

Writing Program Objectives

Part 1

Where do I start?

Start at the beginning!

The purpose of assessments is to identify strengths and weaknesses, and identify aspects of the environment that can be modified to facilitate skill development.

Instructional objectives are derived from the information gathered through functional, behavioral and ecological assessments. (An ecological assessment involves a person being observed and assessed in different environments to see how they function in the different places).

What does the process look like?

Assess → identify needs → prioritize
skills for instruction → write objectives

What do the regulations¹ say?

- W227 = The IPP contains a list of objectives based on needs identified in the comprehensive functional assessment and for those needs observed to most likely impact the person's ability to function in daily life.

- W228 = Objectives are arranged in a logical order in which they will be addressed and relevant to the person's long term development.
- W229 = Objectives must be stated separately in terms of a single behavioral outcome.

- W230 = Objectives must be assigned completion dates based on the person's rate of learning.
- W231 = Objectives must be stated in a manner which permits them to be quantifiably measured. (Quantifiable is defined as information that can be counted or expressed numerically).

- W232 = Objectives must be organized to reflect the person's developmental progression.

This means objectives must be based on the person's current functional abilities, allow the person to experience success, and begin with the most logical step and move to more complex behavior.

- W233 = Objectives must be assigned priorities.

This means skills and behaviors which significantly impact the person's day-to-day functioning are worked on first.

Objectives should also take into account whether training is targeting acquisition, fluency or generalization of the skill.

Assessment data should be specific enough to reflect the person's learning phase.

Acquisition = Behavior is performed accurately and in a functionally reasonable amount of time; typically requires greater assistance and prompts.

Fluency = Behavior is based on time criterion and must be performed accurately within a time limit; typically requires less assistance and prompts.

Generalization = Performance of previously learned behaviors in new situations, new settings in response to new people, new requests, or with new materials; typically requires less assistance and prompts.

So, how does all this work?

Activities are global routines in which a person engages during the day in various environments (e.g., doing the laundry, hygiene). Each activity comprises multiple tasks.

Tasks selected for instruction are typically broken down into steps. This series of steps is called a task analysis.

Steps in a task analysis are typically broken down based on motor actions (basic developmental skills).

A task analysis involves preparing three components:

- 1) the objective;
- 2) the steps of the task sequence;
- 3) identification of the prerequisite skills.

⊕ Activity Description for Hygiene:

Tasks: <i>For hygiene activity</i>	Steps: <i>For washing hands</i>	Basic Developmental Skills: <i>For turning on water</i>
Brush teeth	Approach sink	Anticipate need to turn on water
Wash hands	Turn on water	Focus on faucet
Brush hair	Adjust water temperature	Understand cause-effect that faucet turns on water
Take a bath	Pick up soap	Reach for faucet
Take a shower	Soap hands	Grasp faucet
Wash face	Put away soap	Hold faucet
Clean fingernails	Rub hands to clean	Turn faucet
Clip fingernails	Rinse hands	Release faucet
Put on deodorant	Turn off water	
Shave	Dry hands	
Menstrual care	Leave sink area	

So, how do I write objectives?

Typically, six components make up an objective. They are Audience (the individual), Behavior (the behavior to be learned), Condition (addresses when, where, and/or with whom you want the behavior to occur), Degree (the specific step you are teaching), Quality (at what level or cue you want the individual to perform the behavior), and Quantity (how long do you want the individual to perform the behavior before advancing to the next step) – otherwise known as ABCDQQ.

Using the above activity for turning on water, instructional objectives using the “ABCDQQ” method, might look something like the following for “Bill.”

- Prerequisite skills: Anticipate need to turn on water and understand cause-effect that faucet turns on water. Bill has these skills.
- Long Term Goal: Complete Hygiene Activity
- Short Term Goal: Wash Hands

Instructional objective for Acquisition:

Audience	Behavior	Condition	Degree	Quality	Quantity
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by focusing on faucet	with a gesture prompt	for 5 consecutive days by 7/1/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by focusing on faucet	independently	for 5 consecutive days by 7/6/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by reaching for faucet	with a gestural prompt	for 5 consecutive days by 7/11/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by reaching for faucet	independently	for 5 consecutive days by 7/16/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by grasping faucet	independently	for 5 consecutive days by 7/21/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by holding faucet	independently	for 5 consecutive days by 7/26/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by turning faucet	with a gestural prompt	for 5 consecutive days by 7/31/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by turning faucet	independently	for 5 consecutive days by 8/5/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by releasing faucet	independently	for 5 consecutive days by 8/10/10

Instructional objective for Fluency:

Audience	Behavior	Condition	Degree	Quality	Quantity
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by focusing on faucet	within 2 seconds	for 3 consecutive days by 9/1/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by reaching for faucet	within 2 seconds	for 3 consecutive days by 9/4/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by grasping faucet	within 2 seconds	for 3 consecutive days by 9/7/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by holding faucet	within 2 seconds	for 3 consecutive days by 9/10/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by turning faucet	within 3 seconds	for 3 consecutive days by 9/13/10
Bill	will turn on the water	each morning and each evening	by releasing faucet	within 2 seconds	for 3 consecutive days by 9/16/10

Instructional objective for Generalization:

Audience	Behavior	Condition	Degree	Quality	Quantity
Bill	will turn on the water	before eating lunch at the cafeteria	by focusing on faucet	independently	for 5 consecutive days by 9/21/10
Bill	will turn on the water	before eating lunch at the cafeteria	by reaching for faucet	independently	for 5 consecutive days by 9/26/10
Bill	will turn on the water	before eating lunch at the cafeteria	by grasping faucet	independently	for 5 consecutive days by 10/1/10
Bill	will turn on the water	before eating lunch at the cafeteria	by holding faucet	independently	for 5 consecutive days by 10/6/10
Bill	will turn on the water	before eating lunch at the cafeteria	by turning faucet	independently	for 5 consecutive days by 10/11/10
Bill	will turn on the water	before eating lunch at the cafeteria	by releasing faucet	independently	for 5 consecutive days by 10/16/10

If a task cannot be broken into steps, it is typically called a “whole” behavior.

Whole behavior = either it happens or it doesn't (i.e., sign 'drink', say 'hello').

Data is usually collected via trails (number of successes divided by number of trials).

Below is an example of an instructional objective using the ABCDQQ method, for a whole behavior (signing):

Audience	Behavior	Condition	Degree	Quality	Quantity
Bill	will sign drink	at breakfast with signed cue 'cup'	80% successful (8/10 trials)	independently	for 7 consecutive days by 7/15/10

What comes after objectives?

See the presentation on Program Development
for the answer!

References

¹ *State Operations Manual Appendix J - Guidance to Surveyors: Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons With Mental Retardation.*
Retrieved from http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/som107ap_j_intermcare.pdf

*Send us your comments or questions to
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