

10. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Criteria: The Provider has clear, specific, and measurable written statements of intended learning outcomes for each continuing education activity that are based on identified needs and communicated to learners prior to registration and during the activity.

Guidelines: Learning outcomes, also referred to as *participant behavioral or performance-centered objectives*, are written statements that:

- Provide a framework for activity planning
- Provide the basis for selecting content and instructional strategies
- Are participant centered (e.g., “By the end of this program, learners will ...”) and describe to learners exactly what knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes they are expected to accomplish/demonstrate as a result of the learning activity
- Must relate back to the content areas and be relevant to OT practice
- Are the basis for providing periodic feedback, measuring progress, and doing a final assessment of learning
- Are realistic and appropriate in number for the planned activity (e.g., for conferences and multi-topic events/activities learning outcomes must be developed for each session)

Learning outcomes should be written in a way that reflects the instructional format and delivery method being used for a particular activity. For example, if learning outcomes are to be measured by a multiple choice exam, it would be inappropriate for the learning outcome to state that learners should be able to “analyze,” “discuss,” or “develop” anything because these cannot be measured by multiple choice. More appropriate outcomes will require learners to “list,” “identify,” “differentiate,” or “recognize,” for example.

Likewise, it would be inappropriate to state that learners will be able to do or complete an activity (e.g., make a particular device, write a treatment plan, develop a program) as part of the learning outcome unless the expected outcome will actually be performed and measured during the course of the activity or through some follow-up method.

Learning outcomes must be objective and measurable; terms such as “learn” or “understand” are not objective and measurable in the context of most CE activities and should be avoided.

Resources can be found on the Web related to developing appropriate learning outcomes, including Bloom’s Taxonomy or resources based on it. The following classic book may also be helpful:

- *Preparing Instructional Objectives: A Critical Tool in the Development of Effective Instruction* (3rd ed.) by Robert F. Mager, 1997. Atlanta, GA: The Center for Effective Performance.

11. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Criteria: Assessment procedures established during the planning of each activity are used to determine whether the learning outcomes have been achieved and are consistent with each activity’s instructional format and delivery method.

Guidelines: Assessment of learning outcomes refers to the specific process through which learners demonstrate the attainment of learning outcomes. In every activity for which AOTA CEUs are awarded, the Provider has the obligation to require learners to demonstrate that they have attained the learning outcomes.

How learners will demonstrate their attainment of the outcomes should be an integral part of the activity planning and include determination of the assessment procedure, its timing, and application. Learners should be advised in advance of registration what will be required of them.