Devising Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are observable behaviours or actions on the part of the student that demonstrate that the intended learning objective has occurred. It is essential that when devising learning outcomes this is done collaboratively between student and educator in a planned manner.

In devising learning outcomes the student and educator should:

1. Refer to:
   (a) The learning Outcomes and Competency Criteria Document which provides guidance on what students should achieve during PPB & PPC.
   (b) PPE Competency Criteria Document for PPC: This provides a guide to the standard for assessment at particular time points during PPC and can be used to identify the level of skill that the student has achieved at a corresponding time in their training.
   (c) The Assessment Form: This gives a definition of competency in each of the criteria. Reviewing the completed assessment form from the previous rotation will also aid as criteria that need more work or not previously targeted will have been documented.
   (d) Timetable for placement: This will help identify the level to be expected from the student and may indicate skills already practiced
2. Identify specific activities that relate to the week of rotation and the skills that can be most appropriately practiced in this area e.g. during a diabetes OPD week it is not likely to be feasible to practice enteral feeding
3. Draw up learning outcomes
   Prepare 5-6 learning outcomes for each week of training including the following features
   (i) Performance verb
   (ii) Suitable setting...OPD/Ward/Group Talk
   (iii) An achievable standard by which performance can be measured (use competency document & assessment form to guide)

The Performance Verb
The verb used will describe the level of performance you expect from the student. It is important to consider what you are focusing on (knowledge/skill/behaviour) and what verb you use, as the level expected will increase over the time of the placement and between placements. The box below gives a guide to the increasing levels of skill and what type of verb could be used depending on the level of proficiency expected.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERFORMANCE LEVEL</th>
<th>AREA OF FOCUS</th>
<th>VERB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Level Skill</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>List, Recall, Describe, Name, State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(In college, or very early part of placement)</td>
<td>Skill i.e. diet history/anthropometry</td>
<td>Repeat, use, Practice, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behaviour/Attitude</td>
<td>Assess, Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Level Skill</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Apply, Translate, record, define, Select, Identify, Discuss, Compare, Distinguish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(PPB &amp; into PPC)</td>
<td>Skill i.e. diet history/anthropometry</td>
<td>Perform, Undertake, Obtain, Conduct, Demonstrate, Calculate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behaviour/Attitude</td>
<td>Consider, Values, Recognises, Judge, Investigates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Level Skill</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Critically Evaluates, Arrange, Recognise, Reproduce, Reference, Summarise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(by end of PPC)</td>
<td>Skill i.e. diet history/anthropometry</td>
<td>Analyse, Interpret, Critique, Respond, Construct,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Behaviour/Attitude</td>
<td>Questions, Appraise, Defend, Support</td>
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</table>

**Aligning Learning Outcomes**

The competency criteria as outlined in the assessment form & PPE Competency Criteria Document for PPC vary in the level of skill performance required therefore it is important to consider this and align learning outcomes to the timeline in training. For example (a) below tests more basic and intermediate performance where example (b) looks at a higher skill level and may be focused on at a later point in training.

a) Is able to **independently obtain and record** an accurate 24-hour recall of diet for inpatients/outpatients.

b) Shows an **independent** ability to **evaluate** the effectiveness of an intervention, and is able to **re-negotiate** goals as appropriate.

Also in the early stages of training the competency criteria may need to be reduced to smaller components. Using the following competence criteria e.g. “Demonstrates ability to explain dietary
interventions for increasingly complex cases in a clear manner that is technically and grammatically correct, at a level appropriate for staff member/patient.” In PPB or the initial weeks of PPC training a learning outcome that could apply here is that the student would like to be able to give advice on a particular component of an education session with a patient, such as explaining carbohydrate to a diabetic patient. For the advanced stages of placement (end of PPC) the full competency criteria itself would be used as a learning outcome.

Examples of Learning Outcomes:

1. I would like the student to be able to take an accurate usual diet history and be aware of the limitations of using this method to assess someone’s dietary intake.

   Learning Outcome: Obtain (performance verb) an accurate (standard) overview of an in patient’s (setting) usual food intake, using open, non judgemental questions (standard), (skill). Question to the reliability of the data obtained, outlining 3 possible sources of error in their results (knowledge and attitude).

2. I would like the student to be able to listen to a patient showing appropriate sensitivity towards their condition.

   Learning outcome: In the hospice (setting) demonstrate (performance verb, skill) 3 methods (standard, knowledge) of non- verbal communication with a palliative care patient (attitude).