

Finding ways to make the complexities of learning concrete and clear to learners is a challenge. Ensuring how we design learning that is both purposeful and meaningful is one thing. Deciding just how we translate the often-abstract concept of learning we have in our head so that it makes sense and has meaning for others is what makes a quality learning experience.

For many lessons, Learning Objectives often become the empty and unloved dark corner of our learning architecture rather than the engine room of the learning experience we are offering.

The “So That...” of learning

By inserting the connective of ‘SO THAT...’ there is a concrete way to communicate the relevance of learning. This can also counter challenges from those students who, when faced with something new or unfamiliar and are reluctant to take an intellectual risk, ask why they need to learn/ do/ understand/ study this or learn in this way. So it gives us a great opportunity to pre-empt what is, in fact the ‘SO WHAT?’ by making the reason for the lesson in the LO overt and explicit from the outset.

Some of the benefits of using the ‘SO THAT...’ connective to:

- It forces the teacher to really think through the reasons why they have designed the learning in a particular way and it doesn’t let them off the hook!
- It makes the teacher explicit about what they intend the impact of learning to look, sound and feel like
- It sharpens up the teachers thinking about every form of learning or training session they design. After all, if they can’t explain the ‘SO THAT...’ it probably means that they couldn’t answer the ‘SO WHAT...?’
- It means that anybody who comes in mid-way through will be clear about the purpose of the design and content of the learning experience
- It provides a prompt for all learners to articulate why and what they are learning in terms of content and the how in terms of the organisation of their learning
- It provides an opportunity to involve the learners in working out for themselves what the purpose of learning is. In doing so, they co-construct the success criteria for individual tasks and can see how these are directly linked into the bigger picture of learning

