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# DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES THAT WILL *BLOOM* IN YOUR LESSON PLANS



## Developing Objectives That Will “Bloom” in Your Lesson Plans

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Title:	Developing Objectives That Will “Bloom” in Your Lesson Plans
Lesson Purpose:	To present the necessary elements of an effective training objective and how objectives play a major role in training transfer.
Training Objectives:	<p>At the end of this block of instruction the student will be able to achieve the following objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Successfully differentiate between the three elements of a training objective, i.e., action, condition and standard during classroom exercises.</li><li>2. Compare the three primary learning domains and determine how an appropriately written objective involves all three.</li><li>3. Using a variety of Aesop’s fables, effectively demonstrate a working knowledge of Bloom’s taxonomy by writing objectives at each level.</li><li>4. Accurately transfer Bloom’s taxonomy principles to criminal justice lesson plan development.</li></ol>
Hours:	One hour and thirty minutes
Instructional Method:	Discussion/Practical Exercise
Materials Required:	Pen/Pencil Student Lesson Plans
References:	<p>Anderson, L.W. &amp; Krathwohl, D.R. <i>A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing</i>, Abridged Edition. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2001.</p> <p>ANSI/IACET 1-2013, Standard for Continuing Education and Training, 2013 IACET, 21.</p> <p>Bloom, Benjamin. <i>Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Affective Domains</i>. White Plains, NY: Longham, Inc., 1956.</p> <p>Cartwright, Steve and Phillip Cartwright. <i>Designing and Producing Media-Based Training</i>. Woburn, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999.</p>

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### I. Introduction

#### A. Opening Statement

“Your primary role as an instructor is to *change the behavior* of your students. That is what training is for. Students will come into your classroom to improve their present skills or to acquire new skills, and they will hopefully leave *changed*.”<sup>1</sup> To ensure that you can physically observe this change, instructors need to monitor student performance. How will you know if a student learns what you are teaching? What behavioral measures will you put in place? It all starts with how you phrase your objectives, which learning domains they will encompass and which action verbs you will use. Measuring and ensuring change and job transfer isn’t difficult, if you start on the right path.

#### B. Training Objectives

#### C. Reasons

“One reason an instructor should go to the pain of writing good measurable objectives is because the instructor can be held accountable for the training session. By writing concrete objectives, you know exactly what the student should have to do, and better than that, you know if the student can do it.”<sup>2</sup> The instructional period will make more sense to the student as well. The block will not be a “mystery” to them. They will know what is expected and what to expect.

“A clear sense of where you want to go, and what you are trying to accomplish is the single most important ingredient for designing active training programs.”<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, students need to be challenged in their training programs to ensure content mastery. Designing training that incorporates all learning domains and engages the students is the key to effectiveness! <sup>4</sup>

### II. Body

#### A. Training Objectives

“Students will be sent to your class because they lack knowledge and skills. As an instructor you should have a purpose, a goal or, as we prefer to call it, an objective that you want your students to accomplish. You may in fact have several. But regardless of the number, there are certain skills,

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knowledge, information or procedures (objectives) you want your students to be able to perform when they leave your classroom.”<sup>5</sup>

1. Reasons for objectives<sup>6 7</sup>

a) “Outlines and specifies learner’s needs

If there’s a cardinal rule in developing training content, it’s to keep the learner’s needs front and center.

b) Provides clear expectations

Communicates to the student what is expected in order to pass the course.

c) Self-assessment throughout training

Helps the student evaluate his own comprehension level of the material.

d) Provides the instructor with standards for unbiased evaluation of student comprehension of the information presented.

e) Provides for evaluation of instruction and identifies unnecessary content.”

