

# **Teacher Training on Learning Objectives**

*Final Paper \_Option 3  
for EDCI-53100-0011 Learning Theory and Instructional Design  
Course*

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**Who are the trainees?**

The trainees are elementary school teachers at an international school who teach using the workshop approach to instruction. The school has a transient population amongst its teachers, administration, and students. The student population is diverse and consists of about 100 different countries; 85 percent of the students are learning English as an additional language, often referred to as EAL. The trainees will participate in a total of three sessions on the topic of learning objectives.

**What is the purpose of the training workshop?**

The purpose of the training is to teach teachers about learning objectives and improve their practice by including them in their instruction and planning. The full training around learning objectives would be conducted in three sessions, with application and assessment activities in between.

- *Session One – One-day workshop*
- *Session Two - Follow-up workshop to refine skills and share problems and solutions*
- *Session 3 – Mini "objectives conference" to share success broadly to the whole school community and recognize the achievements of the participants.*

**What is the rationale for the training?**

A needs assessment was conducted by the curriculum committee and revealed that:

- Learning support (special education and EAL) teachers were stretched thin because of differences between grade level classrooms. They felt ineffective in supporting their students because unit goals were unclear or differed from class to class.

- Teacher lesson plans focused on the activity and materials, but the learning outcome or intention of the activity was unclear. The learning activities were not always aligned with the assessments.
- Every year the school experiences a high turnover of new teachers, and each year, these teachers are overwhelmed and confused as to what to teach. The goals for instructional unit lessons, along with assessment, are undocumented and/or it is unclear what the assessment is assessing and/or how it relates to what was taught.

The decision to help teachers gain a better understanding of when, where, and why to use learning objectives was seen as a solution after analyzing the results of a needs assessment. Learning objectives, "...can be extremely useful to teachers and other designers of instruction as a plan both for instruction and for testing." (Driscoll, 2005, p. 366). Objectives also provide more teacher accountability (Gagne, 1972, p. 396). Learning is the observable performance after instruction has occurred. The role of the objective is to communicate the desired performance and the learned capability. Learned capabilities are "motor skills, verbal information, intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, and attitudes." (Gagne, 1972, p. 395).

The logic of the overall learning process is summarized in the logic map on the next page. The remainder of the paper, except the Evaluation and Follow-up sections, addresses only the first one-day workshop.

**Teacher Training in Instructional Objectives – Impact Map** (Brinkerhoff & Apking, 2001)

<b>Key Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>On-job Applications</b>	<b>Teacher job results</b>	<b>Goals</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purposes and benefits of using learning objectives</li> <li>• The principal differences in a Constructivist versus a Behaviorist approach</li> <li>• The components of a well-constructed learning objective</li> <li>• How to use learning objectives so that they are constructive, not confining</li> <li>• How to construct useful learning objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construct objectives that clarify the link between assessments and instructional plans</li> <li>• Use appropriate objectives in all phases planning, teaching, and assessment</li> <li>• Refer to objectives in parent and pupil communications</li> <li>• Use objectives in ways that are not confining and allow for support of incidental and expanded learning by pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More precise and appropriate lesson plans</li> <li>• Improved assessment of pupil progress</li> <li>• More effective instruction</li> <li>• Improved communication between classroom teachers and support teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More effective and efficient preparation of new teachers</li> <li>• Improved alignment and consistency of instruction within and between grade levels</li> <li>• More consistent pupil progress through grade levels</li> <li>• Improved pupil learning outcomes</li> <li>• Improved parent communication and support</li> </ul>

**What is the plan for how the training will be conducted?**

The objectives and associated learning outcomes (Driscoll, 2005, p. 359) for the workshop training are outlined in the **Objectives for the first workshop on Learning Objectives and Outcomes table**. Teachers will have varying degrees of prior knowledge and attitudes regarding the objectives.

