

Instructional Planning and Implementation: Curriculum Goals and Instructional Objectives

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum goals, in general, are derived from three sources: studies of society, studies of learners, and subject matter specialists. Instructional objectives can be classified into three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. All three domains are interrelated and should be considered when developing behavioral objectives. When planning instruction, the teacher should ask what is specifically intended for the learner and then write an appropriate objective to guide the instruction.

In planning instruction the teacher, a team of teachers, or the school faculty begins with whatever formal or informal curriculum plans or documents have been developed by the school district or individual school. These plans typically take the form of goals or mission statements, officially adopted textbooks, programs of studies, lists of activities, policy statements and handbooks, courses of study, syllabi, and learning activity packages. These sources can be used in developing a teacher's own plan for achieving curriculum goals and instructional objectives.

Curriculum Goals and Instructional Objectives

What are the bases of curriculum goals and instructional objectives? Curriculum goals are derived from three sources: studies of society, studies of learners, and suggestions of subject matter specialists (Tyler, 1949). From studies of society the curriculum developer derives information about the needs of contemporary life, tradition, enduring values, and aspirations. From studies of the learner the curriculum maker learns about needs, interests, ability levels, and learning styles. From subject-matter specialists the curriculum worker learns what knowledge is of greatest importance.

Curriculum goals are broad and general statements helpful in the development of programs of instruction or for general goals toward which several years of education might be aimed, such as elementary, middle, and high school courses of study (Pinar, 2012). Examples of curriculum goals are statements such as the following:

- To understand the rights and duties of citizens in American society
- To attain an appreciation for literature, art, music, and nature
- To develop skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- To learn to respect and get along with people of different cultures.

In contrast to the broad and general goal statements, *instructional objectives* are precise statements that indicate what students will be able to do as a consequence of instruction (Gronlund, 2004). Examples of instructional objectives are statements such as the following:

- Shown the letters of the alphabet in random order (in both upper- and lowercase form), the student will be able to say the name of each letter with 100 percent accuracy.
- Given twenty sentences containing a variety of mistakes in capitalization, the student will be able, with at least 90 percent accuracy, to identify and rewrite correctly each word that has a mistake in capitalization.
- Given a twelve-bar Autoharp and the score (including the chord symbols in the form of letters) of a familiar sixteen-measure melody harmonized with two chords, the student will be able to provide accompaniment to group singing of the melody by locating the letter and playing correctly the required cords (“correctly” being defined as the proper channel sounded with rhythmic accuracy).
- Given the stylistic category of Romantic, together with at least one example each of the musical, literary, and architectural achievements of the period, the student will be able within one-half hour, without the use of verbal reference sources, to write a two-hundred word essay comparing and contrasting in terms of style the given examples (Clark County School District, 1988).

Well-written instructional objectives identify three important elements about learner behavior:

1. The *performance* that is required of the learner
2. The *conditions* under which the behavior will be performed
3. The *extent* or level of performance

Stated in one sentence, a well-written instructional objective should specify under what conditions and to what extent a certain kind of student performance can be expected to transpire.

For example, look at the first instructional objective again: Shown the letters of the alphabet in random order in both upper- and lowercase form (condition), the students will be able to say the name of each letter (performance) with 100 percent accuracy (extent). The three elements about learner behavior are incorporated in the instructional objective. You may now wish to identify the three important elements about learner behavior in each of the subsequent instructional objectives.

Classifying Objectives

Considerable effort has been devoted to the study of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor processes for the purpose of developing instructional objectives and assessing learner outcomes. One of the most systematic approaches has been the development of three separate taxonomies.