2. How training objectives are used in lesson plans

“A learning objective describes what your learners should be able to do after they complete your training.”<sup>8</sup>

a) “Training objectives describe the intended result of instruction, not the process of instruction or the means of achieving those results. They are stating the performance your students will be expected to exhibit to complete your instruction successfully. These objectives should define for both the instructor and the student the specific tasks they should be able to perform after completing this block of instruction.

b) Training objectives must be definite and specific to give direction. Vaguely written objectives make it difficult for both the instructor and student to identify the appropriate methods to reach the objectives stated or even to understand what they are expected to accomplish through the instruction.



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- c) Well-written, specific objectives also simplify the task of evaluating whether the objectives have in fact been reached. Tests constructed from well-written objectives are good indicators of successful instruction.
- d) Clearly written objectives enable students to identify the specific tasks and level of performance expected of them so that they may better accomplish the objectives without having to guess what the instructor is trying to teach. A successful objective is one that communicates to the reader the intent of the writer in a clear, concise manner.
- e) Objectives should not use words that are open to a wide range of interpretations, such as: know, understand, appreciate, etc. Until you clarify these terms by stating what students must be able to do, you have communicated little and left your intended goals open to miscommunication.”<sup>9 10</sup>
- f) “Create content that teaches your learners to *perform* each of the learning objectives. Likewise, do not add additional content that doesn’t help your learner perform the objectives. Resist the temptation to add more information because it’s ‘interesting.’ Remember that in learning, less is more.”<sup>11</sup>

### B. Elements of Effective Training Objectives

“Effective student performance objectives should demonstrate three major characteristics. These characteristics can be observed when answering these three questions:

- What should the learner be able to do? (Action)
- What conditions will the performance occur under? (Condition)
- How well must the learner be able to perform? (Standard)

Each objective should describe the (a) do what, (c) with what, and (s) how well.

It is not always necessary to include all three elements to have a good objective, but the more of them you include, the better your objective will communicate your intent.

#### 1. Action (Accomplishment, Performance, Task)

As an instructor you cannot read the mind of the student to verify the depth of his understanding. Student understanding can only be

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determined through measurable and observable activity. This type of activity may be visible, such as writing, repairing, stopping a motor vehicle, conducting a building search or gathering crime scene evidence from a seized computer; or invisible such as solving, identifying, adding, reciting or analyzing a problem. *Knowledge, appreciation or understanding* can only be measured by observing students perform a task demonstrating the meaning of these abstract terms.

The element of action in an objective describes what the student will be able to do to demonstrate that he has achieved the objective. It is the behavior that will be accepted as evidence that the student has learned.

Sentences that do not state or require an action or performance are not effective objectives.

### 2. Condition

The condition describes the situation in which the student will be required to demonstrate the performance behavior. The condition clearly states the limits and circumstances within which the student will be expected to perform the required task. A performance condition could refer to a specific environment in which the student will be placed, or specific tools, equipment, books, references, etc., that the student will be given or denied when they perform the objective. Conditions state the circumstances under which the task must be performed.

#### a) Environment refers to:

- (1) Street condition
- (2) Classroom
- (3) Range (night firing)
- (4) Building

#### b) Equipment refers to:

- (1) Firearm (fully equipped)
- (2) Handcuffs
- (3) Baton



(4) Reference books

(5) Ruler

c) Situation refers to:

(1) Role play

(2) Hypothetical situation, i.e., building search, vehicle stop, etc.

A condition states HOW a specific task will be performed and the circumstances under which the performance will occur.

### 3. Standard (Criterion)

The standard is the yardstick by which achievement of the objectives is assessed. **It is the minimal acceptable performance that the student must achieve.** In other words, **HOW WELL** must the student be able to perform the given task. The standard is the quantity, quality and speed at which the student will be required to perform the given task. Standards give an instrument of measure against which you can weigh and test your instruction and the student’s performance.

a) Speed/Time

One method of setting a standard is to set a time limit on performance. The time given could be seconds, minutes, hours, days, etc.

EXAMPLES:

- Within 10 minutes
- Within 30 seconds
- In less than 2 hours

b) Quantity

How much must the student achieve? Quantity specifies the minimum number of correct answers or responses which are acceptable, the number of errors allowed, the number of repetitions required or the number of principles to be applied or identified in a given situation. Quantity may also require percentages of proportions.