**Objectives for the first workshop on Learning Objectives and Outcomes**

<b>Type of Outcome</b> (Driscoll, 2005, p. 367)	<b>Learning Outcomes: Teachers will be able to...</b>
Verbal Information	1. explain the benefits of using learning objectives
Intellectual Skills	2. identify and describe components of a quality learning objective 3. construct a range of appropriate learning objectives given different teaching and content scenarios
Cognitive Strategies	4. decide when to identify, support, and evaluate a pupil's incidental learning related to the prescribed learning (i.e., don't be blind to or dismiss additional learning).
Attitude	5. Acquire new information with an open mind and willingness to learn; don't be 'turned off' by previous thinking that objectives are constraining and burdensome. 6. Demonstrate a commitment to attempt and implement new learning and reflect on the process of using learning objectives. 7. Value learning objectives as a necessary part of instruction and prioritize them in planning and instruction.
Motor Skills	8. to construct and use learning objectives, with the long-range goal of making learning objectives a routine part of the planning and implementing instruction.

The workshop plan is structured around Gagne's 9 Events for Instruction (Driscoll, 2005, p. 373). Each event of instruction is identified below, followed by the learning activity. The rationale for each activity is explained using theoretical learning perspectives and methods for the trainer to understand the "what and why" of the activity.

### **The workshop plan** (Driscoll, 2005)

#### **Event 1:** Reception – gaining attention (p. 373)

**Learning Activity** – The trainer will alert the trainees' attention with a cue (i.e., walking on stage, saying hello, tapping the microphone) that the workshop is beginning. Then the trainer will draw in the teachers' interest and help establish the purpose of the training with a humorous video, skit, or reading that stresses the importance of objectives. An example might be, reading a short passage about a familiar topic, such as doing laundry, without ever introducing the topic. This passage helps establish the purpose of the training because without the knowledge of the topic it makes the passage, even about a mundane event, difficult to comprehend (Driscoll, 2005, p. 127).

**Activity Rationale** – *The cue is based on behaviorism principles because it indicates the desired behavior from the teachers (Driscoll, 2005, p. 48). The engaging activity that helps establish purpose is based on schema theory. Without meaning the learner doesn't have any prior knowledge to connect the information to (Driscoll, 2005, p. 127).*

#### **Event 2:** Expectancy – informing the learner of the objective (p. 373)

**Learning Activity** – The trainer will present the first workshop's objectives and long-term objectives for the training, give a brief rationale for the workshop, and the benefits of using learning objectives. Questions or reactions discussion will follow this.

**Activity Rationale** – Gagne (1972) believed when the learning capabilities are communicated with the desired performance, the learning outcome will be achieved (p. 396). Therefore, the type of learning outcome and performance is clearly communicated in the workshop objectives.

**Event 3:** Retrieval to working memory: stimulating recall of prior learning (p. 373)

**Learning Activity** – The training leader will ask participants to recall a frustrating learning experience in which they were confused about the purpose or intended outcomes. What happened? Why do you think you were confused? What would you have done differently? In small groups, participants will share their experiences, followed by a large-group report-out of summaries. Finally, the trainer will highlight key insights.

**Activity Rationale** – This activity is essential in developing meaning by activating a schema through which the trainees can recognize the value of learning objectives (Driscoll, 2005, p. 155).

**Event 4:** Selective Perception – Presenting the content (p. 373)

**Learning Activity** – Quality objectives should use unambiguous language to positively state the behavior, condition, and level of performance of meaningful learning (Cotton, 2004, pp. 23-24). These components of a quality objective will be identified and explained. Examples of quality objectives will also be shown.

**Activity Rationale** – If a learner is presented with too much information at once, they become overloaded, and therefore information is broken into smaller pieces that can be fit together (Driscoll, 2005, p. 87 & 136).

**Event 5:** Semantic encoding – Providing “Learning Guidance” (p. 373)

**Learning Activity** – The trainer will demonstrate how to write a quality objective for a pretend lesson. Job aids will then be distributed with the components of quality objectives

and key considerations.

