *applying* and *analyzing* level. Keep in mind that getting too far up in the taxonomy could create frustration and unachievable goals.

### • Is the student at an advanced level? Does your students have a solid foundation and a fair amount of clinical experience?

If so, you should have few (if any) lower level objectives. Sometimes you might need a lower level objective at this level if there are very complex or unique concepts in your specific clinical situation that the student has to master. Generally, however, you should be using higher level objectives for this level of student in order to develop skill level and clinical reasoning, and provide sufficient challenge.

**Remember you can always adjust the learning objectives during the placement if they are not challenging enough for your student!**

## What Makes an Effective Learning Objective?



<b>S</b>	<b>SPECIFIC</b>	What exactly do you and the student want to achieve/accomplish?
<b>M</b>	<b>MEASURABLE</b>	How, in measurable or concrete terms, will you know...?
<b>A</b>	<b>ATTAINABLE</b>	Is it something that the student will be able to achieve in five weeks in your practice setting?
<b>R</b>	<b>REALISTIC</b>	Is it something appropriate for the student's level of learning and/or resources available?
<b>T</b>	<b>TIMELY</b>	When can the goal be said to be accomplished? (Eg., end of the week, mid-term, end of placement)

## First Steps



A student might come to you with a set of learning objectives, but perhaps not a very good understanding of the kinds of learning opportunities that are possible or currently available in your clinical setting.

**Click on the video** and take a look at how the Clinical Educator adjusts and reworks the student's learning objectives with him.

A student might present an unrealistic or large list of learning objectives for your particular clinical setting.

**Click on the video** and watch how the Clinical Educator helps a student turn his many learning objectives into realistic goals.

Scenario One

00:00 / 01:50

Scenario Two

00:00 / 02:08



## How Might You Improve on Learning Objectives?



What do you think of the learning objectives below?

Would using the "SMART" format make them more relevant and useful for both student and instructor?

Complete a post-operative assignment

Manage a caseload of six patients

Write a home exercise program for a client

Observe a surgery

*"Observe a surgery"*

"Observing a surgery" is often written as a learning objective but is usually more of a learning activity than an objective. To make it into an objective, it should be clear what the student is expected to gain from the experience, and how they will use that knowledge.

**Turn it into an objective:**

Following observation of a THR surgery (**TIME-FOCUSED**), the student will be able to (**SPECIFIC**) explain to a patient what will happen to the joint during surgery and why post-op total hip precautions are important from an anatomical standpoint (**RELEVANT and ATTAINABLE**).

Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Time-focused

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Observe a surgery

*"Write a home exercise program for a client"*

To improve this objective, it needs a time frame and a bit more detail. Which kind of client would benefit from this exercise program?

**Better objective:**

By the end of the placement, (**TIME**) and with minimal assistance from the Clinical Educator (**ATTAINABLE and RELEVANT**), the student will write an appropriate home exercise program for a child with cerebral palsy (**SPECIFIC**) and teach the parents to carry out the program. (**MEASURABLE**).

Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Time-focused

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Observe a surgery

*"Manage a caseload of six patients"*

This objective is vague. We don't know what type of clients the student will be working with, how simple or complex they are, or what "managing" a caseload really means.

**Better objective:**

By the end of the placement, (**TIME-FOCUSED**) the student will be able to independently schedule, prioritize as needed, and provide appropriate treatment (**RELEVANT and ATTAINABLE**) for six assigned clients with multi-system involvement following total joint surgery (**SPECIFIC**).

Specific Measurable Attainable Relevant Time-focused

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Observe a surgery

*"Complete a post-operative assignment"*

Being more specific about when, with how much supervision, and on what type of patient this assessment would be done will be helpful, particularly when you come to evaluate the student as to what extent the objective has been met.

**Better objective:**

By the end of the placement (**TIME-FOCUSED**), the student will be able to complete a post-operative respiratory assessment of a haemodynamically stable patient following a lung resection in under 30 minutes (**SPECIFIC and ATTAINABLE**), with minimal supervision.

Specific   Measurable   Attainable   Relevant   Time-focused

## How Many Learning Objectives Should a Student Have?



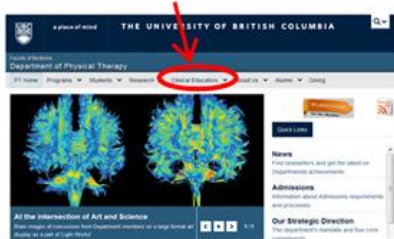
- The appropriate number of learning objectives will vary with each student and clinical area.
- Remember that the student is only with you for 25 days so focus on the key elements of clinical practice in your area.
- Too many objectives may overwhelm the student (and be unachievable in five weeks), while too few will not provide a meaningful level of challenge.
- Usually 5-8 objectives are realistic for a five-week placement.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This module is intended as a quick reference. For the most current and information about program specifics please see our [UBC PT Clinical Education Manual](#).

Visit [www.pt.med.ubc.ca](http://www.pt.med.ubc.ca).  
Our website has a Clin Ed tab on the front page!



### Resources we recommend:

- [E-Tips for Practice Education website](#)
- [Preceptor Education Program \(PEP\) website](#)
- [Facilitating Learning in the Workplace](#)
- [Resources for Objective Writing](#)

For a multitude of other great resources, please visit our [Clin Ed Placement Resources page](#) on the UBC PT website.

# MODULES IN THE EXCEL SERIES

- Module 1: **Introduction to the UBC Master of Physical Therapy (MPT) Program**
- Module 2: **The Role and Importance of Clinical Education**
- Module 3: **Developing Learning Objectives**
- Module 4: **Planning and Facilitating the Learning Experience**
- Module 5: **Adult Learning Styles**
- Module 6: **Your Student's First Day: Orientation**
- Module 7: **Providing Feedback**
- Module 8: **The Evaluation Process**
- Module 9: **The "Perfect Preceptor"**
- Module 10: **Supporting a Student in Difficulty**
- Module 11: **Providing Challenge for an Exceptional Student**
- Module 12: **Placement and Supervision Models**
- Module 13: **The Hidden Curriculum**
- Module 14: **T-Res Overview: The Students' Clinical Log**



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## Questions?? Suggestions?

If you have any questions about this module or suggestions for future modules [please contact us!](#)

You are welcome to use and share these modules. If you would like to link to them, [please email your request](#), as we would appreciate knowing what purpose they will be used for. This will help us in future module development.

These modules were conceived and produced by **Carolyn Andersson** (Clinical Education Officer), with the assistance of **Sue Murphy** (Associate Head, Clinical Education).

Invaluable professional services and assistance provided by the MedIT team (Faculty of Medicine) at UBC.



a place of mind  
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Physical Therapy  
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Feedback?

Do you have a few minutes to complete a short (we promise!) survey about this module?

Your feedback is VERY important to us!

[Go to survey](#)

## With thanks...

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[Click to exit module](#)