

Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are specific, measurable statements that articulate what students are expected to know, understand, or be able to do as a result of a learning experience. They serve as guideposts for instructors, helping to focus teaching efforts, design assessments, and evaluate student progress.

Types of Learning Objectives – Krathwohl's (2002) taxonomy, a revision of Bloom's original taxonomy, provides a framework for setting learning objectives by categorizing cognitive processes into six levels: remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate, and create. This taxonomy guides educators in formulating clear and measurable learning objectives that encompass various cognitive abilities, ensuring alignment between instructional goals, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. Furthermore, Krathwohl distinguishes between factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge, as you can see in the table below.



Why are Learning Objectives important?

- Learning goals help you to clarify for yourself what you want your students to accomplish in your course.
- Learning Goals help you to select the appropriate teaching methods and assignment(s)-
- Presenting the goals to the students can help them to know what you expect from them (Davis, 2009).

The Knowledge Dimension	1. Remember	2. Understand	3. Apply	4. Analyse	5. Evaluate	6. Create
a. Factual						
b. Conceptual						
c. Procedural						
d. Metacognitive						

Characteristics of Effective Learning Objectives

– Effective learning objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, result-oriented, time-bound):

- Specific: Break down broad topics into manageable components, explicitly stating desired outcomes.
- Measurable: Focus on observable changes in students' behavior or performance.
- Achievable: Ensure objectives are within resources, timeframe, and student readiness.
- Result-oriented: Emphasize the knowledge, skills, or attitudes students should acquire.
- Time-bound: Clearly state any relevant timelines for competency (Center for Teaching Excellence Boston College, 2024).



Krathwohl's taxonomy – By systematically integrating Krathwohl's taxonomy into course planning and instruction, university lecturers can create coherent learning experiences that foster students' intellectual growth across a range of cognitive domains. Lecturer can use it as follows:

- Define clear learning objectives for the course, specifying what students should know and be able to do by the end of the instruction.
 - Map each learning objective to the appropriate level of Krathwohl's taxonomy.
- Recognize that learning objectives may encompass different types of knowledge.
 - Develop assessments and teaching methods that align with the learning objectives and taxonomy levels.

Writing Learning Objectives – There are four steps to defining good learning objectives.



	Define the object	Determine mastery level	Complete the learning objective	Tweak and refine
Example 1	Economic principles of supply and demand (Economics)	apply	Students will apply economic principles of supply and demand to analyse real-world market scenarios.	Students will apply economic principles of supply and demand to analyse real-world market scenarios, in both speech and writing.
Example 2	Analysing market trends and forecasts (Economics)	critique	Students will critique market trends and forecasts, considering factors such as accuracy, reliability, and bias.	Students will critique market trends and forecasts, evaluating aspects like authenticity, reliability, and bias within the context of economic theory and practice.

Student learning objective statements should encompass **three key elements**:

1. A clear action-oriented verb that delineates the desired performance or skill to be demonstrated by students.
2. A concise and explicit description of the intended learning outcome, outlining what students are expected to achieve.
3. A broad statement articulating the criterion or standard against which student performance will be evaluated, establishing the level of acceptable achievement (Georgia Institute of Technology, o. J.).



Sources

Center for Teaching Excellence Boston College. (2024). Learning Objectives. [Link](#)
 Davis, B. G. (2009). Tools for teaching. John Wiley & Sons. Krathwohl, D. R. (2002). A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy: An Overview. Theory Into Practice, 41(4), 212–218. [Link](#)

Further Material

Main, P. (2023). Webb's Depth of Knowledge. [Link](#)
 Swissuniversities. (2021). Qualifikationsrahmen für den schweizerischen Hochschulbereich. swissuniversities. [Link](#)