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Skills and Innovation for Adult Social Care

LEADERSHIP IN WORK-BASED LEARNING DIGITAL LEARNING PROGRAMME FOR SOCIAL CARE MANAGERS AND COMMISSIONERS

MODULE 1: DESIGNING EFFECTIVE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND
EVALUATING LEARNING

LAPIS RESEARCH PROJECT
LEARNING FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE PRACTICE INNOVATIONS AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT
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Module’s Learning outcomes

- Be able to clearly define what is a Learning Outcome and what is their purpose

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- Identify and distinguish the most widely known approaches and techniques to design effective learning outcomes and to evaluate learning
- Learners will be able to choose how to design learning outcomes on their own & how and when to evaluate their own modules

Introduction

When creating your own training program, it is very common to feel overwhelmed by the information that needs to be addressed and the approach that needs to be followed for high-quality content and structure. This is especially true when someone attempts to create educational content or training modules without having any prior experience on that. As a result, most companies and organizations spend enormous amounts of time and resources to assist their employees getting the required knowledge and skill competencies related to their job. Only for the US, organizations spend up to 50\$ billion per year to provide their employees with formal training (Velada et al., 2007). This led several well-known organizations to attempt and create their own training modules specifically tailored to their needs but how are these needs met? This is one of the main questions that will be answered in the current module.

Learning Outcomes

Before even attempting to create a training module, it is vital to understand and answer the two W's: What & Why.

- What do you want to offer to the learner with this module?
- Why does your learner need this information?

These two questions along with their answers could be summarized and translated as Learning Outcomes. Learning outcomes are a short, highly focused description of what the student/learner will gain throughout a training course or module and how this will be assessed. Having clearly defined learning outcomes will not only help in designing and creating the module but will also significantly boost the learner's learning progress through the regulation of their learning while developing effective strategies to study. Each module's

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learning outcomes can be interpreted as the goals and objective of each module. Another definition for learning outcomes:

“...statements of what an individual should know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy” (2017 EQF Recommendations).

In addition, the use of learning outcomes is widely used for several different purposes such as:

- Qualification Frameworks & Standards
- Teaching & Training
- Curriculum Development
- Quality Assurance
- Assessment & Validation of Learning

Designing effective learning outcomes is a two-way benefit both for the teachers and for the learners:

- Teachers
 - Rationale for modules’ design decisions about the logical sequence to follow on topics, content, etc.
 - Framework for assessment of student learning
 - Interacting with students to communicate what they must do to progress in learning
 - Clarifying intentions
- Learners
 - Assisting learners to focus on the areas that are needed in order to progress in the module
 - Clear communication on what is expected to be gained and demonstrated by the learners

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- Helps learners to monitor their own progress, find or create learning strategies and self-reflect on the effectiveness of their developed study strategies

Designing Effective Learning Outcomes

After having a clear picture on what is a Learning Outcome and why it is important to be included, we need to identify different strategies and techniques that will help us create our own effective learning outcome. To effectively represent the aims and objectives of a course, you should consider things such as:

- ✓ What is the general picture that you want your learners to acquire and maintain in the long-term?
- ✓ What are the most important theories, approaches, techniques, ideas and concepts that learners should acquire through the module?
- ✓ What competencies, attitudes and values should the learners have in order to pursue and maintain a career in your field?
- ✓ How can your developed learning outcomes offer a range of skills for students with different preparation levels?

Choosing the most effective and appropriate learning outcome is not always straight forward and can be confusing for people with no prior experience. For that reason, several experts have created techniques and guidelines to support the procedure of creating effective learning outcomes.

Bloom's Taxonomy

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In 1956, Benjamin Bloom along with his team published a framework for the effective categorization of educational goals. The framework was called ***Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*** and it was known as ***Bloom's Taxonomy*** after being widely used by teachers and college staff. The framework included some skills and abilities that were defined as six major categories: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation. These categories include small subcategories with all of them forming a spectrum ranging from simple to complex and from concrete to abstract:

- **Knowledge** “involves the recall of specifics and universals, the recall of methods and processes or the recall of a pattern, structure and/or setting.”
- **Comprehension** refers to “the type of understanding or apprehension such that the individual knows what is being communicated and can make use of the material or idea being communicated without necessarily relating it to other material or seeing its fullest implications.”
- **Application** refers to “the use of abstractions in particular and concrete situations”
- **Analysis** can be interpreted as “the breakdown of a communication into its constituent elements or parts such that the relative hierarchy of ideas is made clear and/or the relations between ideas expressed are made explicit.”
- **Synthesis** involves “putting together elements and parts so as to form a whole.”
- **Evaluation** refers to “the judgments about the value of material and methods for given purposes.”

