



Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives  
and  
Writing Intended Learning Outcomes Statements

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## PREFACE

This handbook describes Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives and contains guidelines for writing intended student learning outcomes for business programs.

The handbook is organized into the following sections:

- ❑ **Introduction:** This section summarizes the initial development of Bloom’s classification framework for educational goals and objectives.
- ❑ **The Original Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain:** This section describes Bloom’s 1956 original taxonomy of educational objectives in the cognitive domain along with sample verbs for use in writing intended learning outcomes for each cognitive level of learning.
- ❑ **The Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy:** This section describes the 2001 revision of the taxonomy along with sample verbs for use in writing intended learning outcomes for each cognitive level in the revised taxonomy.
- ❑ **Why Use Bloom’s Taxonomy?:** This section provides several reasons for using Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives in guiding teaching and learning.
- ❑ **Writing Intended Student Learning Outcomes Statements:** This section contains guidelines for writing clear and effective statements of intended student learning outcomes.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom along with a group of like-minded educators developed a framework for classifying educational goals and objectives into a hierarchical structure representing different forms and levels of learning. This framework was published as Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives and consisted of the following three domains:

- ❑ **The Cognitive Domain** – knowledge-based domain, consisting of six levels, encompassing intellectual or thinking skills
- ❑ **The Affective Domain** – attitudinal-based domain, consisting of five levels, encompassing attitudes and values
- ❑ **The Psychomotor Domain** – skills-based domain, consisting of six levels, encompassing physical skills or the performance of actions

Each of these three domains consists of a multi-tiered, hierarchical structure for classifying learning according to increasing levels of complexity. In this hierarchical framework, each level of learning is a prerequisite for the next level, i.e., mastery of a given level of learning requires mastery of the previous levels. Consequently, the taxonomy naturally leads to classifications of lower- and higher-order learning.

In higher education, the cognitive domain has been the principal focus for developing educational goals and objectives while the affective and psychomotor domains have received less attention. Bloom's taxonomy has stood the test of time, has been used by generations of curriculum planners and college and university professors, and has become the standard for developing frameworks for learning, teaching, and assessment.

## **THE ORIGINAL TAXONOMY OF THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN**

Bloom's original 1956 Taxonomy of Educational Objectives identified the following levels of cognitive learning (arranged from lower-order to higher-order levels of learning):

- ❑ **Knowledge** – The remembering of previously learned material; this involves the recall of a wide range of material, from specific facts to complete theories.
- ❑ **Comprehension** – The ability to grasp the meaning of previously-learned material; this may be demonstrated by translating material from one form to another, interpreting material (explaining or summarizing), or by predicting consequences or effects.
- ❑ **Application** – The ability to use learned material in new and concrete situations; this may include the application of rules, methods, concepts, principles, laws, and theories.
- ❑ **Analysis** – The ability to break down material into its component parts so that its organizational structure may be understood; this may include the identification of the parts, analysis of the relationships between parts, and recognition of the organizational principles involved.

- ❑ **Synthesis** – The ability to put parts together to form a new whole; this may involve the production of a unique communication (thesis or speech), a plan of operations (research proposal), or a set of abstract relations (scheme for classifying information).
- ❑ **Evaluation** – The ability to judge the value of material for a given purpose; the judgments are to be based on definite internal and/or external criteria.

For each level in each domain, Bloom identified a list of suitable verbs for describing that level in written objectives. For each level in the cognitive domain, the following table provides a list of sample verbs to use in writing intended student learning outcomes that are appropriate for that cognitive level of learning. In the table, the learning levels are arranged from lower-order learning to higher-order learning.

Bloom's Original Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain					
Cognitive Level	Sample Verbs to Use in Writing Intended Student Learning Outcomes				
<b>Knowledge</b>	Acquire	Find	Locate	Quote	Reproduce
	Choose	Group	Match	Recall	Select
	Count	Identify	Memorize	Recite	State
	Define	Indicate	Name	Recognize	Tabulate
	Distinguish	Label	Outline	Record	Trace
	Fill-in	List	Point	Repeat	Underline
<b>Comprehension</b>	Associate	Define	Fill in	Outline	Retell
	Change	Differentiate	Find	Paraphrase	Reword
	Classify	Discuss	Generalize	Predict	Rewrite
	Conclude	Distinguish	Give examples	Prepare	Restate
	Compare	Estimate	Group	Put in order	Show
	Contrast	Expand	Infer	Rearrange	Simplify
	Convert	Explain	Illustrate	Recognize	Suggest
	Demonstrate	Express	Interpolate	Reorder	Summarize
	Describe	Extend	Interpret	Reorganize	Transform
	Determine	Extrapolate	Measure	Represent	Translate
<b>Application</b>	Apply	Determine	Generalize	Organize	Put together
	Calculate	Develop	Graph	Participate	Record
	Choose	Discover	Illustrate	Perform	Relate
	Classify	Discuss	Interpret	Plan	Restructure
	Collect information	Distinguish	Interview	Practice	Select
	Compute	Employ	Investigate	Predict	Show
		Estimate	Locate	Prepare	Solve

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