

Part 1
Where Are We Going?
Developing Educational Objectives

**First Class Continuing Pharmacy
(CPE) Education**

**How to Develop and Deliver Quality CPE
Programs**

(Four-part Series)

Part 1: Where Are We Going? Developing Educational Objectives

Part 2: How Will We Get There? Instructional Strategies

Part 3: Are We There Yet? Developing Effective Multiple-Choice Tests

Part 4: Go First Class - Presentation Skills in Continuing Education

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“The great aim of education is not knowledge but action.”
--- Herbert Spencer



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Overview

Your job responsibilities include providing education but you have little or no training in how to do it. You are a busy pharmacist with little time to acquire these skills but you want to do a good job. Pharmacists are called upon to educate fellow healthcare professionals, patients, administrators, the public, pharmacy students, residents and pharmacist colleagues. What to do?

If you identify with this dilemma read on. These materials won't make you an education expert but they will quickly give you key skills that will enable you to design and deliver effective, high-quality continuing pharmacy education programs.

As an educator who has reviewed and helped design continuing pharmacy education programs for over ten years, I'll give you the inside scoop on how design and deliver first class continuing education programs and avoid the most common errors pharmacists make when writing educational objectives, selecting instructional strategies, designing multiple-choice tests and presenting live programs.

Skills taught in these materials meet two criteria: They are (1) quick to learn yet also (2) have a significant impact on the quality of pharmacy continuing education programs. References are provided for those who would like to delve deeper.

How to Get Started

Designing and delivering a first class education program is a lot like planning a trip that is enjoyable and efficiently gets you where you want to go. It keeps you from getting lost or uncomfortable and allows you to arrive at your destination on time. Keeping this analogy in mind, here is a roadmap on where this program will take you.

1. When you begin to design an education program, you first need to determine where you want your learners to go. "**Part 1 Where Are We Going?**" is developing the educational objectives of the program.
2. Next, you need to figure out how you will get the learners there, to the achievement of the objectives. "**Part 2 How Will We Get There?**" involves selecting vehicles (instructional strategies) that will be effective in enabling the learners to get where you want them to go (to achieve the objectives).
3. How will you know when the learners have arrived at the destination you have defined for them? "**Part 3: Are We There Yet?**" is where assessment comes in. Because multiple-choice tests are so commonly used, these materials will focus on this form of evaluation.

4. Finally, if you are delivering a live program, ensure that you get and keep your learners' attention so they can best benefit from your expertise. You won't have to settle for anything but first class "**Part 4" Go First Class**" after you learn these presentation skills.

So get out your map, put on your seatbelt and get ready to enjoy our trip together. Here is where we are going:

Program Objectives:

By the end of this program you will be able to:

1. Differentiate effective and ineffective educational objectives by applying selected educational criteria.
2. Select instructional strategies that are appropriate for enabling learners to achieve specified pharmacy continuing education objectives.
3. Apply selected educational standards to identify effective multiple-choice test questions as well as criteria for effective overall multiple-choice test design.
4. Describe the relationship between educational objectives, strategies and assessment.
5. Explain how to apply critical presentation skills to get and keep audience attention when delivering live education programs.

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Continuing Education Information

This is a free CE program for anyone responsible for developing education materials. Each component offers one hour of CE credit for pharmacists. Tests are available online at <http://ce.ashp.org>. Users can take the test and print your CE statement immediately. Follow the prompts to login and register for test.

- **Part 1: Where Are We Going? Developing Educational Objectives in Continuing Pharmacy Education**
ACPE Program #204-000-07-816-H04P (1.0 Contact Hour)
- **Part 2 How Will We Get There? Instructional Strategies in Continuing Pharmacy Education**
ACPE Program #204-000-07-817-H04P (1.0 Contact Hour)
- **Part 3 Are We There Yet? Developing Effective Multiple-Choice Tests in Continuing Pharmacy Education**
ACPE Program #204-000-07-818-H04P (1.0 Contact Hour)
- **Part 4 Go First Class Presentation Skills for Continuing Pharmacy Education Programs**
ACPE Program #204-000-07-819-H04P (1.0 Contact Hour)



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Part 1
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Developing Educational Objectives
for Continuing Pharmacy Education**

Introduction

*One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree.
"Which road do I take?" she asked.*

*His response was a question: "Where do you want to go?"
"I don't know," Alice answered.
"Then," said the cat. "it doesn't matter."*

- Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

Have you ever attended an educational program in which the instructor rambled to irrelevant tangents or left you feeling like you didn't quite get what you came for? Without well-crafted objectives, many education programs flounder in this way. In this section, you will learn key criteria that will enable you to write objectives that are clear, focused, and provide a foundation for a program that will be most effective for your learners.

