

### Judging a Course by Its Cover

#### *Establishing the appropriate learning level*

Learning level is a critical factor in a participant's course selection. The learning level helps the participants understand the depth of the materials and expected outcomes of the course to decide if it meets their needs. The level indicates the depth of the content, what the course is asking the learner to be able to do and indicates assumed prerequisite knowledge. Mislabeled courses can lead to learner frustration and disengagement with the material.

#### BASIC

*The course presents introductory concepts and a general understanding of the topic; learners have minimal to no prerequisite knowledge and limited previous experience with course material.*

These courses provide general information and understanding to make the learner aware of a topic. They transfer new knowledge without substantial action outcomes for the learner. This level is appropriate for courses that present new concepts or convey information in a limited timeframe. The course introduces concepts at an elementary level. These courses also may reinforce terminology, specific facts, ways of dealing with specifics, universals, and abstractions in a field, such as principles and generalizations, theories, and structure.

Learning objectives and quiz question cues might include define, describe, examine, identify, label, list, match, name, read, recall, recognize, record, reproduce, select, state, tell, view, and write.

#### INTERMEDIATE

*The course presents detailed, in-depth materials and instruction; learners have some prerequisite knowledge, and the course provides the ability to apply information to practice.*

These courses require the learner to be more engaged and produce more tangible outcomes. The content moves beyond basic information and facts and provides additional content to help learners understand how to apply this knowledge to their practice. It will require more in-depth material or explanation by the instructor and more opportunity for the participant to interact with the material and be engaged in using the information in their practice.

Learning objectives and quiz question cues might include analyzing, assessing, associating,

classifying, citing, contrasting, comparing, describing, differentiating, discussing, distinguishing, estimating, explaining, generalizing, giving examples, interpreting, paraphrasing, restating, selecting, and summarizing.

### ADVANCED

*The course presents sufficient material and opportunities to gain new knowledge, practice application, apply information, and complete a definitive action; learners have pre-existing knowledge and experience applying this information to practice.*

These courses require the learner to be able to complete a definitive action after the course. They include using previously learned information in new and concrete situations to solve problems. The course material and activities must allow the learner to gain new knowledge, practice its application, and independently apply the information. To achieve this level, courses need enough material and time to allow the learner to achieve and demonstrate the objectives. Courses must include a definitive action that provides feedback to the learner to demonstrate the achievement of the learning objectives.

Learning objectives and quiz question cues might include apply, articulate, assess, calculate, change, chart, classify, compute, construct, control, create, demonstrate, design, determine, develop, establish, illustrate, implement, instruct, interview, operationalize, participate, prepare, produce, project, provide, report, select, show, solve, teach, transfer, use, utilize.

### EXPERT

*The course presents detailed training on specific topics with opportunities to be fully engaged with materials and activities and to demonstrate a mastery of content through coursework; learners have extensive prior knowledge or experience with the topic.*

These courses are intended for learners with prior knowledge or experience with the course topic. Courses at this level include extensive, detailed training on specific technical topics. The courses break down course concepts into component parts, examining such information to identify motives or causes, make inferences, and find evidence to support generalizations. Ultimately, these courses allow learners to make pertinent conclusions about their field. Expert learning requires creatively applying prior knowledge and skills to produce a new or original whole. Learners fully engage with course materials and activities and demonstrate their mastery of the content through coursework. Courses at this level are typically multi-day or semester-long training or include experiential training techniques and use various instructional methods, including interaction with an instructor or subject matter expert.

Learning objectives and quiz question cues might include analyze, appraise, assess, breakdown, calculate, categorize, classify, compare, conclude, connect, construct, correlate, decide, design, develop,

diagram, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, evaluate, explain, focus, judge, justify, illustrate, infer, integrate, limit, measure, modify, outline, plan, point out, predict, prioritize, produce, rank, rate, rearrange, research, rewrite, select, separate, subdivide, substitute, validate.