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## Practice papers

# Reflections on achieving educational objectives of Bloom's taxonomy in the simulated course for tour guides in Shanghai

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## ABSTRACT

In July 2011, I had access to Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, a real inspiration for me. I began to reflect on the educational objectives of the Simulated Course for Tour Guides, which I have been giving for thirteen years. After making an analysis of the learning outcomes, the assessment format and the marking criteria, I rewrote the learning outcomes, and renewed the assessment format and the marking criteria, trying to achieve the educational objectives of Bloom's Taxonomy in the Simulated Course for Tour Guides in Shanghai.

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## 1. Introduction to the instructional theory and the practical course

In July 2011, I had a chance to attend a short-term training session on teaching methods, held in the University of Central Lancashire, northwest England. There were altogether 20 of us, coming from various schools of Shanghai Institute of Foreign Trade. We learned such courses as critical thinking, intercultural communication, active learning, assessing learning outcomes, and presentation skills. There, for the first time, I had access to Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, a real inspiration for me. With the help of three colleagues from Event and Tourism Management School, Zou Nannan, Zhang Li and Du Jiayi, I began to reflect on the educational objectives of the Simulated Course for Tour Guides in Shanghai, which I have been giving for thirteen years.

### 1.1. A brief introduction to Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives

In 1956, a group of educational psychologists, headed by Benjamin Bloom, developed a classification of different learning objectives that educators set for students (Bloom, 1956; <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin\\_Bloom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Bloom)>). There are six levels in the original taxonomy, namely, knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, moving from the bottom to the top, which is known as the old version of Bloom's Taxonomy.

During 1990s, another group of cognitive psychologists, led by a former student of Bloom, updated the taxonomy, reflecting relevance to the 21st century. The six levels in the revised taxonomy include, from the lowest to the highest, remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. Note that the top two levels are essentially exchanged and the nouns are changed to verbs as well (Fig. 1).

The new version of Bloom's Taxonomy can be further explained in such relevant questions as: Can the student recall or remember the information? Can the student understand and explain ideas or concepts? Can the student apply or use the

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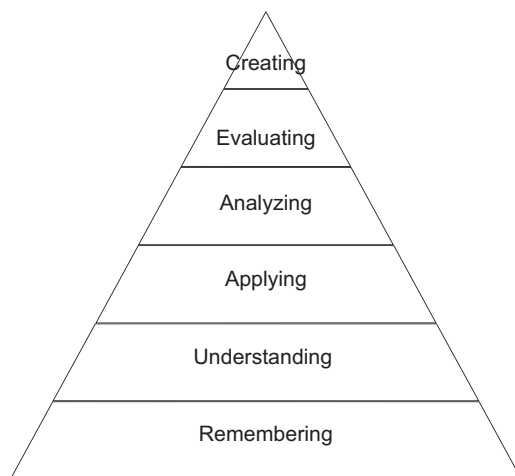


Fig. 1. New version of Bloom's Taxonomy. <[http://www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/Blooms\\_taxonomy.htm](http://www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/Blooms_taxonomy.htm)>.

information in a new way? Can the student analyze or distinguish between different parts? Can the student evaluate and justify a stand or decision? Can the student create new product or point of view?

## 1.2. A brief introduction to the simulated course for tour guides in Shanghai

### 1.2.1. Nature of the course

The Simulated Course for Tourist Guides is a required course taken by tourism management majors in Shanghai Institute of Foreign Trade. There are 36 class hours in one semester, and the students can get 2 credits.

It is a practical teaching course, taking advantage of modern multi-media facilities, making comprehensive use of the English language and the specialized knowledge of tour guides, and aiming at cultivating practical English guiding ability through demonstration and drilling of guiding activities.

### 1.2.2. Primary coverage of the course

The course consists of two modules: working procedures of tour guides and scenic attractions.

There are roughly 9 working procedures of tour guides, including greetings, en route, hotel accommodations, itinerary discussion, dining in China, shopping, entertainment, farewell and handling complaints.

Scenic attractions are mainly concerned with the typical urban tourist sites in Shanghai, such as the Bund, Pudong New Area, Yuyuan Garden, Jade Buddha Temple and People's Square, etc.

### 1.2.3. Teaching mode of the course

The course implements the "student-centered and teacher-guided" principle, "teaching only the essentials and ensuring plenty of practice". It employs the "heuristic" and "artistic" teaching method.

In the simulated environment created by multi-media equipment, the students make monologues, dialogs, and introduce a variety of specific scenic spots. The dress, posture and demeanor of the students should meet the basic requirements for international tour guides.

### 1.2.4. Learning outcomes of the course

Through practical drills, the students are expected to get familiar with various scenic spots and memorize the running commentary of the main attractions in Shanghai, to have a good command of the standardized reception and service procedures, to pass the on-site oral test of the tour guide qualification examination, and to be competent for the job of international guide as soon as possible.

### 1.2.5. Assessment of the course

Formative tests are taken in the teaching process. Each student is expected to choose one scenic spot and make the simulated explanation either on site or based on some visual materials, and then is required to answer one or two questions. Formative tests will account for 40% of the final course grade.

The final exam will take the form of an oral test. Each student is expected to make a 5-min simulated scenic spot explanation and then is required to answer some impromptu questions concerning the scenic spots described and procedures of guiding services. Lots are drawn to choose the topics within the scope of the teaching content. Summative tests will account for 60% of the final course grade.

The instructor will mark the presentation according to the criteria given in Fig. 2.

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