### EXAMPLES:

- Correctly answer 14 questions
- Solve at least two cases of unsolved murders
- Correctly answer 15 out of 20 problems
- With no more than four errors
- All 35
- Error free
- 85% correct

### c) Quality/Accuracy

How well must the student perform the task? This type of standard defines the quality of acceptable performance in more detail. Quality defines the important characteristics or attributes of a required performance which will be expected of the student. If the phrase emphasizes the excellence of the action, it is a standard.

### EXAMPLES:

- According to the PRN procedure
- Without creating service interruptions
- Using all safety rules while performing
- Accurately, properly, correctly, appropriately, safely, etc.
- Accurately to the nearest whole number
- In sequential order

Standards may be written using any one of these measures or if needed to specify performance levels, all three may be used.

### 4. Still confused about whether your objective is a condition or a standard?

Sometimes we tend to use phrases that are easily intermingled when we try to decide whether the phrase should be called a ‘condition’ or a ‘standard.’ In these situations, ask yourself if the phrase says anything about the excellence of performance which will be expected of the student. If it does, the phrase is a ‘standard.’ Phrases which specify givens, restrictions, equipment or props are ‘conditions.’”<sup>12 13 14 15 16</sup>

### C. Domains of Learning

As you begin to write instructional objectives, you might find it helpful to refer to some frame of reference that clarifies the various types of outcomes to consider. This will provide greater assurance that important

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objectives are not overlooked. Many curriculum designers describe these three domains or categories of learning: “learning about things you can ‘know,’ learning about things you can ‘do,’ and learning about things you ‘feel.’ These are called the Cognitive domain, the psychomotor domain and the Affective domain. They are also referred to as Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes. Trainers often call these ‘KSAs’ for short.”<sup>17</sup>

Or you can remember these major types of learning as “A-B-C.”

### 1. Affective

“Affective learning includes the fostering of attitudes, feelings, and preferences. For example, you may want your students to value a certain situation, procedure, or piece of equipment. Or you may wish them to become more aware of their feelings and reactions to certain issues and new ideas.

“Attitudinal goals, therefore, are those that ask a learner to *choose* to do something under certain circumstances. The intent of attitudinal training is to influence or persuade a person to make a decision in the desired direction. It may involve changing attitudes as well as associated feelings, values, motivations and beliefs.”<sup>18</sup>

### 2. Behavioral

Behavioral learning includes the development of competence in the actual performance of procedures, operations, methods and techniques.

Behavioral goals are the priority when there is a lack of skill. This is often referred to as a “can’t do” situation.

### 3. Cognitive

Cognitive learning includes the acquisition of information and concepts related to course content. You may want your students to not only comprehend the subject matter, but also to analyze it and apply it to new situations.

Cognitive goals are the priority when there is a lack of knowledge. This is often referred to as a “don’t know” situation.

Although it is possible to design your training program with only one of these types of learning in mind, a design that incorporates all three is

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more likely to result in lasting change. Even a relatively short course can include affective, behavioral and cognitive objectives.”<sup>19 20 21</sup>

### D. Levels of Objectives<sup>22 23 24 25 26</sup>

#### 1. Bloom’s taxonomy

“Benjamin Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives has been widely accepted since 1950. Most teaching at the cognitive level involves some combination of the six categories or levels of objectives provided by Bloom. As indicated in the list outlined for you, the levels become increasingly complex and difficult to specify, attain, and evaluate as you progress from one to six.”

##### a) Recall and recognize information

An objective written to gauge student knowledge is in this first level. “This involves your students’ committing to memory, facts, theories and principles. This would be your basic level objective. You would use such words as list, define, state the principle of conversion of mass; recite the Miranda warning, etc.”

