WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “ANALYZE” AND “EVALUATE”?

Helen A. Karabelas, Learning Architect
Product Strategy, Innovation and Development

What is the difference?

One very important aspect of creating a well-designed course or module is determining the learning objectives. A strong learning objective clearly and concisely captures what it is you want students to learn and be able to do, as a result of participating in a learning experience. When creating learning objectives, you might use the words “analyze” and “evaluate” to describe the objective of an assignment. Mistakenly, these two verbs often are used interchangeably. In reality, these verbs describe two very different learning tasks.
Why is this important?

Let’s say a student was learning about how lifestyle choices affect health. If the student were asked to analyze how lifestyle choices affect health, he or she might describe ways in which a sedentary lifestyle increases risk of developing different diseases or conditions. He or she might also compare and contrast the effects of exercise and sedentary lifestyle on various health measures. In this example, by analyzing, the student is examining the components of the topic, and the relationship between these different components.

Now, let’s say instead of being asked to analyze, the student were asked to evaluate how lifestyle choices affect health. He or she might respond that while exercise provides health benefits, it alone is not sufficient for good health. Exercise coupled with healthy eating provides even greater health benefits than exercise alone. In this sample response, the student is going beyond examining the component parts of the topic. By evaluating, the student is in effect making a judgment on the value of the information.

According to Bloom’s Taxonomy of Cognitive Learning, evaluation is a higher order thinking skill. In order to evaluate information, students will need to have analyzed information first. This is helpful to know when structuring your assignments. For example, you can help students reach a higher level of learning by providing them opportunities to first master content through analysis. Further follow-up assignments can ask students to evaluate based on what they previously analyzed.

How Do I Get Started?

Provided below are some links to useful resources for creating learning objectives, as well as a chart that provides examples on the differences between analyze and evaluate.

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<th>Learning Verb</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Example Questions / Tasks</th>
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<td>Analyze</td>
<td>Take apart and examine</td>
<td>Categorize, Differentiate, Compare, Contrast, Survey, Examine, Interrelate, Distinguish</td>
<td>Identify the different parts... What is the relationship between...? What is the evidence for...? Compare and contrast... What is the difference between...?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Make a judgement on value</td>
<td>Critique, Judge, Recommend, Solve, Assess, Rate, Interpret, Solve, Weigh</td>
<td>Assess the value of... Which is most effective and why...? What conclusions can you make and why...? Which option is better and why...? What are the ramifications of...?</td>
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References:
