What is a competency?

A competency is the capability to apply or use a set of related knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully perform "critical work functions" or tasks in a defined work setting. Competencies often serve as the basis for skill standards that specify the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success in the workplace as well as potential measurement criteria for assessing competency attainment.

The difference between a competency and a learning objective

Competencies define the applied skills and knowledge that enable people to successfully perform their work while learning objectives are specific to a course of instruction. Competencies are relevant to an individual's job responsibilities, roles and capabilities. They are a way to verify that a learner has in fact learned what was intended in the learning objectives. Learning objectives describe what the learner should be able to achieve at the end of a learning period. Learning objectives should be specific, measurable statements and written in behavioral terms. In short, objectives say what we want the learners to know and competencies say how we can be certain they know it.

Here is an example of competencies and learning objectives relating to the competency:

Competency:

- ➢ Utilizes appropriate methods for interacting sensitively, effectively, and professionally with persons from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, educational, racial, ethnic and professional backgrounds, and persons of all ages and lifestyle preferences (*competency from: Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice*)

Learning objectives from a course that relate to the above competency:

- ➢ Describe the demographic trends and epidemiological trends related to diverse populations in the United States and abroad
- ➢ Compare and contrast diversity and cultural competency in the public health context
- ➢ Identify a framework to design culturally competent public health care services for diverse populations

How to write a competency:

1. Begin with a present tense <u>action</u> verb.
   (Example: Convert meters to points and inches.)

2. Each action verb requires an object.
   (Example: Identify bacteria, fungi, and parasites.)
   (Verb followed by object)

3. Each competency is measurable and/or observable.
   (Example: Describe general methods of child study by describing such procedures as longitudinal study, case study and correlational study.)

4. Each competency is based on performance.
   (Example: Evaluate literacy genre from a historical perspective by comparing and contrasting the literary works in the 19th Century.)

5. Do <u>not</u> use evaluative or relative adjectives.
   (Do <u>not</u> use words like good, effective, appropriate.)

6. Do <u>not</u> use evaluative or relative adverbs.
   (Do <u>not</u> use words like quickly, slowly, immediately.)

7. Do not use qualifying phrases.
   (Do not use a phrase such as "Write with greater confidence.")

8. Say what you mean, using only necessary words.

Content

1. Use all domains as appropriate: cognitive, psychomotor and affective.

2. Build the level of learning from the lowest level to the highest level in each domain, e.g., from knowledge to evaluation in the cognitive domain; from imitation to naturalization in the psychomotor domain; and from receiving to characterizing in the affective domain.

3. Organize similar knowledge, skill and abilities together into a competency, developing a smaller number of competencies rather than an extensive number of knowledge, skills and ability outcomes.

4. Introduce the knowledge, skills and abilities required for transfer to upper division programs, or performance in career.

5. Relate competencies to prerequisites and general education requirements.

LEVELS OF LEARNING

COGNITIVE DOMAIN

KNOWLEDGE

Recognition and recall of facts and specifics

EXAMPLES:
Define
Describes
List
State

COMPREHENSION

Interprets, translates, summarizes, or paraphrases given information

EXAMPLES:
Convert
Infer
Rewrite

APPLICATION

Processes information in a situation different from original learning context

EXAMPLES:
Demonstrate
Relate
Produce

ANALYSIS

Separates whole into parts; clarifies relationships among elements

EXAMPLES:
Diagram
Outline
Illustrate

SYNTHESIS

Combines elements to form new entity from original one

EXAMPLES
Compile
Compose
Design

EVALUATION

Makes decisions, judges, or selects based on criteria and rationale

EXAMPLES:
Compare
Contrast
Justify
Summarize

PSYCHOMOTOR DOMAIN			ARTICULATION Combines more than one skill in sequence with harmony and consistency	NATURALIZATION Completes one or more skills with ease; requires limited physical or mental exertion
IMITATION Observes skill and attempts to repeat it	MANIPULATION Performs skill by instruction rather than observation	PRECISION Reproduces a skill with accuracy, proportion, and exactness; usually performed independent of original sources		
AFFECTIVE DOMAIN		VALUING Displays behavior consistent with single belief or attitude; unforced compliance **EXAMPLES:** Complete Explain Justify	ORGANIZING Committed to a set of values as displayed by behavior **EXAMPLES:** Integrate Adhere	CHARACTERIZING Total behavior is consistent with values internalized **EXAMPLES:** Qualify Modify Perform
RECEIVING Listening passively. Attending to **EXAMPLES:** Ask Name	RESPONDING Complies to given expectation; shows interest **EXAMPLES:** Answer Recite			