##### b) Comprehension/Translation

“These objectives imply that you want the student to report back to you something he has learned but through an alternative or different means; i.e., to restate in your own words, to describe the principle of; to review; to explore the meaning of . . . . As an instructor you are looking for more than simple recall from your students.”

##### c) Application

“Application refers to the use of learned information to solve a problem. This means carrying over knowledge of facts or methods learned in one specific context to completely new ones.” Here the student must take facts learned about a topic area and apply them. Examples include: given a role-play of an arrest situation, identify the correct and incorrect use of the Miranda warning; operate the blue lights on a patrol vehicle; sketch a crime scene.

d) Analysis

“Taking learned information apart. Analysis means figuring out a subject matter’s most elemental ideas and their interrelationships.” Examples include: to differentiate between; to calculate; to test; to compare/contrast; to solve.

e) Synthesis

This is a process of working with elements, parts, etc., and combining them in such a way as to constitute a pattern or structure not there before.

“Generally, it is a recombination of parts of previous experiences with new material, reconstructed into a new whole. This category allows the student to be creative and show original thought.” Examples include: to design an original piece of art; to compose music or poetry; to research and determine new results; to organize a new system for investigating complaints.

f) Evaluation

“Evaluation is defined as ‘making judgments about the value, for some purpose, of ideas, works, solutions, methods, materials, etc.’ It involves the use of criteria as well as standards for appraising the extent to which particulars are accurate, effective, economical or satisfying. Evaluation encompasses to some extent all the other categories. Examples include: to evaluate; to rate; to select the best features of; to estimate and measure.

2. Putting all six levels together

“Knowing the levels of objectives and the domain of learning can be very useful in reminding you of the range or levels of objectives. Knowing the domain of learning which a given objective addresses will assist you in selecting the appropriate performance words to describe your intent as well as the start of test items that might be appropriate.

As you begin to write your training objectives, you might keep the following questions in mind to help you determine what level of objectives you are striving for:

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- a) Does the block of instruction seek to encourage comprehension and application of basic principles? For example, do you want our students to apply the laws of arrest, search and seizure (application), or do you want them to recite (recall) them?
- b) Do you want to teach students skills involving critical thinking, evaluation or creativity (synthesis) or do you want them to define or restate someone’s theory of law (translation)?
- c) Do you want to develop tolerance or active sensitivity in your students (evaluation) or do you want them to determine the differences between concepts (analysis)?
- d) Do you want to encourage values or attitudes, or to bring about change in a viewpoint (evaluation) or do you want them to provide their values to other examples (synthesis)?”<sup>27</sup>

### 3. A newer version of Bloom’s taxonomy<sup>28 29</sup>

“In 2000/2001 Bloom's Taxonomy was revised. Originally, the categories were listed as nouns, like ‘knowledge.’ The 2001 revision simply turned the nouns into verbs. The six revised categories are:

- a) Remembering
- b) Understanding
- c) Applying
- d) Analyzing
- e) Evaluating
- f) Creating

The tasks associated with each level remained the same, except that "creating" is now believed to take place at a higher cognitive level than evaluation, or synthesis. Basically, levels 5 and 6 swapped places in the Revised Taxonomy. Both versions of Bloom’s Taxonomy are still in use.”

The goal for our instruction should be to challenge our students at the highest levels we can. We must push to the application and creation levels that more closely reflect their current job responsibilities.



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### 4. Choosing activities at each level<sup>30</sup>

Once you have determined the appropriate “action” verb for your lesson plans, then you can choose the best activities to reinforce your content. In your handout, is a rubric that can help you make those decisions.

### 5. Practical exercise time

### 6. Writing law enforcement related objectives

Think of a traditional police function conducted daily by patrol officers. There are procedures and guidelines that should be followed by officers from the moment they are dispatched, through the arrival and completing the call. Apply Bloom’s taxonomy and write one objective at each level outlining the activities required by officers.

## III. Conclusion

### A. Summary

During this workshop we have explored the elements of an effective objective, i.e., action, condition and standard, and learned how to apply these elements when writing training objectives. We also discovered how learning domains influence the type of objective we construct and the value of planning the level of learning we want our students to achieve using Bloom’s taxonomy.

