

Writing Objectives for Academic Sessions

1. Think of what you want your audience (students, residents, physicians, faculty) to be able to do when you are finished your session, NOT what you are going to do. Avoid words like *present*, *review* and *discuss* in favour of verbs that describe the desired outcome for your group.

Presenter-centred (I will...)	Learner-centred (The learner will be able to...)
present the case of a 3-year old female bitten by a dog	→ determine an appropriate course of antibiotics and post-discharge care for a child following a dog bite
review the biopsy of soft tissue sarcomas	→ distinguish between benign and malignant soft tissue tumours
discuss the role of simulation in clerkship training	→ identify occasions during clerkship training to make use of the Human Patient Simulator

2. Be specific about what you want your audience to be able to do. This helps focus you on what you are presenting and your audience is focused on the main message of the session. Avoid words like *understand*, *learn* and *know* in favour of more specific verbs (See page 2 for suggestions).

Vague (The learner will...)	Specific (The learner will be able to...)
understand the impact of cigarette smoke on the immune system.	→ recognize the link between cigarette smoke and the severity of respiratory virus infection
learn about antibody induction in kidney transplant patients	→ appraise when antibody induction is justified in kidney transplant patients
know about the management of Type 2 diabetes during pregnancy	→ plan specialist team care for a pregnant patient with Type 2 diabetes



3. Decide if your session addresses any of the CanMEDS objectives found at <http://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/canmeds/canmeds-framework-e>

If your session deals with...	it may be related to the role of...
relationships with patients and families, conveying information	Communicator
interprofessional work, conflict	Collaborator
healthcare systems, practices, careers, resources, leadership	Leader
health promotion, disease prevention, communities	Health Advocate
professional growth, critical appraisal, research, teaching	Scholar
ethics, regulations, physician wellness	Professional

Suggested verbs for effective objectives

Instead of verbs like *learn*, *understand* and *know*, use specific verbs that reflect the level of knowledge you want your audience to gain. Some suggested verbs for objectives are listed below, organized in a hierarchy of cognitive knowledge.

I want my audience to be able to...	Remember	Understand	Apply
Some suggested verbs	describe identify list name state	define label locate recognize	classify explain interpret select
		distinguish indicate represent summarize	apply generalize organize show
			choose judge produce solve

I want my audience to be able to...	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Some suggested verbs	analyze differentiate infer subdivide	categorize distinguish select	appraise criticize judge
		compare defend	combine create develop make plan
			construct design formulate organize produce

The Learning Objectives Wizard under the Faculty of Medicine's curriculum blueprinting tools may be helpful. <http://www.med.mun.ca/cblue/admin/objectives/objectiveWizard.aspx>

References:

- Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. New York: Longman
- Frank JR, Snell L, Sherbino J, editors. *CanMEDS 2015 Physician Competency Framework*. Ottawa: Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada; 2015