**Activity Rationale** – *It is best to be “...explicitly shown what to do and how to do it.” when learning something new (Kirschner, Sweller & Clark, 2006, p. 79).*

**Event 6:** Responding – Eliciting performance (p. 373)

**Learning Activity** – In small groups, teachers will write objectives using a job aid.

**Activity Rationale** – *This social opportunity allows the teachers to exchange thoughts, process, and come to a solution together (Driscoll, 2005, p. 258).*

**Event 7:** Reinforcement – Providing Feedback (p. 373)

**Learning Activity** – Groups will exchange learning objectives with another group and provide each other feedback using the job aid(s) as support.

**Activity Rationale** – *Feedback motivates, reinforces correct behaviors and corrects mistakes/misconceptions (Driscoll, 2005, p. 63).*

**Event 8:** Retrieval and reinforcement – Assessing Performance (p. 373)

**Learning Activity** – The instructor will gather and provide easily attainable feedback.

**Activity Rationale** – *Feedback must be in the learners' abilities, and the learners' efforts must receive some recognition and reinforcement (Driscoll, 2005, pp. 245&369).*

**Event 9:** Retrieval and generalization – enhancing retention and transfer (p. 373)

**Learning Activity** – The instructor will repeat the aspects of quality objectives in the context of the "what and why." Time will be made for the teachers to jot down questions that will be collected, as well as make themselves available for questions.

**Activity Rationale** – *The trainer needs everyone to feel and be successful; therefore they will provide the supports to ensure success (Driscoll, 2005, p. 370).*

**How will the trainees be supported after the training?**

The training session is an example of a well-structured environment and teachers will be using these objectives in less structured environments, which impacts the teachers' ability to problem solve and effectively apply this new learning into new contexts or authentic situations (Driscoll, 2005, 398). Therefore, after this training and before the next training session, support will be provided to the teachers in a variety of different forms.

Each support after the training is listed, along with the rationale of why that particular support is offered. The rationale behind each support will help the instructor understand why that kind of support is important.

**Continued support with objectives:**

**Support** – Additional web-based eLearning refresher training sessions that teachers can access as they feel a need.

***Rationale** – The Driscoll (2005) text states, it is not "...possible to use a single analogy or model to represent all cases or content in the domain." p. 398). To gain a deeper understanding, it is essential that the learning content is revisited multiple times through a variety of different sensory modes (Driscoll, 2005, pp. 398 – 399).*

**Support** – 2 to 3 job aids will be provided on how to write "quality" objectives.

***Rationale** – The skill of writing learning objectives is not a part of the trainees' long-term memory; therefore this skill needs strategies and resources, such as a job aid, that will break down the steps into systematic manageable steps (Driscoll, 2005, 87).*

**Support** – Time during faculty meetings will be allocated for teams to work together on writing learning objectives.

***Rationale** – Social negotiation is the idea that collaboration is significant in gaining new perspectives and more in-depth understanding (Driscoll, 2005, p. 396).*



**Support** – Upon request, an objective expert mentor teacher will provide one-on-one assistance.

***Rationale** – Vygotsky's "Interactions in the Zone of Proximal Development" is the idea that a more advanced partner will increase learning (Driscoll, 2005, p. 257).*

**What evaluation processes will take place before the second workshop?**

Two months after the first training, the curriculum team will conduct a follow-up needs assessment to evaluate progress before the next session. Similar to the initial needs assessment, they will interview learning support teachers and new teachers, and lesson plans will be collected. Also, this needs assessment will interview teachers to find out what is and isn't working, and how teachers have met or are still working towards the objectives from the first workshop. The results of the needs assessment might reveal areas that need to be improved in the second workshop. The third workshop will be an afternoon 'Objectives Conference', open to all school staff members, where several participants will make brief presentations on their successes. The trainer will invite a keynote speaker from the local university, who is an expert learning psychologist who will precede these presentations. The conference will be followed by a brief celebration ceremony where 'graduates' of this training will be recognized.

## References

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