Writing Module Objectives

A Guide for Quality Matters Reviews at Columbia Gorge Community College

Why Module Objectives?

Module or unit objectives are central to the Quality Matters (QM) rubric because they link course objectives with assessments, resources and activities.

> STANDARD 2.2 - (3 Points)
> 2.2 The module/unit-level learning objectives or competencies describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives or competencies.
>
> Measurable module/unit-level learning objectives or competencies form the basis of alignment in a course because they are consistent with the course-level objectives or competencies (standard 2.1). Objectives or competencies explain how learners will be assessed (standard 3.1). Instructional materials (standard 4.1), learning activities (standard 5.1), and tools used in the course (standard 6.1) contribute to the accomplishment of the learning objectives or competencies.

Terms Used in CGCC QM Reviews

QM uses the term '*module* objective' because online and hybrid courses are usually broken into weekly or other types of modules. However, they are the same as any type of objective that breaks down course goals into measurable steps (unit/topic/chapter, etc.).

CGCC uses the term course *outcome* and QM uses the term course *objective*. For the purposes of QM reviews, the two are the same. You can find the CGCC course outcomes for your class in the [course content and outcome guides](#).

How to Write Module Objectives

The ABCD method is helpful for writing module objectives. This was presented to CGCC faculty by Courtney Cunningham.

Definitions - ABCD Method

A - Audience
Who are your learners?

B - Behavior
What measurable, observable actions do you want to see them carry out?

C - Condition
What do they need in order to achieve the behavior?

D - Degree
What are the standards for acceptable performance? (i.e., time limit, range of accuracy, proportion of correct responses, qualitative standards.)

Step 1: Start with a course outcome:

Example from ED: 216- Purpose, Structure & Function of Education in a Democracy:

Critically evaluate traditional education structures (separation of academic disciplines, instructional delivery methods, assessment of student learning) and their relevance in today's teaching practices.

Step 2: Write a module objective using the ABCD method

Example 1

(Condition) After reviewing several resources about traditional assessment and alternative assessment,
(Audience) learners in ED 216
(Behavior) will be able to distinguish the characteristics of each and express their opinion about which one is more advantageous
(Degree) in a 15 minute small group discussion with their peers.

Example 2

(C) After reviewing two forms of assessments, one traditional and one alternative, and participating in an in-class discussion
(A) learners in ED 216
(B) will be able to compare and contrast the two forms of assessment, including the advantages and disadvantages of each
(D) in a 2-3 page essay, with at least 80% accuracy according to the expectations in the rubric.

The behavior is the core of the module objective; it describes the new skills and capabilities students will obtain after instruction. It should be stated as an observable (i.e. seen or heard) behavior, one that can be measured.

If you want to write a module objective, ask yourself:

> What will a learner be able to gain that s/he could not do before?
> What must a learner do before accomplishing the course outcome/objectives?

Use terms such as *define, identify, and produce* as opposed to *know, understand, and appreciate*. Behaviors should demonstrate deep understanding and real-world capability. Here are some other terms to use, related to Bloom's taxonomy:

Bloom's Taxonomy

create — Produce new or original work
Design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate

evaluate — Justify a stand or decision
appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh

analyze — Draw connections among ideas
differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test

apply — Use information in new situations
execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch

understand — Explain ideas or concepts
classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate

remember — Recall facts and basic concepts
define, duplicate, list, memorize, repeat, state

@cirtlmooc