Chapter 3: Course Design by Objectives

The purpose of teaching is to facilitate learning. You should ask yourself what you are trying to accomplish in a course and how you can assess how well you’ve met your goal.

Think about what you want your students to be able to do at the end of the course. Course design by objectives guarantees a high level of student engagement because the process steers you towards student-active teaching strategies.

What is an Objective?
- Course objective—what the teacher wants to do in terms of content
- Student Learning Objective—what students must be able to do if we are to meet course objectives

Student Learning Objectives
1. A statement of measurable performance centered on action verbs
2. A statement of conditions for the performance centered on types of activities
3. Criteria and standards for assessing the performance, the criteria and standards by which you evaluate student performance

Types of Learning Objectives
- Cognitive, affective, psychomotor, social, ethical

A Cognitive Hierarchy of Objectives
You might organize the course around the cognitive levels you want to assess, keeping in mind that higher-order objectives challenge students to higher levels of thinking (see Bloom’s taxonomy—knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation)

Course Design by Objectives
1. formulate your ultimate or end-of-course learning objectives
2. work backwards, asking what students need to be able to do before they can accomplish each ultimate learning objective—mediating objectives
3. structure course content based on learning objectives
4. choose books that are in line with your learning objectives
5. provide scaffolding by planning class meetings and activities that support learning objectives
Learning Activity:

Think of a goal or student learner outcome for students in one of your courses

Then with a partner list three activities that will help students achieve this goal

Finally write out the SLO (remember action verbs) and the Measure (kind of activity) for this goal—collaborate with your partner to write a clear and connected SLO and Measure