What is an educational objective?

The objectives of an educational program are "where you want your learners to go." They are what you want learners to be able to do as a result of participating in the program. If you don't know exactly where you want them to go, like Alice in the anecdote above, it doesn't matter what you include in your program.

Well thought-out educational objectives help make a program most meaningful to learners because you carefully clarify what is most important for them to acquire from the program. Well-developed objectives help you determine what content to include in the program and how to teach it.

Frequently, when preparing to teach a topic, instructors will ask themselves, "What do I know about this topic? What can I say about it?" Instead, spend some time thinking about the audience for your program. Who are your learners? What do they most need and want from you in this area? What do they need to be able to do in this area your program is addressing? At the end of the program, what will they be glad they got from it?

This information will help you form your objectives. Focus on the learning rather than the teaching and make your objectives learner-centered, rather than instructor-centered. Don't include everything you know on a subject. Figure out what your audience most needs that can be meaningfully learned in the time and setting allotted. Be selective and design your program accordingly.

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An objective can be seen as something you want your learners to achieve and that they want to achieve. An education program is designed to enable learners to achieve the objectives that have been defined. ***The quality of the program is determined by how well it does this.***

Achievement of the objectives is the reason for the program. Rather than dashing them off as an afterthought to meet requirements or standards, give them careful thought and find your programs will be more focused and meaningful.

In addition, as the movement toward “continuing professional development” (CPD) gains momentum, well-crafted objectives will assist those implementing CPD to more accurately select and target educational programs that meet their identified educational needs within the CPD model.

Importance

Consider this analogy about getting where you want to go:

- If I ask for directions to New York, I’ll get to New York. New York is a big place!
- If I ask for directions to Brooklyn, New York, I’ll get to Brooklyn. It is smaller than all of New York but still pretty big.
- If I ask for directions to Park Slope in Brooklyn, I am being more specific.
- If I ask for directions to my sister’s house in Park Slope and give her address, I’ll arrive exactly where I want to go.

Now let’s apply this concept to a pharmacy education example:

- If you want learners to “learn about new drugs,” that is a “big place” for them to go.
- If you want them to “describe new drugs in the treatment of diabetes,” that is more specific.
- Even more specific: “Develop a regimen to transition a Type 2 diabetes patient to insulin therapy.”

Or you can take your learners down one of these roads:

- “Identify the most promising new drugs that have become available within the past year.”
- “Explain appropriate applications for this year’s most promising new drugs.”
- “Compare and contrast risks and benefits of this year’s most promising new drugs.”

There are many roads on which you can take your learners in the “big city” of “learn about new drugs.” Where do you want them to arrive (translation: what do you want them to be able to do?). This will determine what road you take them down (and in what vehicle - more about that in the next section on instructional strategies).

The quality of an education program is determined by the extent to which it delivers what learners need and want – that they get where they want to go.

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Applying the criteria for writing effective objectives described in this program will help you ensure that this happens and, thus, is central to program quality.

Developing Educational Objectives in Continuing Pharmacy Education

Objectives

By the end of this section you will be able to:

1. Explain the relationship between well-developed objectives and program quality.
2. State key criteria of effective educational objectives.
3. Identify common errors in educational objectives.
4. Identify appropriate revisions to objectives containing errors.
5. Describe the relationship between objectives and other components of an education program.

Note:

This program will not make you an expert on educational objectives. There is more to learn about objectives than you will find here. This chapter is designed for busy pharmacists who have educational responsibilities but who have not formal training in the field of education. In about an hour, this section will give you key skills in developing objectives that you can apply immediately to make quick but significant improvements in your objectives and, therefore, your entire education program.

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Six Key Criteria of Effective Objectives

The rest of this program will cover the six criteria for effective objectives listed below. For each one, you'll find an explanation, an example, and an opportunity to practice identifying proper use of the criteria, as well as common errors. At the end of the program you'll find a checklist of criteria to use when developing objectives.

Educational objectives should:

1. Be written from the point of view of the learner (what the learner will be able to do as a result of participating in the program).
2. Be stated in observable (behavioral/measurable) terms.
3. Be achievable within the scope of the program.
4. Describe one objective (avoid multi-pronged objectives).
5. Contain seven or less objectives per program or program subsection.
6. Simulate, as closely as possible, what learners will have to do on the job.

