Duke Surgery Office of Continuing Medical Education
Creating Learning Objectives

Learning Objective: Description of actionable items the participant will be able to do at the conclusion of the activity. Learning objectives focus learning on specific areas to address gaps identified. The use of SMART learning objectives helps in developing objectives that are clear and concise. Identified objectives should fall within Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Thinking.

SMART Learning Objectives

S – Specific: Learning objective clearly identifies what should be covered and accomplished by learners and should address gaps identified during the gap analysis.

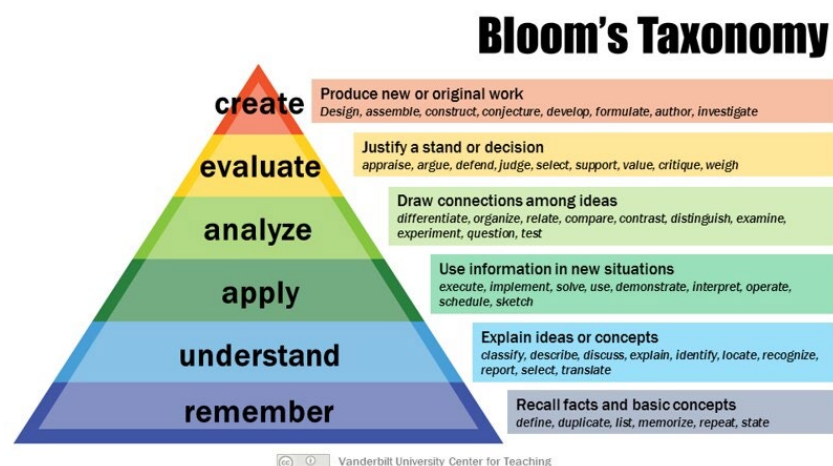**M – Measurable:** Learning objective can be assessed.

A – Achievable: Learning objective can be accomplished within the CME activity contact period.

R – Relevant: Learning objective is closely related to the session and addresses an educational gap or need of the learners.
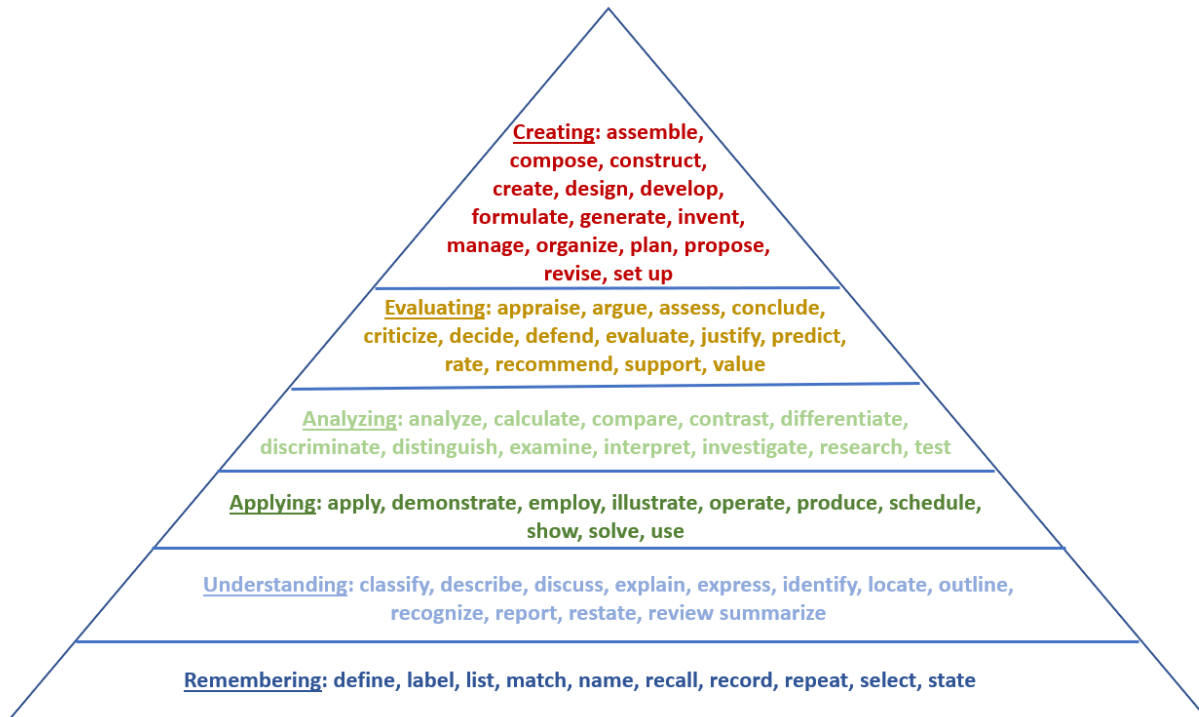
T – Time Bound: Learning objective clearly indicates the time period by which the learning objective should be achieved.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's Taxonomy is a way of defining and distinguishing levels of human cognition that can be used to understand the fundamental ways learners develop knowledge, skills, and understanding. Deeper learning happens as you move across the continuum. This movement generally begins with more cognitive and theoretical (shallow) knowledge-based activities moving to more applied and practical (deep) application-/practice-based activities. Bloom's Taxonomy can be applied to the development of course learning objectives making them specific and targeted toward gaps identified in course development.

Learning objectives should be active and measurable. The following demonstrates "active verbs" for each domain within Bloom's Taxonomy.

Creating: assemble, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, generate, invent, manage, organize, plan, propose, revise, set up

Evaluating: appraise, argue, assess, conclude, criticize, decide, defend, evaluate, justify, predict, rate, recommend, support, value

Analyzing: analyze, calculate, compare, contrast, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, interpret, investigate, research, test

Applying: apply, demonstrate, employ, illustrate, operate, produce, schedule, show, solve, use

Understanding: classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, locate, outline, recognize, report, restate, review summarize

Remembering: define, label, list, match, name, recall, record, repeat, select, state

*Adapted from the Stanford Center for Continuing Medical Education, CME Activity Planning Toolkit