In 2001, a team consisting of theorists, researchers, cognitive psychologists and other specialists published a revision of this taxonomy titled “*A Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning and Assessment*”. In this publication, the authors attempted to leave from the static perspective of educational goals as defined by Bloom but rather highlight the dynamic approach that needs to be followed using verbs and gerunds to title the categories and their subcategories respectively. These are called “action words” or “action verbs” and are used to describe the cognitive processes that each learner will use and encounter in the procedure of learning:

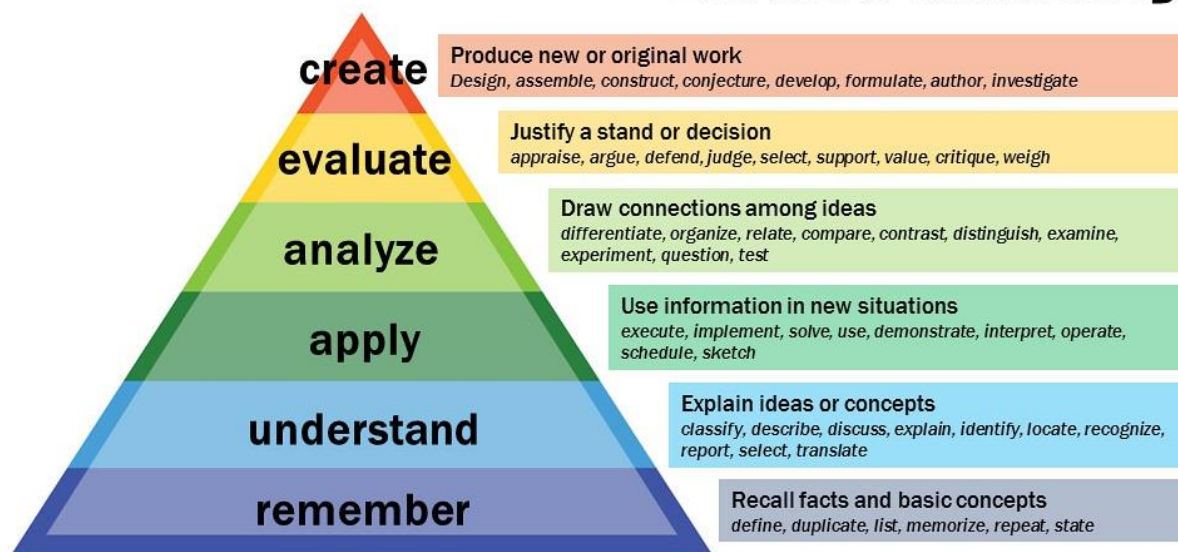
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<u>Remember</u>	<u>Understand</u>	<u>Apply</u>	<u>Analyze</u>	<u>Evaluate</u>	<u>Create</u>
Recognizing	Interpreting	Executing	Differentiating	Checking	Generating
Recalling	Exemplifying	Implementing	Organizing	Critiquing	Planning
	Classifying		Attributing		Producing

These action verbs can be seen as a pyramid for better understanding of the taxonomy:

Recall facts and concepts (Remember) → Be able to explain ideas and concepts (Understand) → Use the acquired information for new situations (Apply) → Identify connections and similarities between different ideas (Analyze) → Justify your decision (Evaluate) → Produce original work (Create)

Bloom's Taxonomy



(Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching (2015), Bloom's Taxonomy)

For a detailed explanation you can visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hE_XjCekfs

The ABCD Method

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Another widely used method when creating learning outcomes was created by Robert Mager in 1962 and is called the ABCD method. The ABCD method is straight-forward and simpler than Bloom's Taxonomy defining the ABCD objective as:

- (A)udience
 - Describe the target group or the learner
- (B)ehaviour
 - Describe the learner's work that needs to be accomplished. Should be both observable and measurable and should refer to verbs that describe behaviours.
- (C)ondition
 - What is the condition where the learner is expected to perform a desired task?
- (D)egree
 - How is the behaviour expected to be performed?

e.g.: "At the end of this module, care workers will be able to identify and distinguish the different hygiene procedures"

S.M.A.R.T.

Whichever technique is chosen to use while creating learning outcomes, the teacher must keep in mind that while setting goals and trying to identify what is needed, the SMART approach is needed to have the best chances in achieving your goals:

- ✓ Specific: Well-defined and clear
- ✓ Masurable: With specific criteria and ways to measure your progress towards the goal
- ✓ Attainable: Not impossible to achieve
- ✓ Relevant (or Related): Within your target group's reach, values and objectives
- ✓ Time-bound: In a clearly set and defined timeframe including starting date and end date.

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S	M	A	R	T
Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-Bound
Add in as many details as possible.	Make sure your goal is trackable.	Take time to reflect.	Think about what is important to you.	Keep yourself accountable.
What will you do? Why and by when?	How will you measure your goal?	Can you realistically accomplish this goal within a certain timeline?	Does this goal align with your values and larger objectives and goals?	By when do you want to accomplish this goal? How long will it take?