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Criteria #1: Learner's Point of View

Describe learner, *not instructor*, behavior.

Ask yourself:

"What will the learner be able to do
as a result of participating in the educational program?"

It is helpful to precede objectives with this phrase:
"By the end of this program the learner will be able to:"

This prevents you from stating an "objective" from the instructor's point of view (what the instructor plans to do, rather than what the instructor is trying to facilitate the learner to be able to do). Such a description of instructor plans is not an objective. To write an objective, ask yourself, "What do I want the learner to do as a result of what I am planning to do?" This will help you translate it into a learning objective for the learners, as in the example below.

Example

Instructor Point of View	Learner Point of View
Introduce the idea that objectives are important to program effectiveness.	Explain the relationship between well written objectives and program effectiveness.

In the example above, by introducing the idea that objectives are important to program effectiveness (what the instructor does), the learners will be able to demonstrate their understanding by explaining the relationship (what the learners need to be able to do).

Exercise 1

A. Identify the flaw in this objective:

"To introduce the concept of 'direct patient care.'"

B. Now revise the objective.

Objective containing error	Revision
To introduce the concept of "direct patient care."	

You can check yourself on this and the other exercises throughout the program with the Answer Key on page 14.

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Criteria #2: Observable

Ask yourself:
How will I know when a learner has achieved an objective?

In the example on the preceding page about stating objectives from the learner's point of view, notice that the verb used was "explain" rather than "understand." This is because "explain" is observable while "understand" is not.

How do you know if a learner understands something? You know when you observe the learner demonstrating what he understands. Learners have to do something observable. In this case, they could show they understand by explaining the concept. Also they could **identify** an example of someone demonstrating the concept, they could **describe** the concept, or **illustrate** the concept with an example. Here is list of [verbs](#) that are observable and not observable. When you write objectives you may find them helpful. This will also help you if you need to develop an assessment, when you will need to select a way for learners to demonstrate achievement of an objective.

Now look at the example below. The left-hand column contains a non-observable verb in the objective, while the right-hand column has an observable verb.

Example

Not observable	Observable
Recognize objectives containing common flaws.	Identify objectives containing common flaws.

How do you know when learners can recognize something? Ask them to identify it! That is the difference between observable and not observable.

Exercise 2

A. Identify the flaw in this objective:

"Understand how to motivate staff members to achieve a team goal."

B. Now revise the objective.

Objective containing error	Revision
Understand how to motivate staff members to achieve a team goal.	

Check out the verb list on page 16 for help on verbs to use or not use in educational objectives.

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Criteria #3: Within Program Scope

Achievable within the scope of the educational program to which they belong.

Ask yourself:

Can the learner demonstrate achievement of this objective in an activity within the education program (rather than after the program)?

What is wrong with this New Year's resolution? "To bring about world peace."

I'm sure we would all agree that this is a worthy goal. However, it is not a good New Year's resolution because it is unlikely that one person will be able to achieve it in one year. It would be better to state something that will contribute to the achievement of world peace that you can accomplish in one year, such as work on a project with an existing world peace organization or teach a class in non-violent conflict resolution at a local school.

Keep this in mind when you write educational objectives. Write objectives that can be accomplished within the scope of your program. Of course, we want learners to take what they learned and apply it in the world. However, you can't control that unless your program is long-term. By focusing on what the learners can do within your program, you make it more likely that they be successful when they leave the program. This is particularly true if you apply Criteria #6, which we will discuss shortly.

In the example below, read the left-hand column. It contains an objective that cannot be achieved within the scope of a self-study program.

Example

Not within program scope/control	Within program scope
<i>For a self-study program:</i> "Implement procedures to ensure compliance with USP 797 requirements."	<i>For a self-study program:</i> "Explain how to implement procedures to ensure compliance with USP 797 requirements."

If this were a long-term program, perhaps the learners could learn about how to implement certain procedures and then implement them as a part of the program. However, if the program is self-study alone, they will not have the opportunity to implement them and be evaluated on how well they implemented them. Therefore, the objective is not achievable within the scope of the program and is not under the instructor's, or the program author's, control. The objective in the right-hand column is achievable within the program scope.

Exercise 3

A. Identify the flaw in this objective.

"Connect with staff through the use of good communication skills."

