TEACHING OBJECTIVES, ACTIVE VERBS

When writing teaching objectives, it isn't sufficient to just write 'understand' or 'know' ... because your expectation of anticipated learning outcomes is not defined as clearly as it could be. Different types of learning require different behaviours or skills, different types of instruction and assessment of outcomes. If the action verbs used in writing objectives are not sufficiently well-defined, assessment is unlikely to be testing the required learning outcome.

Action verbs for teaching objectives should be:
- Measurable
- Observable
- Definable
- Understandable

They can be applied to different levels of learning/performance in different domains. Here we will deal with Action Verbs related to the Cognitive and Affective domains.

Cognitive domain

KNOWLEDGE
define, describe, identify, label, list, match, outline, reproduce, select, state

COMPREHENSION
convert, defend, distinguish, estimate, explain, extend, generalize, give example, infer, paraphrase, predict, rewrite, summarize

APPLICATION
change, compute, demonstrate, discover, manipulate, modify, operate, predict, prepare, produce, relate, show, solve, use

ANALYSIS
break down, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, identify, illustrate, infer, outline, point out, relate, select, separate, subdivide

SYNTHESIS
categorize, combine, compile, compose, create, devise, design, explain, generate, modify, organize, plan, rearrange, revise, categorize, combine, compile, compose, create, devise, design, explain, generate, modify, organize, plan, rearrange, revise, rewrite, summarize, tell, write

EVALUATION
appraise, compare, conclude, contrast, criticize, discriminate, explain, justify, interpret, relate, summarize, support

Affective domain

RECEIVING (willingness to attend)
ask, choose, describe, follow, give, hold, identify, locate, name, point to, select, reply, use

RESPONDING (active participation)
answer, assist, compile, conform, discuss, greet, help, label, perform, practice, present, read, recite, report, select, tell, write

VALUING (worth or value a student attaches to a particular object)
complete, describe, differentiate, explain, follow, form, initiate, invite, join, justify, propose, read, report, select, share, study, work

ORGANIZATION (bringing together different values)
adhere, alter, arrange, combine, compare, complete, defend, explain, generalize, identify, integrate, modify, order, organize, prepare, relate, synthesize

CHARACTERIZATION BY A VALUE
act, discriminate, display, influence, listen, modify, perform, practice, propose, qualify, question, revise, serve, solve, use, verify

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Some instructional objectives and techniques to think about
(In no particular order, not matched left column to right)

Objective
content knowledge
critical thinking
motivation - inspiration
personal identification with a scholar
relating material to personal experience
application
attitude change
increased interest
additional perspectives on topic
concrete examples
learning by doing
learning through physical manipulation
add visual context or setting
magnify or enhance visual detail
manual skill development
develop problem solving abilities
share enthusiasm for topic
make "real world" connections
first hand knowledge
develop info technology competence
increased awareness of issues
develop organization skills
develop interpersonal skills
immediate feedback to learner
immediate feedback to instructor
historical perspective
Blow there mind
increase awareness of community

Teaching strategy or technique
reading assignment
lecture
in class discussion
class e-mail list
student oral reports
expert guest lecturer
films - video
slide presentation
audio tutorial
bulletin board - class display case
field trip
laboratory exercise
role playing
case studies
small group discussion
study guides - workbooks
computer aided instruction (CAI)
self-paced learning
problem sets
term paper
student project
study groups
laboratory "practicals"
required "first draft" writing
simulation games
web page
give them new points of view on fringe topics
argue the "devil's advocate"/ opposite point of view.
stating objective clearly at beginning
and/or rules

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