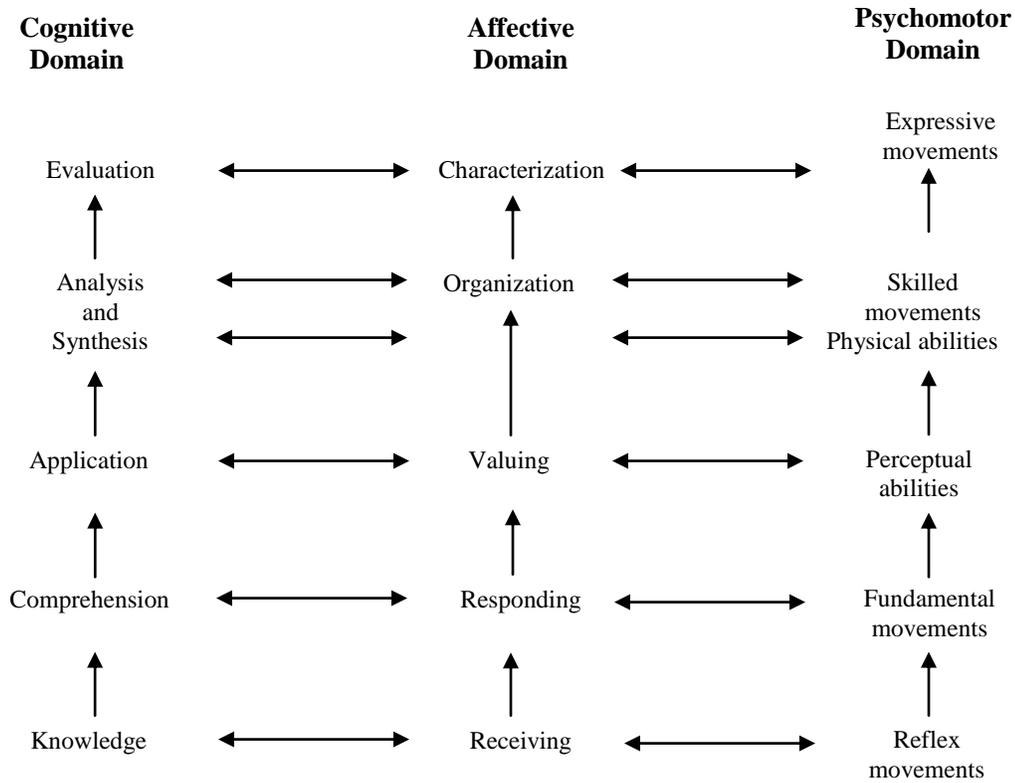


Figure 1. Relationships among cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

As shown in Figure 1, the cognitive processes are classified in a hierarchical order, from simple to complex levels of thinking: (a) knowledge, (b) comprehension, (c) application, (d) analysis, (e) synthesis, and (f) evaluation (Bloom, 1956). In the life of the student, the affective processes—interest, attitudes, appreciations, and values—are inseparable from the cognitive processes. The affective processes are classified in hierarchical order, from simple to complex levels of feeling: (a) receiving, (b) responding, (c) valuing, (d) organization, and (e) characterization (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). Integrally related to the cognitive and affective processes are the psychomotor processes. From lowest to highest levels of the schema are the (a) reflex movements, (b) fundamental movements, (c) perceptual abilities, (d) physical abilities, (e) skilled movements, and (f) expressive movements (Harrow, 1972).

The higher psychomotor processes, perceptual and physical abilities, skilled movements, and expressive movements operate cooperatively with the cognitive and affective processes. For instance, whether students are concerned with learning handwriting, improving their swimming strokes, learning a new art technique, playing a musical instrument, developing interpretive movements in ballet, or learning a surgical technique—the cognitive and affective processes are interdependent with the psychomotor processes.

Conclusion

Curriculum goals, in general, are derived from three sources: studies of society, studies of learners, and subject matter specialists. Instructional objectives can be classified into three domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. All three domains are interrelated and should be considered when developing behavioral objectives. When planning instruction, the teacher should ask what is specifically intended for the learner and then write an appropriate objective to guide the instruction. For example, if we teach the student about the Vietnam War, what is our intention? Do we want the students to know about it (Bloom's first tier) or to be able to evaluate it (Bloom's sixth tier)? A corresponding feeling would accompany the learning experience. Viewed in this way, planning a curriculum at the instructional level might be thought of as a matrix showing the interrelationship of the cognitive and affective domains. The student should comprehend the material and respond to it (Wiles & Bondi, 2010).

References

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