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B. Now revise the objective.

Objective containing error	Revision
Connect with staff through the use of good communication skills.	

Check your answers on page 14.

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Criteria #4: Contains One Objective

Ask yourself:

Can I test achievement of this objective with one question?

Sometimes objectives really contain multiple objectives in one. The problem with this is that it will create problems when (1) you are selecting instructional strategies to help learners achieve the objective (different strategies may be appropriate for different parts of the objective so should be considered separately) and (2) when you are deciding how to assess whether or not the learners have achieved the objectives (different parts of the objective may need to be assessed differently).

In the example below, notice the two objectives included in one on the left and how they are broken into two separate objectives on the right.

Example

Multi-pronged objective	Single-pronged objective
Identify common flaws in educational objectives and correct objectives containing flaws.	Identify common flaws in educational objectives. Correct objectives containing flaws.

Instructional strategies and assessment methods for the two objectives will need to be very different so they should be stated separately.

Exercise 4

A. Identify the flaw in this objective:

"List the risk factors for type 1 and type 2 diabetes and advise an individual about risk modification."

B. Now revise the objective.

Multi-pronged objective	Revision
List the risk factors for type 1 and type 2 diabetes and advise an individual about risk modification.	

Check your answers on page 14.

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Criteria #5: Includes Seven or Fewer Objectives

People learn best when the number of objectives is seven or less. Why seven? It's just the way the human brain works for most of us. Grouping your objectives so that you don't go over seven in any given program, or subtopic within a program, and you significantly increase the chance that your learners will effectively learn and remember what you are trying to teach them.

If you have more than seven objectives, try one of these two strategies:

1. Break the material into smaller sections.
2. Analyze the objectives to determine if some are really part of other objectives and, therefore, could be dropped.

Example: USP 797 Overview

Objectives:

1. Describe the relevance of USP 797 to your practice site.
2. List the benefits of following common processes and practices, including meeting USP 797 guidelines for ensuring quality patient care.
3. Examine the relationship between USP 797 and good compounding practices.
4. State critical Joint Commission compliance dates.
5. Explain the responsibilities of compounding personnel.
6. Describe good personnel control practices.
7. Identify proper garbing, hand washing and gloving techniques.
8. Explain proper cleaning and sanitizing of workspace.
9. Identify proper aseptic technique.
10. Describe laminar airflow workbench operation.
11. Summarize written QA and standard operating procedures.

Strategy 1: Break into smaller sections	Strategy 2: Analyze, combine, delete
<p>Create two sections:</p> <p>USP 797 Overview: Objectives 1-4</p> <p>Responsibilities of compounding personnel: Objectives 5-11</p>	<p>Objectives 1 and 3 could be seen as part of objectives 2.</p> <p>USP 797 is relevant to your practice site because of the benefits and the relationship between USP 797 (objective 1).</p> <p>Good compounding practices are included in the benefits (objective 3).</p> <p>1 and 3 could be deleted.</p>

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Exercise 5:

Identify ways to limit the following list of objectives to seven or less.

Objectives for a program on "Educational Guidelines":

1. Explain the importance of developing objectives in accordance with educational guidelines.
2. List key criteria of effective educational objectives.
3. Identify common errors in educational objectives.
4. Effectively revise objectives containing errors.
5. Explain the importance of effective educational assessment.
6. Explain how to determine what to include in a test.
7. Distinguish effective and ineffective multiple-choice test questions.
8. Identify common flaws in multiple-choice questions.
9. Identify corrections for common flaws in multiple-choice questions

Check your answers on page 14.

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Criteria #6: Simulates job tasks as closely as possible

What does the learner need to do on the job? To be most meaningful, thought should be given to this question. The objectives should describe that as closely as possible within the confines of the education program and move the learner toward a simulation of what they will need to do on the job.

The hardest part of trying something new is doing it for the first time. If you can provide the learner an opportunity to try it for the first time within the supportive structure of an education program, you will increase the likelihood that learners will try it, and be successful, in the transition from education program to job.

Example

For a program on leading effective meetings:

Does not simulate job tasks	Simulates job tasks
<p>Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe different types of meetings. 2. Explain criteria for an effective meeting leader. 3. Explain criteria for effective meeting participant. 4. List common pitfalls that can occur at meetings. 5. State typical meeting tasks. 	<p>Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain how to determine when a meeting is necessary. 2. List criteria for selecting meeting attendees. 3. List steps to be taken to effectively prepare for a meeting. 4. Apply strategies for opening, leading and concluding effective meetings. 5. Apply strategies for effectively handling typical challenges that occur in meetings.

