



Writing Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes should be expressed through the use of active verbs which spell out what students will be able to do.

In order to achieve clarity, expressions such as 'to know', 'to understand', 'to appreciate', 'to be acquainted with', should be avoided, since they are too vague to convey the exact nature of the outcome being sought.

More active and explicit verbs such as 'state', 'show', 'explain', 'define', 'describe', 'predict', 'recognise' and 'criticise' should be used wherever possible.

The list below is a guide to words which can be used to express learning outcomes, grouped according to various generic level descriptors.

A. Cognitive Areas

1. Activities which give evidence of knowing

Define, describe, identify, label, list, name, outline, reproduce, recall, select, state, present, extract, organise, recount, write, measure, relate, match, record.

2. Activities giving evidence of comprehension

Interpret, translate, estimate, justify, clarify, defend, distinguish, explain, generalise, exemplify, infer, predict, rewrite, summarise, discuss, perform, report, present, indicate, find, represent, formulate, contrast, classify, express, compare, recognise, account.

3. Activities giving evidence of application of knowledge/understanding

Apply, solve, demonstrate, change, compute, manipulate, use, employ, modify, operate, predict, produce, relate, show, select, choose, assess, operate, illustrate, verify.

4. Activities giving evidence of analysis

Recognise, distinguish between, evaluate, analyse, break down, differentiate, identify, illustrate how, infer, outline, point out, relate, select, separate, divide, compare, contrast, justify, resolve, examine, conclude, criticise, question, diagnose, categorise, elucidate.

5. Activities giving evidence of synthesis

Arrange, assemble, organise, plan, prepare, design, formulate, construct, propose, present, explain, modify, reconstruct, relate, re-organise, revise, write, summarise, account for, report, alter, argue, order, select, manage, generalise, derive, synthesise, enlarge, suggest.

6. Activities giving evidence of creativity

Originate, image, begin, design, invent, initiate, state, create, pattern, elaborate, develop, devise, generate, engender

7. Activities giving evidence of evaluation

judge, evaluate, assess, discriminate, appraise, conclude, compare, contrast, criticise, justify, defend, rate, determine, choose, value, question, measure.

B. Transferable Skills

1. Psycho-motor skills

Perform, execute, operate, manipulate

2. Self Appraisal and Reflection on Practice

Reflect, identify, recognise, evaluate, criticise, judge

3. Planning and Management of Learning

Plan, prioritise, access, use, select, explore, identify, decide

4. Problem-solving

Identify, choose, select, recognise, implement, define, apply, assess, resolve, propose, formulate, plan

5. Communication Presentation

Communicate, express, articulate, question, examine, argue, debate, explain, formalise, respond, rebut, justify, defend, listen, illustrate, demonstrate, organise, pace, model, summarise

6. Interactive and group skills

Accommodate, interact, collaborate, participate, co-operate, co-ordinate, structure, arbitrate, initiate, lead, direct, guide, support, decide, set goals, motivate, reflect, evaluate, recognise, enable, Learning Support Services, confirm, include

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