

Teaching-Learning Methods in Christian Ministry
Using Level III Objectives
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In the education literature four types or levels of objectives are distinguished; they range from the most general (Level I) to the most specific (Level IV). The following is a composite of many writings and authors on this subject.

Level I Objectives: Broad statements of intent that are aims or goals expressed in terms of what the teacher plans to do regarding lesson subject matter. Example: “In this class I will teach how to witness effectively for Jesus Christ.” Such objectives are good for giving students, teachers, administrators, and others a brief overview of the subject matter that will be presented, but these goals do not inform anyone as to whether the student has in fact learned the subject matter that has been taught. For example, neither the teacher nor the student can be certain that what was taught was in fact understood and, more importantly, whether it is being applied in life.

Level II-IV Objectives are statements of intent that are expressed in terms of what the student will do. Therefore, they are typically called performance objectives.

Level II Objectives state in general terms what the students will be able to do as a result of the teacher’s instruction. Example: “The students will be able to witness for Christ.” Such objectives offer helpful indications as to the subject matter of the class and what the students will be able to do, but such objectives do not sufficiently specify what the students will be doing to demonstrate that they have developed the desired competency to function as well as necessary as a result of the instruction. As such the teacher has no certainty that the students have learned and comprehended what he or she taught, nor can he or she be certain the students are in fact doing it in their daily lives.

The focus of this document will be on Level III objectives, which in the author’s mind and experience are those most informative and helpful to a teacher for indicating the likelihood that his or her students have learned what was intended and is being applied in the students’ lives. Most importantly, it is this life application that God requires. See, e.g., Matthew 7:16-29; John 15:8; Ephesians 2:8-10; 4-6; James 1:22-25; 2:14-26. In church education contexts, Level III objectives usually suffice to facilitate the desired student competency and learning transfer to life situations in addition to providing the assurance to the teacher that the learning has occurred. We will return to them shortly.

Level IV Objectives are the most specific indications of the teacher’s expectations. Where mentioned at all, typically they are expressed in terms of test questions or very precise definitions within objectives.

Level III Objectives contain three observable components: (1) students' *terminal behavior*; (2) *condition(s)* under which the terminal activity is to be done (e.g., the specific resources to be used); and (3) *how well* the activity is to be accomplished by the students, to assure the teacher that the students have developed the intended competencies.

Level III Objectives for Each Domain of Human Learning

Three main domains or categories of human learning are referred to in the field of education. The description of Level III Objectives that follows will occur in the context of these three standard domains of learning: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor or behavioral, i. e., action and performance in life, including first of all for believers in and followers of Christ: obedience to the Lord. In theological terms what we are trying to do as teachers is to help our students develop in higher stages of progressive sanctification, the process of becoming oaks of righteousness (Isaiah 61:3) by maturing in Christ-likeness. (Ephesians 4:13)

These three categories are referred to throughout the whole Bible. All three are very important. The psychomotor refers to behavior. God clearly teaches that while he requires us to know certain information, he expects us to act in obedience to his revealed Word.

While the use of these three domains, and Level III objectives within each domain, will focus on education in this essay, their use will be helpful in all areas of church ministry, e.g., not only teaching but also pastoral care, sermon preparation, worship, youth ministry, camp ministry, and small group ministry to name a few. To be sure adaptations will need to be made concerning the subject matter, and the applications will be unique to each area of ministry, but the model will be a helpful guide for teachers, pastors, youth directors, and other church leaders to insure the coverage of all aspects of the relevant learning, including skill development, and their comprehension and use that is required for maturity in Christ, in the gifts he has given, and in their most effective employment in the Lord's service.

1. **Cognitive** Objectives (These objectives measure mental capabilities, *factual knowledge*.) **HEAD** {Deuteronomy 6:1-2, 4, 6; Proverbs 10:14; Matthew 22:29}
 - a. For a lesson on love: Each student will be able to identify in writing at least three components of the Apostle Paul's definition of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.
 - b. For a lesson on witness: Following the viewing of a witnessing scenario on a DVD, each student will be able to evaluate in writing the effectiveness of the communication for Christ, comparing and contrasting what was done with at least two Bible texts, and including at least one suggestion for improvement for any miscue that was made.

2. **Affective Objectives** (These objectives measure feelings about and attitude toward the subject.) **HEART** {Deuteronomy 6:2, 4-6; Ephesians 4:23}
 - a. For all lessons: No one will drop out of the class, and at least three new students will begin attending before Christmas.
 - b. For a lesson on growth in Christ-likeness (sanctification): In next week's class session least 10 students in the course will report to me verbally that they have begun to read their Bible and pray at least once a day.

3. **Psychomotor or Behavioral Objectives**: (These objectives measure *action on the subject in life settings*, application of what is being learned to life. How do you want your students to act in their lives as a result of your teaching? This very important aspect of learning is what educators refer to as transfer of learning, what I sometimes call going "from text to turf.") **HANDS** {Deuteronomy 6:1, 3, 7; John 15:8; Ephesians 2:10; James 1:22; 2:26; 1John 5:2}
 - a. For lessons on love and hospitality: By the end of October I will hear no mean statements being made to any other member of the class during class sessions or at any other church activity.
 - b. For a lesson on hospitality: At every class session at least three students will talk with every visitor to the class and at no time will a visitor be left alone.

Most objectives for classroom learning are designed for evaluating learning in the cognitive domain. Nevertheless, for each class it is valuable for the teacher and the students to include at least one objective each for the affective and psychomotor or behavioral domains.

Learning to write Level III objectives is sometimes challenging, but in my experience as a teacher of students and as a teacher of teachers, I find that by keeping at it, one soon becomes able to write such objectives very naturally. Furthermore, after a period of time using these objectives they become "second nature" in lesson planning; the teacher thinks in these specific terms while preparing his or her instruction. It isn't necessary to write an objective for everything you teach in the class, but objectives for the most important subjects are essential. It is especially helpful and productive for the students to give them at least some of the objectives at the beginning of the course and all of the objectives for a particular lesson at the start of the class.

For more on this subject see the Church Education section on my Web site:
www.fromacorntoak12.com.