Potent Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

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A Brief Summary of Curricular Development

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Take a moment:
How familiar are y’all?
What are you hoping to learn?
Session Goal:

By the end of this session, participants will be prepared to employ reverse design principles in the creation and delivery of their courses successfully.
Session Learning Outcomes:
By the end of this session, participants will…

…articulate the principles of reverse design and the differences between course objectives and learning outcomes,

…value the role of learning outcomes in course design and instruction, and

…construct at least one viable learning outcome statement for a course they teach.
Compatibility check?
Reverse Design

• Analyze a “quality” or “successful” end product.
• Articulate what is “right” about it. Clearly.
• Dismantle the product to figure out how it works.
• Identify the pieces and processes that make that “working” possible.
• Capitalize on the best of those and make improvements.

• In short? Start with the end in mind…
Reverse Design

Start with the end in mind:

What should students do, not do, or do differently as a result of successful engagement in our course/experience?

These “shoulds” become our goals…and these goals are about them, not us.
The true mission of teaching is **to facilitate learning.**

SO:

Is YOUR program/curriculum/course **teacher** centered or **learner** centered?
Take a moment: How would a student know?
Course Objectives vs. Learning Outcomes

- Focus is on the instructor ("this course will...")
- Students as tabula rasa
- Prescriptive
- Intent: Assessment can be independent of students.
- RARE in the purest sense

- Focus in on the students ("the students will...")
- Students have existing knowledge
- Constructive
- Impact: Assessment is dependent on students.
- RARE in the purest sense
WARNING: I (might) use “Learning Objectives” and “Learning Outcomes” interchangeably. For some, this is inexcusable. My apologies.
Student centered does not equate to student driven.

Know thy learners…
Adult Learning

Enhanced by:

1) Respect
2) Building on previous experiences
3) Immediacy of application
4) Opportunities to practice (in a safe environment)
Student *centered* does not equate to student *driven*.

Structure thy process…
The **GNOME**: A Curriculum Development Model

**G** = Goals  
**N** = Needs  
**O** = (Learning) Objectives  
**M** = Methods  
**E** = Evaluation

The GNOME: A Curriculum Development Model

G = Goals  N = Needs
O = (Learning) Objectives

Goals are broad aspirations, which are refined by the learners' Needs to specific, measurable objectives.
(Learning) Objectives define what we want the student to achieve as a result of our instruction.
The GNOME: A Curriculum Development Model

M = Methods

These are educational tactics selected to meet the learning objectives. Must be intentionally matched to the nature of the objectives.
The **GNOME**: A Curriculum Development Model

**E** = Evaluation

This lets us know the extent to which the learning objectives have been achieved; formative assessment until our goals are accomplished.
The GNOME: A Curriculum Development Model

G = Goals
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Why the GNOME?

• Articulates our overall instructional intent
• Considers students’ needs in formulation of that intent
• Communicates that intent to the students

• Defines instructional and assessment tactics (We often jump to the teaching without clarifying the goal or learning outcomes.)
What are “potent” learning outcomes?

- Focus on observable, measurable verbs (Bloom’s Taxonomy)
- Address discrete accomplishments
- Recognize performance over possession
- Emphasize mastery or excellence
Less-than-potent...?

- At the end of this course, students should be able to understand ethical dilemmas.
- This course will teach proper examination procedures for geriatric patients.
- Upon completion of this course, students will be proficient in motivational interviewing and patient behavior change.
- After successfully completing this course, students will engage in lifelong learning and professional development.
Knowledge, Attitudes, and Skills

Knowledge + Attitudes -> Skills

OR

Information + Motivation -> Action
Take a moment: Write a potent learning outcome for a bit of knowledge, an attitude, and/or a skill.
My dream learning outcome?

K: Participants will create potent learning objectives
A: and value those objectives such that they will
S: govern their instructional and assessment tactics
   according to those learning objectives for their
curricula/courses.
What are your...questions?
...comments?
...thoughts?
...problems?
...observations?
Many thanks,
and take good care.

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