



Faculty and Curriculum Development Centre

## Writing course learning outcomes

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# Writing Course Learning Outcomes

## What are Learning Outcomes?

Learning outcomes communicate what knowledge, skills, and attitudes students will develop during a course.

## Benefits to Writing Learning Outcomes

Setting learning outcomes for a course helps:

- Instructors align instructional strategies, learning activities, and assessment measures to achieve desired outcomes.
- Students understand what is expected of them and the purpose of the course in their degree program.
- Colleagues understand how their course might fit into the fabric of curriculum.
- Employers and other stakeholders understand how our students are being educated.

## Characteristics of Well-Written Learning Outcomes

Good learning outcomes display these important characteristics:

- Use verbs to define what a student should *know* and realistically *be able to do* following engagement over time with a specific set of structured learning experiences.
- Outline the *standards, conditions* and *terms* which must be met by students and specify the *degree of sophistication* in learning intended for students.
- Focus on *observable, measurable* behaviours (what a student writes, does, or says) that can be used to gauge students' successful achievement of learning objectives.
- Addresses students' prior or future knowledge.

## Writing Learning Outcomes

Use this formula to assist you in creating learning outcomes for your course:

Below are two examples of learning outcome statements that were created from the formula:

**SWiBAT (Student Will Be Able To) + Active Verb** (shows continued or progressive action) + **Condition** (as a result of) + **Measurement** (as measured by or as demonstrated by...) + **When** (at what timeline).

Example 1: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to evaluate and employ the principles of colour psychology, composition, media application, and drawing, to the process of picture building.

### Example 2:

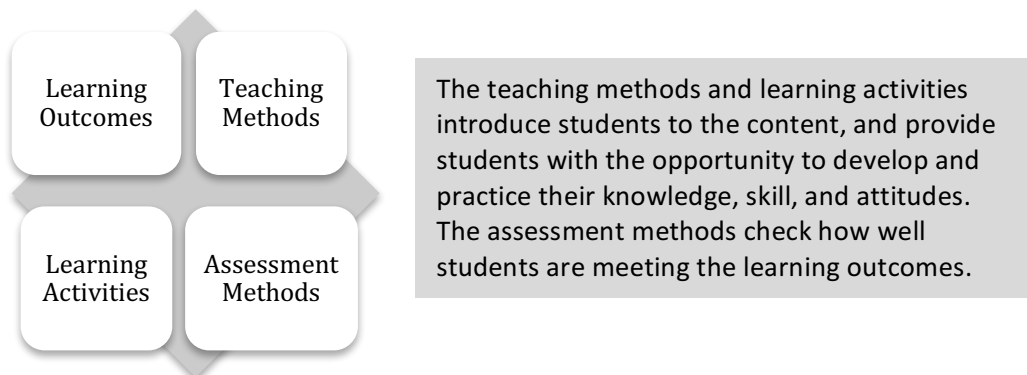
Ideal graduates of the Illustration degree program at OCAD University will be able to investigate, analyze, interpret, articulate and apply in visual, oral, and written form:

- Critically informed ideas regarding the influence of historical periods, styles, techniques of Illustration, and material expressions of design and art.

Use this chart to assist you in the development of your learning outcomes.

DOMAINS OF LEARNING	Knowledge/Cognitive What Should Students Know?	Attitude/Affective What Will Students Value or Care About?	Skill/Performative What will Students Be Able to Do?
DEGREE OF SOPHISTICATION			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lower Order Sophistication</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Higher Order Sophistication</b></p>	Recall, describe, define, list, label, relate, reproduce, select, state	Receive, listen, focus, do, read, attend, take part, discuss, acknowledge, hear, be open to, retain, follow, concentrate, feel	Imitate, copy, follow, replicate, repeat, adhere
	Explain, reword, classify, report, summarize, illustrate, review, translate, interpret	React, respond, seek, clarify, interpret, illustrate, contribute, question, present, cite, help team, write, perform	Manipulate, re-create, arrange, build, perform, execute, implement
	Apply, discover, solve, manage, produce, implement, construct, change, prepare, critique, perform, respond	Value, argue, challenge, debate, refute, confront, justify, persuade, criticise	Demonstrate, complete, show, perfect, calibrate, control
	Analyze, compare, quantify, measure, test, examine, experiment, relate, graph, diagram, plot, extrapolate	Organize, conceptualize, build, develop, formulate, defend, modify, relate, prioritise, reconcile, contrast, arrange, compare	Construct, solve, combine, master, coordinate, adapt, integrate, develop, modify, formulate
	Synthesize, develop, plan, design, organize, propose, formulate, establish, direct, integrate, modify, evaluate, justify, assess, defend, argue, investigate, project-manage	Internalize, act, display, influence, solve, practice	Design, specify, build, create, organize, manage, invent, project-manage

Once you have developed your learning outcomes, you can align your learning outcomes to your teaching methods, learning activities, and assessment methods.



### Important Considerations Checklist

It is best to review each of the learning outcomes you have created in order to ensure that you have created well-written and well-aligned learning outcomes. Use this checklist to review the learning outcomes you've created.

Question	Yes	No
Does the outcome define what students should <i>know</i> and realistically <i>be able to do</i> following engagement over time with a specific set of structured learning experiences?		
Is the learning outcome observable and measurable and clearly related to a specified standard or set of conditions?		
Is the learning outcome attainable by intended learners with their prior knowledge and skill?		
Does the learning outcome matter? Is it associated with greater curriculum aims?		
Is the learning outcome statement structure following the formula? (SWiBAT (Student Will Be Able To) + Active verb + Condition (as a result of) + Measurement (as measured by or as demonstrated by...) + When (at what timeline))		
Do the learning outcomes align to the teaching methods, learning activities and assessment methods for the course?		

### More Questions?

If you require further information or assistance in writing learning outcomes, please contact:

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