Tips for Writing Goals and Objectives

Although many different courses will cover in depth writing goals and objectives for health promotion programs, grants, and organizations, we have compiled a few tips to help write your goals and objectives early in your career.

What are goals and objectives?
A goal is an overarching principle that guides decision making. Objectives are specific, measurable steps that can be taken to meet the goal.

For example

Goal	Develop an increased understanding of careers in health education by the end of the Fall 2006 semester
Objectives	Find five job descriptions for health education related jobs by the beginning of December
	Interview two current health education professionals by the end of November
	Identify three organizations that employ health educators by the end of September

A common way of describing goals and objectives is to say that :

Goals are broad	Objectives are narrow
Goals are general intentions	Objectives are precise
Goals are intangible	Objectives are tangible.
Goals are abstract	Objectives are concrete.
Goals are generally difficult to measure	Objectives are measurable

These are not the only definitions of goals and objectives. Goals and objectives are used in different ways for different purposes and several of your classes will offer you greater insight into using goals and objectives.

Throughout your master programs, you will come to appreciate the importance of measurable goals. Measurable goals and objectives are essential for evaluating progress. Your personal goals are no different. A useful way of making goals and objectives more powerful and measurable is to use the SMART mnemonic. While there are plenty of variants, SMART usually stands for:

S	Specific
M	Measurable
A	Attainable
R	Relevant
T	Time-bound

For example, instead of saying "I will talk to people about health education" say "I will interview three current health educators including questions about their position and career development by December 1, 2006".

Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Objectives
Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive objectives, originated by Benjamin Bloom and collaborators in the 1950's, describes several categories of cognitive learning. These stages can be useful when writing your goals and objectives.

Category	Description
Knowledge	Ability to recall previously learned material.
Comprehension	Ability to grasp meaning, explain, restate ideas.
Application	Ability to use learned material in new situations.
Analysis	Ability to separate material into component parts and show relationships between parts.
Synthesis	Ability to put together the separate ideas to form new whole, establish new relationships.
Evaluation	Ability to judge the worth of material against stated criteria.

Useful Verbs for Writing Goals and Objectives

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Define	Choose	Apply	Analyze	Arrange	Appraise
Identify	Cite examples of	Demonstrate	Appraise	Assemble	Assess
List	Demonstrate use of	Dramatize	Calculate	Collect	Choose
Name	Describe	Employ	Categorize	Compose	Compare
Recall	Determine	Generalize	Compare	Construct	Critique
Recognize	Differentiate	Illustrate	Conclude	Create	Estimate
Record	between	Interpret	Contrast	Design	Evaluate
Relate	Discriminate	Operate	Correlate	Develop	Judge
Repeat	Discuss	Operationalize	Criticize	Formulate	Measure
Underline	Explain	Practice	Deduce	Manage	Rate
	Express	Relate	Debate	Modify	Revise
	Give in own words	Schedule	Detect	Organize	Score
	Identify	Shop	Determine	Plan	Select
	Interpret	Use	Develop	Prepare	Validate
	Locate	Utilize	Diagram	Produce	Value
	Pick	Initiate	Differentiate	Propose	Test
	Report		Distinguish	Predict	
	Restate		Draw conclusions	Reconstruct	
	Review		Estimate	Set-up	
	Recognize		Evaluate	Synthesize	
	Select		Examine	Systematize	
	Tell		Experiment	Devise	
	Translate		Identify		
	Respond		Infer		
	Practice		Inspect		
	Simulates		Inventory		
			Predict		
			Question		
			Relate		
			Solve		
			Test		
			Diagnose		