

What are learning outcomes?

Learning outcomes are statements that specify what learners will know or be able to do as a result of a learning activity. Outcomes are usually expressed as knowledge, skills, or attitudes.

What are the characteristics of good learning outcomes?

1. The specified action by the learners must be observable.
2. The specified action by the learners must be measurable.
3. The specified action must be done by the learners.

The ultimate test when writing a learning outcome is whether or not the action taken by the participants can be assessed. If not, the outcome probably does not meet all three of the characteristics.

What is the importance of action verbs?

Many program brochures include learning outcomes that are unclear or represent elements of curriculum rather than some action the participants will demonstrate. Since the learner's performance should be observable and measurable, the verb chosen for each outcome statement should be an action verb that results in overt behavior that can be observed and measured.

Sample action verbs are: compile, create, plan, revise, analyze, design, select, utilize, apply, demonstrate, prepare, use, compute, discuss, explain, predict, assess, compare, rate, critique.

Certain verbs are unclear and subject to different interpretation in terms of what action they are specifying. Such verbs call for covert behavior which cannot be observed or measured. These types of verbs should be avoided: know, become aware of, appreciate, learn, understand, become familiar with.