THE LEARNING DICTIONARY

The CPD Standards Office is a unique organisation and was founded with the vision of understanding and enabling positive and successful CPD and learning experiences. As a highly specialised expert team, our university led research has equipped us with extensive expertise on all things CPD.

Between the work of the Professional Development Consortium and the CPD Standards Office dual CPD research and accreditation activities sharpen our knowledge and expertise. This enables us to work with individual coaches, training providers, employers, and 'membership organisation's as a collaborative CPD network & community.

This factsheet provides an outline on common terms used within CPD, L&D and Educational forums.

Learning Dictionary: Understanding the terminology!

During the CPD Standards Office assessment process we request the learning objectives and outcomes of any given activity, and there sometimes can be confusion about the difference. This factsheet defines all of the terminology and provides helpful examples to assist you when designing CPD training course.

Learning Goals

Learning goals are a useful tool to assist the design of your training course or learning activity from the outset.

As a provider of any educational or training activity, a crucial first step is to consider the purpose of the activity that you are going to deliver prior to putting together any content.

Your delegates will want to know - Why they should take the course and how you will deliver it to them?

'Learning Goals' provide a concise summary of the activity and can then steer you when designing your CPD activities such as face to face training, groups workshops, online or otherwise.

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To write learning goals, follow this set of commands:

1. Clarify what you want students to accomplish

2. Communicate expectations to students more effectively.

3. Select appropriate methods, training materials, and where applicable, homework or assignments.

4. Guide any assessment or evaluation of what your delegates have learned.

It is good practice to develop at least 3 learning goals for any educational or CPD activity.

An example of a set of learning goals for a Management & Supervision course are as follows:

1. This course aims to provide an introduction to management and supervisory skills for junior doctors.

2. Using interactive case studies and discussions groups, delegates will learn a variety of supervisory skills to use in different contexts.

3. This course is a face to face instructor led group, running once a month. Delegates do not need any prior knowledge of management or supervisory skills and can book here.

Learning Objectives

Learning objectives should be used within your marketing and promotion of your learning activity, and are constructed at the outset of your learning activity.

They are advertised statements that define the expected aims of the learning activity. The learning objectives should be a single sentence, and are often listed in concise bullet points.

The CPD Standards Office encourages a minimum of 3 learning objectives for any CPD activity, and no more than a maximum of 10.

The learning objectives should clearly communicate what will be acquired by the delegate or attendees by undertaking the activity.

An example set of learning objectives for a Business Communications course are as follows:

- Build collaborative relationships that emphasize trust and respect
- Communicate effectively using simple and concise language
- Enhance listening skills to anticipate and avoid misunderstandings
- Foster cross-cultural understanding in your workplace
- Eliminate communication barriers
- Focus on nonverbal cues

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The objectives are concisely written and lead to clear learning outcomes for the trainee as they are specific and measureable. The trainee should be able to walk away from the session with the confidence to acyion the objectives which were set before the course started.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are developed with a delegate or student usually during, or post, the learning activity.

Learning outcomes refer to an individual's experience of what has been learnt, how this has been achieved, and what they plan to do with it in the context of their professional role or practice.

They are often a personalised set of sentences, clearly listing the learning that has taken place. It is good practice to encourage delegates to document at least 2 learning outcomes from undertaking your CPD activity.

This is important, as by articulating what has been learnt, it paves the way for a set of action points or next steps, to positively transfer the learning into an individual's role or professional practice.

An example set of learning outcomes for professional skills course training someone to be assertive would include:

- Demonstrate and model assertive behaviour for win-win outcomes
- Gain self awareness of your attitudes, behaviour patterns and habits
- Develop a positive, proactive response to difficult behaviours
- Exhibit confidence in your ability to address challenging situations

Within the CPD Standards Office assessment, we need to understand how you, as an educational provider, encourage your delegates to articulate their learning outcomes.

This is especially important as formal CPD records often require individuals to list their learning outcomes.

As an educational provider, developing learning outcomes with your delegates demonstrates that you are thinking beyond the actual delivery of your CPD activity, and are responsibly assisting with personalised ongoing professional development.