### B. Questions from Class

### C. Closing Statement

It is generally agreed that students should share responsibility for their own learning. Objectives tell the students what the learning outcomes should be and provides criteria that can be used to judge the total learning process. When objectives are not provided, the student must guess what the instructor expects and usually guesses wrong.”<sup>31</sup> Instructors are certainly responsible for ensuring that each student leaves the training experience with the full knowledge to be able to **apply** what they learned, **transfer** it to another situation and then **evaluate** their decision making and actions. If we fail to do this during our classroom segment, then we will have failed our students.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Georgia Cloutier et al., “Lesson Plan Preparation: Format and Objectives,” *Instructor Training Manual* (Salemberg, NC: North Carolina Justice Academy, 1996), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Mel Silberman and Carol Auerback, *Active Training* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 1998), 37.

<sup>4</sup> Northwest Center for Public Health Practice. “Effective Adult Learning: A Toolkit for Teaching Adults.” University of Washington School of Public Health, 2014, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Cloutier et al., 5-7.

<sup>6</sup> Norman Gronlund. *How to Write and Use Instructional Objectives* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 2000), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Jeffrey Dalto. “Creating Learning Objectives: The Ultimate Guide to Writing Learning Objectives for Training Materials.” Convergence Training. March 2014. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.convergencetraining.com/download/learning-objectives-web.pdf> [January 11, 2019], 3.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>9</sup> Cloutier et al., 7-8.

<sup>10</sup> William Rothwell, *Mastering the Design Process* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992), 130-131.

<sup>11</sup> Dalto, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Cloutier et al., 8-11.

<sup>13</sup> Rothwell, 132-136.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Mager, *Making Instruction Work* (Atlanta, GA: The Center for Effective Performance, 1997), 75.

<sup>15</sup> Dalto, 7 – 8.

<sup>16</sup> Northwest Center for Public Health Practice, 18.

<sup>17</sup> Dalto, 11.

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<sup>18</sup> Connie Malamed. “A Quick Guide to Attitudinal Training.” *The E-Learning Coach*. 2019. [On-line]. Available at [http://thelearningcoach.com/elearning\\_design/attitudinal-training/](http://thelearningcoach.com/elearning_design/attitudinal-training/) [March 3, 2019]. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Silberman and Auerback, 38-40.

<sup>20</sup> Steve Cartwright and Phillip Cartwright, *Designing and Producing Media-Based Training* (Woburn, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999), 32-33.

<sup>21</sup> Rothwell, 129.

<sup>22</sup> Cloutier et al., 12-13.

<sup>23</sup> Silberman and Auerback, 44.

<sup>24</sup> Benjamin Bloom, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Affective Domains* (White Plains, NY: Longman, Inc., 1956), 62-193.

<sup>25</sup> Gronlund, 112.

<sup>26</sup> Dalto, 12.

<sup>27</sup> Cloutier et al., 13.

<sup>28</sup> Alatalo Sari. “Critical Thinking: From Teaching to Theory.” *EPooki*. February 6, 2015. [On-line]. Available at: [http://www.oamk.fi/epooki/2015/critical-thinking-theory-teaching/?ccm\\_paging\\_p\\_b1802=3](http://www.oamk.fi/epooki/2015/critical-thinking-theory-teaching/?ccm_paging_p_b1802=3) [March 3, 2019.]

<sup>29</sup> Natasha, Hoover. “What is the Importance of Studying Bloom’s Taxonomy of the Cognitive Domain?” *HubPages*. July 30, 2013. [On-line]. Available at <https://hubpages.com/education/Blooms-Taxonomy-of-the-Cognitive-Domains> [March 1, 2019], 1.

<sup>30</sup> ANSI/IACET 1-2013, Standard for Continuing Education and Training, 2013 IACET, 21.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 21-22.