ABSTRACT
                Two new programs, which represented first attempts to
use behavioral objectives, are presented. These were independent
study and and elective course for non-college bound high school
seniors. Students taking independent study were asked to write
behavioral objectives outlining the intended direction of their
projects. Because students were not indoctrinated adequately, they
wrote inane objectives. In the other experiment, teachers wrote the
objectives for the various projects. Then the non-college seniors
selected the projects they wished to and/or needed to work on. It was
found that the stereotyped underachiever performed well with precise
direction while his capable counterpart foundered with his freedom.
It is recommended that to initiate independent study, the students
select from a teacher-prepared list of objectives or that the
teachers prepare a unit about writing behavioral objectives. (CK)

Our Experience with Behavioral Objectives

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At the present time there is a demand by students for individualized learning experiences. However, attempts to offer such learning experiences create problems. For instance, when our English department tried to develop programs utilizing behavioral objectives, we encountered problems with both students and staff. Nevertheless, the benefits outweighed the problems.

We became aware of the weaknesses in our program when a chemistry teacher offered to critique some of our lectures. Puzzled by the intended direction of a three-day lecture, he jokingly suggested that the lecture must have had the following objectives: 1) the *teacher* will enjoy himself; 2) the *teacher* will defend the book against typical student attacks; and 3) the *teacher* and students will discover the direction by the end of the third day. We saw the need for improvement. Both the teacher and the students needed to be aware of the purposes of *any* day's activity.

With the assistance of our colleague in chemistry, we set up two morning workshops to learn how to write behavioral objectives.[1] At the same time some members of our department were taking courses about measurement at Kansas State University. We discovered that, according to Benjamin Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, far too many of our test items required only "knowledge." The morning workshops conducted by the chemistry teacher and the analysis of the test items produced negative reactions from the staff. One staff member insisted, "This is just another fad. You younger teachers will have to learn that good teaching is like cream—it just naturally comes to the top." Another teacher's concern was that we were going to "emphasize content not people." This underscored a real problem: we were having difficulty writing effective objectives. Some teachers were simply defensive: "What I do in my room is my business." "What does a chemistry teacher know about teaching English?" Despite the apparent problems, however, the department decided that we needed the clarity and specificity of good behavioral objectives.

Our first attempts to use behavioral objectives were in two new programs, independent study and an elective course for non-college bound seniors. Students taking independent study were asked to write behavioral objectives outlining the intended direction of their projects. We're still not sure why we

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[1] Our basis for these sessions was Robert Mager's *Preparing Instructional Objectives.*

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thought they could write them. We now know that if students are going to write behavioral objectives, they must have an extensive orientation period. Because we failed to indoctrinate students adequately, they wrote inane objectives. For example, one student wrote, "Since I like to read and I learn a lot from reading, my objective is to read *The Brothers Karamazov*."

Exercising the veto power over student attempts was not enough either. When we did this to insure what we felt was a worthwhile objective, the students contended we were depriving them of their independence. However, their "direction" was even less clear than ours had been. The result of inadequate background preparation for independent study was chaos.

For our other initial experiment, *we* wrote the objectives for the various projects. Then the non-college seniors selected the projects which they wished to and/or needed to work on. One fact seemed evident: the stereotyped underachiever performed well with precise direction while his capable counterpart floundered with his freedom.[2] We've discovered this year in our revised program that students can satisfactorily fulfill cognitive and affective behavioral objectives about literature if they are written well. The problem lies not in students' ability to accomplish objectives but in the quality of the objectives. To initiate independent study, we would recommend that the students select from a teacher-prepared list of objectives or that the teachers prepare a unit about writing behavioral objectives.

As a postscript we might explain that this year seniors in college-prep English have an option every three weeks. They may read a novel and attend a teacher-conducted lecture, or they may select an independent project. To complete the project, they have to choose three affective objectives from a list containing five or six. From ten to thirty per cent have worked on the projects each time. The students' reaction has been generally favorable. The teachers feel the quality of the work reflects the quality of the objectives. There are two problems: lack of time and lack of experience. Writing the objectives for one of these options has taken from approximately seven hours for the first one to three hours for the third. (This did not include the time required to read the material.) Since the school day did not provide ample time for this kind of planning, we had to work unpaid during the summer and have had to give up several Saturdays and evenings. On one occasion, the administration provided a day of released time for the entire department. To accomplish this, the principal conducted in the auditorium hourly "talk sessions" about school problems and policies. However, time alone will not insure good affective objectives. As we gain experience, we are also gaining sophistication in this area.

[2] Sample objective: "Given an assignment to write an article for *Kansas English*, the writers, Kaupp and McCormic, will demonstrate their ability to use alliteration."

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Our department has used Unipacs (a trade name for one kind of individualized instruction package) to help clarify objectives in grammar, composition, vocabulary, research, and library study. In our enthusiasm to increase individualization this year, during the summer we constructed thirty-two Unipacs complete with concept statement, objectives, pretest, learning activities, self-test and post-test. However, teachers were only able to contribute a limited amount of time. One result of this necessarily hasty writing is that several Unipacs need revision. No amount of enthusiasm is a substitute for time and experience. But Unipacs stating clear objectives enabled us to individualize. In other words, given clear direction, the student can function independently. Finally, we had insisted on developing a perfect program before we began, we would never have begun.

The first step in any type of innovation is the creation of a climate for change. We have already discussed in this article the problems of writing and using objectives and have made some recommendations about their use in new or revised programs. However, the first recommendation must be the creation of a climate for change. As the curriculum books suggest, a change agent is necessary. In our case Don Schmalzreid, the chemistry teacher, served as the catalyst. His friendly criticism of our efforts and his willingness to let us imitate him stimulated change. Honesty is the next criterion. Teachers had to be willing to admit weaknesses in the old system. As we pointed out, critiques of lectures and analyses of tests pinpointed areas needing improvement.

However, not only individual problems but also departmental weaknesses such as lack of coordination became evident. We found the objectives of one grade level were not always consistent with the next. For instance, Junior English required a mock term paper. Senior English required a complete research paper. Since we had never written objectives for this assignment, there were numerous problems in articulation from the mock to the complete research paper. This was only one example of the problem areas we discovered. Now our Unipacs dealing with the research paper state specific objectives which the student can complete in either year.

University classes, inter-school visitation, and journal articles fostered openness, which is also necessary for change. Useful university courses included the following: Basic Principles of Measurement, Curriculum Construction, Supervision and Improvement of Instruction, Creativity in Education, and English Curriculum. While there are many schools utilizing behavioral objectives, we had the opportunity to observe the innovative programs of Shawnee Mission Northwest and Salina South. The helpful journal articles are too numerous to mention.

However, a change agent, honesty, and useful input are of little value without adequate time to plan and implement the ideas. Of course, it is

necessary to have the administration encouragement and approval that we have enjoyed.

Our experiences should suggest that the principal problems of writing clear objectives can be overcome. The end result, specific behavioral objectives, compensates for the effort we expended and the difficulty we encountered.