

# Active Learner and The Learner Performs the Objective(s)

(Robert Mager)

Where am I going?

How do I know when I get there?

How do I get there?

First, Mager emphasizes that “what the learner will be able to perform at the end of learning” is the main objective. If you pay attention to that, you’ll notice two very important things:

- First, what *the learner* will be able to do. It’s not a description of the course material or something that the instructor does. These are two common misunderstanding. These errors are not learner-centered. So, if you're creating English lesson training materials, your learning objectives are what students should be able to do when the training is over. “mastery test” is one of the best way that is done at the end of lessons.
- Ex. Able to say without textbook “What sports do you like?”

- And second, it's something the learner *performs*—some form of action that learners try during lessons. Trials and errors or shadowing with friends can be say as a action. This learner-centered action will be something *evaluated*.

Those are the truly important aspects of the Mager objective. The rest is about setting conditions for how the learner can perform the action and how the performance will be evaluated.

Example of setting conditions:

- **How the learner can perform the action:**
  - Show video sample of how to say one's favorite color in English and then let the learners practice.
- **How the performance will be evaluated:**
  - Student shares their favorite color in their own words.
  - "What food with your favorite color do you like?"
  - "I like yellow mangoes."

## The Three Parts of a Mager Performance-Based Learning Objective

According to Mager, a learning objective should include the following three components:

- **A performance** (performed by the learner)
- **Conditions** (where the learner must perform the performance)
- **Criteria** (how well the learner must perform the performance)

In Japan, teachers refer to these component as follows. Teachers in the field of ICT-education always pay attention to these points.

**Where am I going?** (A Performance: Learning Objectives)

(どこへ行くのか?)

**How do I know when I get there?** (Criteria: Evaluation Methods)

(たどりついたかどうかをどうやって知るのか?)

**How do I get there?** (Conditions: Teaching Strategies)

(どうやってそこへ行くのか?)

When making a lesson plan, teachers must choose the appropriate components depending on their main goal. The main goal is for students to be able to express the target English sentences on their own while being guided by the lesson plan.

In the final check at the end of the class, teachers should expect the following interactions of students with their friends.

Ex. What color do you like?

I like blue. My bicycle is blue.

## The Performance in the Learning Objective

### “Where am I going?”

In Mager’s words, the objective must answer “**Where am I going?** What learners must be able to DO” So, as we have said before, the key is that the learner must do something.

But you must be careful when you are writing a learning objective.

You must tell the learner how their performance will be evaluated. Or, as Mager puts it:

**The most important and indispensable characteristic of an objective is that the learner has mastered the objective.**

After the lesson, students must become those with “can do” mindset after the lesson.

It's important to avoid learning objectives with words like "know" and "understand." Instead, focus on things people really do on their job.

In the lesson plan, "they can do" is the goal - can calculate and can speak target sentences - these are key dimensions to answer, "Where am I going".

## The Conditions of a Learning Objective

### **"How do I know when I get there?"**

The next thing to do is to set the conditions that will help the learners to accomplish the performance.

- What can I use while doing the performance? Ex. Flash cards, PC, projectors, and some photos
- In which conditions will the performance have to occur?

You can set such an environment according to your school conditions. Of course, some software will be great help to show and lead students to the "can do" spirit. If it's difficult to set up such a facility, please use an alternative way, such as flash cards or a drawing in a large grid paper.

## The Criteria of a Learning Objective

### **"How do I know when I get there?"**

Finally, the third part of Mager's principle, is **"How do I know when I get there?"**

As Mager puts it: "After describing what students must be able to do, tell them how well they should perform."

Note again Mager's focus on "the communication power of an objective."

## Conclusion

That's about it in a nutshell. Keep in mind that the learning objective should state what the learner should do after training. Remember to include the objective's three parts, when required--performance, conditions, and criteria. Maximize the communication power of the learning objective to your learner by keeping things clear, concise, and by removing ambiguity. You'll be headed in the right direction with your learning objectives. You'll also be creating better training materials that lead to better performance results.

## References

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