LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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Learning objectives are important in all aspects of the teaching and learning process. Learning or instructional objectives are concrete statements of the goals towards which instruction is directed. Objectives provide a genre of choosing subject matter content, sequencing topics and for allocating teaching time. Learning objectives also guide in the selection of materials and procedures to be employed in the actual teaching process. Further, they provide standards as well as criteria for evaluating the quality and efficiency of teaching and learning activities.

A learning objective is a statement of the description of the behaviour expected of a learner after instruction. Simply put, they are instructional goals.

Functions of Learning Objectives

An instructional goal is some outcome of instruction expressed in terms of student learning. As a result of instructing learners, the teacher expects them to acquire knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes.

For a learning objective to be useful for learning purposes, it must perform the following three functions:

- It must serve as a guide for planning instruction.
- It must state an acceptable standard for assessing students' achievement.
- It must provide a criterion for evaluating instruction itself.

Components of a Learning Objective

The different components of a learning objective are: terminal behaviour, test conditions, and performance standards.

Terminal behaviour. This component of a learning objective describes the behaviour of a student after instruction, what is the outcome of instruction? Behaviour means any performance or activity that can be observed or recorded. Terminal behaviour is the description of a pattern of behaviour or performance we want the learner to be able to demonstrate. An objective should be a statement of performance and responsibility. For example, "Identify all the parts of a mammalian digestive system"; "Draw the map of Africa showing all the countries and their capital cities". The words 'identify', 'draw',

and 'describe' are action words or verbs that can be observed and recorded. The terms that learning experience is expected to produce.

Test Conditions. The tests conditions component of a learning activity describes the situation in which the students will be required to demonstrate the terminal behaviour. There are three (3) general conditions that affect student's performance during a task or test. These include the availability of reference books, the time allocated, resource/tools available for the use and how the information will be presented during the testing period or teaching period. For example, to be able to identify the mammalian digestive system, a chart of the digestive system or a specimen like a rat that can be dissected to expose these organs are provided for the learners during the lesson.

Performance Standards. The standard describes the minimal level of performance that will be accepted as evidence that a student has achieved an objective. Examples: "Answer all the questions correctly"; "Complete at least 10 questions within one hour." Performance standards provide a criterion for judging the effectiveness of terminal behaviour.

An example of a learning objective is given to further explain the three (3) components of learning objectives:

> "At the end of the lesson, the learner should be able to draw and label all the structures of the digestive system of a dissected rat."

Domains of a Learning Objective

The domain of a learning object can be cognitive, affective or psychomotor.

Cognitive domain involves knowledge and development of intellectual skills. It includes recall of facts, patterns and concepts. It has six (6) major categories, which are knowledge, synthesis, evaluation (comparison), comprehension, application, and analysis. In essence, it focuses on acquisition of knowledge. This is what the learner recalls, understands, or the information he or she knows.

Affective domain deals with the manner in which learners deal with emotions, such feeling values, appreciation, motivation, and attitudes. It has five (5) major categories which are receiving, responding, valuing, organization, and internalizing. It focuses on acquisition of particular attitudes, values or feelings. The learners show increased interest, are motivated or they demonstrate a change in attitude.

Psychomotor domain includes physical movement, co-ordination and use of motor skills. The development of these skills requires practice, speed, precision, procedures and techniques to perform. It has seven categories listed from the simplest behaviour to the most complex: perceptions, set, guided response, mechanism, complex overt response, adaptation, and origination. It focuses on how a learner moves or controls the

body. The learner learns how to manipulate an object, use a tool, produce a product or perform a routine.


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