Learning Evaluation

The 'Continuing' within the term CPD is one of the most important aspects for training and learning providers, but is often overlooked.

Individual professionals are not looking for a short one off experience, rather an activity that assists them with ongoing development. Hence, as a provider, we need to see that you have thought about steps delegates may take after the activity in terms of impact on their role and mapping their learning into their CPD record.

Key points to include are:

- Demonstrating that clear consideration has been given to 'future learning' beyond the course or activity.
- Feedback mechanisms: How do you capture delegates overall experiences of the course or activity, and does this contribute to future developments or revisions?
- Evaluation: Do you measure impact of the delegates learning post-activity? In term of behavioural change, benefits to colleagues, cultural change, ROI calculations, or any other evaluation models.
- CPD Recording: Do you provide any assistance or support for delegates to map their learning onto their CPD record?

How to evaluate learning and development (L&D)

The process of evaluating L&D can involve both formal and informal assessment of the quality and effectiveness of an employer's L&D resources.

- Quality of the course content (the input of resources) should be measured on how much merit is awarded to an individual by the end of the course and if it is presented in a clear and consistent way.

- Effectiveness can be measure if there is way to monitor the impact on the learner after they have completed CPD. If they feel they have improved their skills then this may translate into a better performance at work.

Businesses that implement an L&D strategy must think about how it will contribute to business success. It is essential to write a plan to regularly review and assess the use of L&D programmes to support the profitability of the company and support the strategy.

In order to effectively evaluate L&D, it is first necessary to clearly identify learning needs and the objectives of L&D programmes in line with the L&D strategy. To ensure individuals and organisational teams meet their learning needs, a learning needs analysis (LNA) should be outlined for them.

When evaluating the effectiveness of provisions for learning and development it is also helpful to conduct benchmarking exercises. This may involve careful consideration of the methods used, costs and return on investment.

Learning Styles

Learning styles refer to how your delegates prefer to learn.

Different individuals learn in different ways, and have different approaches to learning dependent on their personality, strengths, weaknesses and preferences.

Within training, learning and CPD, "Learning styles" tend to group different approaches together, and there is much academic debate on how learning styles should be identified.

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Within the CPD Standards Office assessment, we simply need to understand how you, as an educational provider, have considered that the range of learning styles within your audience or delegate base.

Each individual will approach your CPD activity with different learning styles or preferences. Hence it is important to demonstrate that your CPD activity can encompass different learning formats, so that it is appealing to different individuals.

An example might be a training course that blends together seminars, case studies, role play, assessment, discussion groups and question and answer sessions.

Learning styles have been debated within educational forums, there are many academic arguments on how they should be identified or grouped.

The following are 7 common groupings that describe individual learning preferences;

- Visual (spatial): You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.
- Aural (auditory-musical): You prefer using sound and music.
- Verbal (linguistic): You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.
- Physical (kinaesthetic): You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.
- Logical (mathematical): You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.
- Social (interpersonal): You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.
- Solitary (intrapersonal): You prefer to work alone and use self-study.

The Honey & Mumford learning styles questionnaire was developed from Kolbs learning cycle and has 80 questions.

It is a popular method for identifying learning styles and has four main categories where individuals are identified for having a preference for being an activist, reflector, theorist or pragmatist.

The following table is adapted from Rogers, J. (2001) Adults Learning. 4th edn. Maidenhead: Open University Press, p.24.

Learning Style	Stage associated with	Likes	Dislikes
Activist	Having an experience	Doing and experiencing. Games, practical activities, anything that is energetic and involving.	Sitting around for too long; working alone; theorising; having to listen to others.
Reflector	Reviewing the experience	Time to think, observe, take it all in; watching others; solitude and time.	Being hurtled into activity, no time to think; crammed timetables; lack of privacy, no time to prepare.

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Theorist	Concluding from the experience	To know where something fits into overall ideas and concepts; analysis and logic; being stretched; abstract concepts; structure, clarity.	Frivolity, mindless fun; wasting time; not being able to question; lack of a timetable and structure.
Pragmatist	Planning the next steps	Practical problem solving; relevance to the real world; applying learning.	Anything theoretical; learning that focuses too much on past or future and not present.

We hope you have found this factsheet helpful.

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