Behavioral Learning Objectives Primer

When developing a new educational activity such as a lecture, consider what cognitive level of learning you want your learners to attain - and what can reasonably be attained due to the limits (e.g. time) of the presentation. A lecture-based, short activity may only allow for attainment of a cognitive level of *Knowledge* or *Comprehension*. But adding some creativity may get you to higher levels of learning. For example, role play will allow learners to apply and practice what they've learned. Critiquing a video may allow learners to analyze, synthesis, and even evaluate.

After you have determined what level of learning your learners can reasonably attain, define the behavioral learning objective using one of the "action verbs" below. A behavioral learning objective describes what you want your audience to learn and how they will demonstrate what they have learned.

The behavioral learning objective should define the behavior you wish the participant to demonstrate at the conclusion of the teaching session. For example, you can observe whether the participant can "explain" or "list" or "repeat" information. Words like "know" or "understand" cannot be tested . . . except through your observation of whether they can "explain" or "list" or "repeat" the information. So, words like "know" and "understand" are not appropriate action verbs to use in developing a behavioral learning objective.

The behavioral learning objective defines what the learner will be able to demonstrate at the conclusion of your teaching session. A behavioral learning objective is NOT a listing of what you – the teacher - will do or provide. The behavioral learning objective should be a response to the phrase: "at the conclusion of this teaching session, the participant will be able to . . . . "

For example:
    After reading this Behavioral Learning Objectives Primer, the reader will be able to:

- Define a behavioral learning objective
- Explain why the words "know" and "understand" are not appropriate action verbs for behavioral learning objectives.
- Discuss how different assessment strategies can be used to test the cognitive level of the learner.

BE CREATIVE! Your learners will appreciate it.

Use the table below to develop behavioral learning objectives based on your desired educational outcomes.

Cognitive Level	Action Verbs	Behavioral Learning Objective Example	Teaching Strategies Examples	Assessment Strategies
Knowledge *Learners will "know" something new*	Define Describe List Record Repeat	*Learners will be able to list the five risk factors of MI*	Lecture Video Audio	Written exams Oral exams Pre/Post
Comprehension *Learner will be able to "convey" their new knowledge.*	Discuss Explain Express Identify Recognize Restate Translate	*Learners will be able to explain the Krebs Cycle*	Question Discussion Learner presentations Writing	Written exams Oral exams Pre/Post Learner presentations Writing critique
Analysis *Learners will be able to "analyze and interpret" new information*	Analyze Calculate Compare Contrast Criticize Diagram Differentiate Distinguish Experiment Question	*Learners will be able to analyze a fishbone diagram for cause and effect of a problem*	Problems Exercises Case Studies Critical incident analysis Discussion	Assessment of: Problems Exercises Case Studies Critical incident analysis Root Cause Analysis
Evaluation *Learners will be able to "evaluate" situations or concepts based on what they've learned*	Appraise Assess Choose Estimate Evaluate Measure Revise Score Select Value	*Learners will be able to evaluate best treatment plan based on efficacy and cost*	Case Studies Projects Exercises Critiques Simulations Appraisals	Assessment of: Case Studies Projects Exercises Critiques Simulations Appraisals