Evaluating Learning

After creating the learning outcomes for a module and the module itself, it is important to be able and understand whether the module provided the learners with what was expected. In order to define what needs to be improved and what is already helpful, the teacher needs to somehow evaluate the learning procedure which in this case is a module/course. There are numerous ways to do that like quizzes, completing evaluation forms and others, however, is it important to understand why evaluation is needed:

- ✓ It allows continuous improvement of the module's content and teaching method used
- ✓ It will provide feedback to teachers on the quality of learning
- ✓ Will help the trainers/teachers to understand what approach or method is best suited for their target group or students
- ✓ Will alert teachers for problems and maybe will suggest ways to solve them
- ✓ Supports advancement

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The Kirkpatrick Model

The Kirkpatrick model was developed by Donald Kirkpatrick in the 1950s in order to evaluate the training of supervisors in terms of effectiveness. It is one of the most widely used methods when it comes to training program evaluation, and it follows a result-oriented approach evaluating what results occurred comparing to what results the trainer aimed for at the beginning. The model proposed by Kirkpatrick can be visualized as a chain of four (4) levels:



Level 1: Examines the degree to which the students remained engaged and were pleased by the module's content. In this level, the evaluator can get a first picture of how the module was received by the target group / audience.

Level 2: It is based on the satisfaction scores and explores whether students really acquired the knowledge, competencies, confidence and skills that the module aimed for.

Level 3: Evaluates whether students want or aim to adjust their behavior based on the module. In simple words, Level 3 refers to the transferability of the module's content to the field of application.

Level 4: The evaluator assesses the module based on the tangible results of the training itself.

Evaluation Timing

A good question regarding the evaluation of any learning program is when someone should complete the evaluation? Most of the evaluation procedures witnessed in the everyday life occur at the end of the training program, course or module. However, according to the Birmingham City

University (Academic Practice Department, 2019) every evaluator has three choices and all of them serve a purpose

End of module evaluation

This is the most common timing for evaluation because it gives the teachers an opportunity to evaluate their module using a holistic approach, gathering data and reflecting on them from start to finish. It enables teachers to observe every success or challenge arising along with how the students reacted to them. It also provides a good way to make decisions about the teaching methods, the tools, the content used etc. On the other hand, it lacks urgency, meaning that the students who will give the feedback will not be the ones experiencing the changes on the module/course and this may lead to students being less willing to provide feedback.

Mid-module Evaluation

A growing interest can be identified in the mid-module evaluation because it has the most significant impact on the target group / students. Evaluating mid-module or between the courses of the same training program will give the teachers an opportunity to listen to the students, adjust to their feedback and show them the changes made. This is important for every student and will significantly raise the student's willingness to participate because they will feel engaged and that their opinions not only matter but also acted upon.

Continuous evaluation

Continuous evaluation is like a coin with two sides. On the one hand it has the best speed at which a teacher can address any issue that will arise. This is very valuable because it allows the teachers to solve small issues before they become large ones that cannot be easily handled. Continuous evaluation provides the most accurate feedback since it is usually focused on one topic/module at a time. On the other hand, repetitive and constant evaluation can become a routine procedure resulting in lower levels of participation from the students and finally lower feedback's value.

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Quiz: Test your understanding

Q1: Which of these is not a part of the ABCD method?

- a) Behaviour
- b) Degree
- c) Audience
- d) Design
- e) Condition

Q2: When designing effective learning outcomes, you should:

- a) Know what important theories and concepts your learners need to acquire
- b) Take into consideration the learner's previous experience
- c) Have a clear picture of what is needed in your field to maintain a successful career
- d) All the above

Q3: What is the best approach to follow when designing effective learning outcomes for the Social Care sector?

- a) ABCD method
- b) SMART approach
- c) The best approach is decided by the teacher each time
- d) Bloom's Taxonomy

Q4: Effective learning outcomes should not be prioritized because they are just an added value to the module

- a) True
- b) False

Q5: Learning Outcomes of a module should be short in length

- a) True

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b) False

Q6: The timing of an evaluation is not important since the feedback will be the same regardless of timing

a) True

b) False

Breakdown of answers:

Q1: D, design of the learning outcome is the desired result from following any of the above-mentioned approaches. Design is not part of the ABCD method.

Q2: D, all of the above are vital in order to design effective learning outcomes. They all serve their purpose when combined and should be the teacher's priority.

Q3: C, every teacher should be flexible and create their learning outcomes based on their learning group's needs. There is no method or approach that is the best of all, each one of them can be applied in several different contexts and it is up to the teacher/trainer to decide the most suitable one.

Q4: False, effective learning outcomes can be seen as the starting and end point of a module. They will define whether your module will be effective and meet your goals in the end. As a result, they are a vital part of each module.

Q5: True, the learning outcomes should remain short and concise but be careful, it is important they are short to not confuse the learner but on the contrary, they need to have all the required information summarized to a simple sentence or two. This will also help the learner to remain focused on the learning goal/outcome when attending the courses.

Q6: False, it is important to identify the best timing to evaluate a module for each group of students in order to balance willingness to participate and value of the feedback received. Each timing has its own advantages and drawbacks; thus, there is no such thing as "best timing" for evaluation.