



Learning Objective: The student will understand the structure of course goals, objectives and learning outcomes.

There are many variations or explanations for the definition of goals, objectives and learning outcomes; variations result from the fact that the terms are often combined or applied interchangeably. While they may seem to be interchangeable, in education or training development they are very separate concepts applied to the design and structure of a learning experience.

After completing your students' needs assessment, analyze the information received and begin structuring a course with these three elements:

Goal — a goal is a broad definition of expected student competence; the goal is larger than the course and related to a specific curriculum. Examples of goals include:

- Students will be competent in recognizing hazardous materials during an incident response.
- Students will have an appreciation of the necessity of making difficult ethical choices when managing a response effort.
- Students will know how to make decisions when faced with disparate information.

Objective — a course objective describes what the trainer will present in a course; it is written at the students' expected skill level. Objectives are generally less broad than goals and more broad than student learning outcomes. Examples of objectives include:

- Students will identify chemical elements on the basis of their atomic number on the periodic table.
- Students will apply the Incident Command System during a response.
- Students will establish span of control.

Student learning outcome — a detailed description of what a student must be able to do at the conclusion of training. When writing outcomes, it is helpful to use verbs that are measurable or that describe an observable action. Such verbs help avoid misinterpretation. The best outcomes will include a description of the conditions.

- When given a hazardous materials incident, identify and apply actions based on readings, case studies and available resources that distinguish effective, well-managed decisions and technology applications for responding to a specific hazardous material.

After establishing the training goal, objectives and learning outcome, the structure is established and ready for the next phase in course design, which is creating units of learning that support the learning outcome and are organized by relevance to subject.