Writing Task Statements

A task statement should

• Contain a verb and an object, at a minimum
  > Identify crimes.
  > Examine ethics.

• Include a qualifier when possible
  > Identify common crimes.
  > Examine the legal bases for workplace ethics.

• Contain only one verb
  > If two verbs seem necessary, is one a sub-skill of the other? (e.g., List and explain = Explain)
  > If two verbs seem necessary, are they covering steps in a process? Could another verb express both steps? (e.g., Collect and file job advertisements = Compile job advertisements.)
  > If a task has more than one verb, an “assessment” task is more complex; so consider verb level in relation to level of course.

• Not express a value judgment (e.g., effectively, properly) or degree (quickly, thoroughly)

• Express an action that accomplishes an end, not a means
  > “Operate copier” expresses a means, whereas “Make copies” expresses an end.
  > “Use legal terminology” expresses a means, whereas “Document case progress” expresses an end.

• Use a verb that indicates the appropriate place of the task in the hierarchy of learning (e.g., identify vs. explain; describe vs. analyze)

• Be measurable
  > Avoid verbs like understand, recognize, discuss, which are difficult to measure. Instead, use verbs like explain, identify, analyze, contrast, etc.

• Vary in learning domain from one task to another (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) providing a balance of learning experiences for the student.
  
  **Cognitive**
  
  **Identify – Describe – List – Summarize**

  **Affective**
  
  **Develop – Compare – Select – Assist**

  **Psychomotor**
  
  **Demonstrate – Assemble – Compose – Design**
Developing Task Definitions

The task definition should answer the question “What must the student do to demonstrate mastery of this task/competency?” The definition should

- address the entire task, not just a part
- clarify the intent and scope for the teacher (so that teachers will interpret the task the same way from school to school)
- ensure that the important steps, procedures, or parts are not omitted
- begin with a noun form of the task’s verb (For example: if the task is “Describe career options,” the definition should begin “Description should include…”)

Sample elements that may be addressed in a task definition:

- Accuracy (e.g., handling monetary transactions; measuring fabric; calculating medications)
- Completeness (e.g., all required parts of an employment portfolio)
- Quality (e.g., communication with customers or co-workers)
- Examples (e.g., current trends)
- List (e.g., procedures for handling complaints)