

Educational Goals, Objectives & Outcomes: What's the Difference?

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Abstract:

In the assignment we were asked to research education terms “outcome,” “objectives” and “goals” to determine if these words are used correctly in the education arena. The two-page paper should project my viewpoint based on research.

The formal definitions of the three words - outcome, goals and objectives - are fairly straightforward. Webster's Learner's Dictionary, the one I use for most of my students because it simplifies meanings to an understandable level and is superb for those who are unfamiliar with the nuances of the English language says (1) an outcome is "something that happens as a result of an activity or process"; (2) a goal is "something that you are trying to do or achieve" and; (3) an objective is "something you are trying to do or achieve : a goal or purpose."

The reason goals and objectives are often used interchangeably is because they mean basically the same thing. Whereas an outcome is the result of an occurrence or action. Which makes sense as educators use the term, especially when discussing student growth over a period of time. As I have been researching this, I keep thinking that somehow this is a trick question designed to lead me back to my original understanding of these words,

Today after doing a Bloom's Big Buck challenge/contest, which was designed to built on students ability to manage the Bloom's Taxonomy objectives like remembering, analyzing, evaluating and creating to name a few, I asked my class questions and posed thought-provoking theories on the movie, Hidden Figures, which we had recently seen. I grouped the students in pairs and allowed them to pick a name for themselves. In one class, there was a group that did very well on the \$5 and \$10 questions, which were the simpler ones. The objective of posing the questions was to get students to dig deep into their psyches and think past what's on the surface. The goal was for them to dig deeper and deeper as the dollar values went up (\$500 for Bloom Top spot of creativity Q and A). As a greater demand came on their brain engine power, some of the students just gave up citing that the activity was "just stupid." Even though the final question required this team to produce a creative outcome, they "just refused to do it."

Bloom's taxonomy (a set of objectives) is presented to help students strive to attain more sophisticated levels of understanding and abstraction in this course and their entire educational experience. It is worthwhile discussing the concepts of levels of learning, especially as students become more comfortable with dealing with the theories of human nature and the Experiential-Learning Model, and are ready to begin to refine their work. Attention to higher level processes, such as analysis and evaluation, certainly should be integrated into written comments on draft essays and synthesis becomes very important in the development of some of the humanities papers.

(file:///Users/ReadingWritingRocket/Desktop/bloom_taxonomy.pdf)

This is an example of a set of objectives.

The outcome is the result of applying the desired goal or objective to an assignment. If the results are favorable then the objective or goal starting out, reached the intended outcome. Goals give a philosophical mapping out of what is to be done, often with the end purpose in mind. The outcome is that end result.

The Common Core routinely promotes the idea that being able to cite text evidence, determine text structures and it's relationship to text meaning and understanding plot as "objectives" for students. Curriculum theorist, Ralph Tyler, a former teacher developed the Tyler Objective and some say initially redefined the term, its changing meaning. His model consisted of 4 essential questions for effective classroom instruction: (1). What educational purposes should the school seek to attain? 2. How can learning experiences be selected which are likely to be useful in attaining these objectives? 3. How can learning experiences be

organized for effective instruction? 4. How can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated?

In closing, when I write my objectives on the board everyday, I call them student learning objectives or SLOs. These SLOs are written in the language of the teacher, e.g. SWBAT (student will be able to). The DOLs (i.e., demonstration of learning) identifiers are often written in student speak in a much simpler format, like “I can statements.” This differentiates the terms for me.

References

If Standards=Outcomes=Objectives, What is the Real Common Core?

Retrieved from:

<http://tylerobjectivemodel.weebly.com/>