Although the information on the left may be interesting, the objectives on the right describe actual skills and steps a person needs to be able to do to lead effective meetings.

Exercise 6

- A. Identify potential weakness(es) in these objectives for a program on performance appraisal for new supervisors.
 1. Describe different types of performance appraisals.
 2. Define benefits of 360° feedback.
 3. Explain steps to be taken to terminate a problem employee.
 4. Summarize legal issues that impact on performance appraisal in the workplace.

- B. Revise the objectives to include objective(s) that simulate what the learner is likely to need to do on the job regarding performance appraisal. Check your answers on page 14.

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Relationship between objectives, assessment, and instructional strategies

Objectives do not stand alone! The quality of your objectives determines the quality of the assessments and instructional strategies that you design. The table below highlights their relationship to each other.

<p><u>Objectives</u> define what learners should be able to do by the end of a program.</p>	<p><u>Assessment</u> determines how well learners have achieved the objectives.</p>	<p><u>Instructional strategies,</u> along with the content selected for inclusion in the program, are the way you move the learners from the objectives to the successful completion of the assessment.</p>
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High quality programs have:

- well thought-out objectives that apply the criteria described in this program.
- instructional strategies that help learners attain the objectives.
- an assessment, when appropriate, that determines if the objectives have been successfully achieved or how well they have been met. This, in turn, provides information about whether the learner needs further work on the objective.

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Exercise Answer Key

Exercise 1

- A. Written from instructor's point of view
- B. Sample revision: "Define the concept of "direct patient care."

Exercise 2

- A. Not observable.
- B. Sample revision: "Explain how to motivate staff members to achieve a team goal."

Exercise 3

- A. Not achievable within the program.
- B. Sample revision: "Given a scenario with staff members, demonstrate an effective verbal response."

Exercise 4

- A. Multi-pronged objective.
- B. Sample revision:
 - Objective 1: "List the risk factors for type 1 diabetes."
 - Objective 2: "List the risk factors for type 2 diabetes."
 - Objective 3: "Advise a type 1 diabetes patient about risk modification."
 - Objective 4: "Advise a type 2 diabetes patient about risk modification."

Exercise 5

- Divide into two sections: One on objectives and a second on assessment.
- Combine 1 and 5: Explain the importance of developing objectives and assessment in accordance with educational guidelines.
- Objective #3 could be considered part of #2, and #8 a part of #9. Objectives 3 and 8 could be deleted.

Exercise 6

- A. Is focused more on information about aspects of performance appraisal than on what the learner needs to do on the job.
- B. Sample revision:
 1. Apply an effective strategy for developing employee goals.
 2. Explain the uses of self-assessment, peer evaluation, and 360° evaluations in performance appraisal.
 3. Apply an effective strategy for handling an employee's problem behavior while minimizing defensiveness.
 4. Explain a process to deal with employees or team members who do not improve.
 5. Describe ways to appropriately recognize staff members who exhibit good progress and performance.

These objectives focus on what a person needs to *do* to conduct an effective personal appraisal, as opposed to acquiring information about performance appraisals.

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Summary

By applying the six criteria described in this program, you'll provide a firm foundation on which to base a high-quality education program. You'll clarify what will be most valuable for your learners to get from the program and be ready to select the most effective instructional strategies for helping them achieve the objectives. You will know what you need to assess to determine the successful completion of the program. Your objectives will help ensure that your learners arrive at a sunny destination!

Educational Objectives Checklist

Make it more likely that education program participants will learn successfully and meaningfully by checking objectives for these six criteria.

Criteria	Check
1. Written from the point of view of the learner (what the learner will be able to do as a result of participating in the program).	
2. Stated in observable (behavioral/measurable) terms.	
3. Achievable within the scope of the program.	
4. Describe one objective (avoid multi-pronged objectives).	
5. Seven or less objectives per program or program subsection.	
6. Simulate, as closely as possible, what learners will have to do on the job.	

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Verb List

Observable <i>(use these!)</i>	Not observable <i>(don't use these)</i>
Explain Describe Identify Compare and contrast Distinguish Define State Outline Select Differentiate Evaluate Interpret List Apply Demonstrate Illustrate Summarize	Understand Learn Comprehend Know

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Continuing Education Information

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