

What are Goals?

When do we need them?

What are Objectives?

When do we need them?

Distinction #1 – Curriculum Design vs. Assessment

Goals are used in curriculum design.

They state the *intentions* of a program or course in terms of student learning. These are holistic and address overarching aspirations for a program or course.

Objectives are used in assessment.

They describe *specific actions* that students will do as assignments in a course. These are direct and pinpoint specific skills demonstrated in assignments.

Note: Because students do not complete assignments that are not embedded in courses, programs do not need objectives. Programs are assessed through aggregating data from in-course assessments as described by objectives.

Distinction #2 – Learning vs. Action

Goals are written in terms of student learning, understanding, and development. Rather than stating specific skills that students will perform, goals describe that students will *learn how* to perform that skill, or will understand the importance of the skill, or will understand some essential content. Goals describe the knowledge behind the skill– the learning that enables the skill to happen.

Objectives must be observable in order to be assessable. Objectives can only describe actions that can be seen in a resulting product or a performance. While the performance of a skill does not guarantee that deep learning or understanding has happened, we have no choice but to assess what can be observed– *which is why both goals and objectives are necessary and must be carefully, intentionally, and transparently aligned*.

Distinction #3 – Verbs for Goals vs. Verbs for Objectives

To assure that **goals** focus on big-picture learning or core understanding, they typically use the following verbs: learn, know, understand, appreciate, develop, consider, see, discover, or reflect.

To assure that **objectives** describe observable actions (in a resultant product or performance that must also be described in the objective), action verbs are used. Writers of objectives are encouraged to consult verb lists that align with Bloom's Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain (see back).

Examples:

Goal: Students will understand the roles the arts play in creating, preserving, and celebrating cultures. (BMWA)

Objective: In an oral and visual presentation, students will identify stylistic characteristics of one movement in the history of poster design and will connect those features to contemporary technical, cultural, or historical events. (ARTD 232 – Poster Design)

REVISED Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs

I. Remembering	II. Understanding	III. Applying	IV. Analyzing	V. Evaluating	VI. Creating
Exhibit memory of previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts, and answers.	Demonstrate understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, interpreting, giving descriptions, and stating main ideas.	Solve problems to new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way.	Examine and break information into parts by identifying motives or causes. Make inferences and find evidence to support generalizations.	Present and defend opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas, or quality of work based on a set of criteria.	Compile information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing new solutions.
Define Describe Duplicate Enumerate Examine Identify label list locate match memorize name observe omit quote read recall recite recognize record repeat reproduce retell select state tabulate tell visualize	ask associate cite classify compare contrast convert describe differentiate discover discuss distinguish estimate explain express extend generalize give examples group identify illustrate indicate infer interpret judge observe order paraphrase predict relate report represent research restate review rewrite select show summarize trace transform translate	act administer apply articulate calculate change chart choose collect complete compute construct determine develop discover dramatize employ establish examine experiment explain illustrate interpret judge manipulate modify operate practice predict prepare produce record relate report schedule simulate sketch solve teach transfer write	advertise analyze appraise calculate categorize classify compare conclude connect contrast correlate criticize deduce devise diagram differentiate discriminate dissect distinguish divide estimate evaluate experiment explain focus illustrate infer order organize plan prioritize select separate subdivide survey test	appraise argue assess choose compare conclude consider convince criticize critique debate decide defend discriminate distinguish editorialize estimate evaluate find errors grade judge justify measure order persuade predict rank rate recommend reframe score select summarize support test weigh	adapt anticipate assemble collaborate combine compile compose construct create design develop devise express facilitate formulate generalize hypothesize infer integrate intervene invent justify manage modify negotiate originate plan prepare produce propose rearrange reorganize report revise rewrite role-play simulate solve speculate structure test validate write

Adapted from Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing*, Abridged Edition. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.