

## Refining Course Goals Into Measurable Objectives

Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Example Showing a Link Between Objectives and Assessment	
<b>Refining a Goal Into Measurable Objectives</b>	
<p><i>Goal:</i> Students will be familiar with the major theories of the discipline.</p> <p>Does this goal convey any information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would a student know what was expected of his/her work?</li> <li>• Would a colleague know the focus of your department's teaching?</li> <li>• Would an employer know what your students could do?</li> </ul>	
Refining the goal into a measurable objective	Explanation of the process
<p>Students will be familiar with <u>the major theories of the discipline.</u></p>	<p>Objective = <b>verb</b> (active behaviors) + <b>object</b> (products, skills/performances, content/knowledge, attitudes/dispositions)</p> <p>Objective = (be familiar with) + (<u>major theories of the discipline</u>)</p> <p>Start with the <b>object</b> aspect of the objective. Suppose five major approaches (theories) to conflict resolution are: withdrawal, smoothing, forcing, compromising, and problem solving.</p>
<p>Students will be familiar with <i>withdrawal, smoothing, forcing, compromising, and problem solving.</i></p>	<p>Specifying what the department views as <i>the major approaches (theories)</i> is an improvement in the wording of the objective.</p>

Students will be familiar with withdrawal, smoothing, forcing, compromising, and problem solving.

Sharpening the **verb** will also make it better – what does “be familiar with” imply about a student’s knowledge or skills?

Objective = (be familiar with) + (withdrawal, smoothing, forcing, compromising, ...)

- Avoid vague phrases:

appreciate, understanding, have an awareness of, etc.

- Use action verbs:

generalize, produce, evaluate, etc.

Action oriented verbs make objectives more concrete.

This objective might be revised into two objectives:

- Students **will summarize** ...
- Students **will choose and defend** ...

*Objectives* obtained through the revision of the original *Goal*:

- Students **will summarize** the five major approaches to conflict resolution: withdrawal, smoothing, forcing, compromising, and problem solving.
- Students **will choose and defend** a conflict resolution approach appropriate for a given situation.