DESIGNING MEANINGFUL COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this newsletter, readers will be able to :

- choose the proper number of objectives for a single course;
- analyze current course objectives; and
- compose meaningful course objectives using action verbs.

As you update your syllabi with new policies, resources, and assignments, you may be tempted to assume that course objectives will not change from one semester to the next. Although the topic of the course will not change, you can revise course objectives so that students know the scope of the course before they begin the class.

A good course objective has two key parts: (1) an action verb and (2) the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the students should acquire by the end of the course. Effective course objectives finish the sentence, "Upon completion of this course, students will...." Thus, every course objective should start with an action verb such as *explain, analyze, evaluate*, or *create*. Use Bloom's Taxonomy to vary your verbs so that students attain high levels of familiarity with course concepts. Ideally, each objective will have only one verb.

Most courses in higher education have 3 to 6 course objectives that state the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the students will gain from the course. If you find yourself writing 8, 10, or even 15 course objectives, ask, "What is the main goal of the entire course?". Limit yourself to 6 goals that are specific to the course, and do not include general goals of the university. Write the objectives in student-centered terms that predict the students' growth; objectives should not state the professor's instructional strategies or lesson topics. Measurable, realistic goals will help you assess learning and improve your instruction in future courses.

STATISTIC OF THE MONTH

5.5

the average number of objectives in a PIU course

UPCOMING DUE DATES

Feb. 25 - Deans submit summer and spring textbook lists

Mar. 15 - Final Program Reviews Completed

Bloom's Taxonomy

Synthesize
Create

Evaluate
Judge . Assess

Analyze
Connect . Explain . Compare

Apply
Demonstrate . Use . Solve . Illustrate

Understand
Discuss . Identify . Restate . Translate . Classify

Remember
Define . List . Name . Select . Duplicate . Reproduce . Recognize