Historians, feeling the effects of accountability and the demands for relevance in education, are faced with the use of behavioral objectives. An attempt to capitalize on the behavioral objectives concept is presented in this description of a survey course in United States history (1492-1877) offered in one, three-hour weekly, evening meeting attended mostly by older, college students. The main objective of the course is that students discover history as an interesting, varied, and interpretative discipline. Each of 16 class sessions is divided into self-contained learning activities or into large group sessions, addressed to particular behavioral objectives, depending on the needs of the subject matter. Students are made aware of exactly which objectives are to be attained at each activity. Various types of audio and visual aids are used in the activities. The effect of team teaching is accomplished with the help of social science education majors in the planning and presentation of session activities. Evaluation of course mastery indicates that students learned at a level comparable to that in traditional courses. Students evaluated the course favorably. (JH)
HISTORY: BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES AND THE CLASSROOM

By Delbert Schafer

The study and teaching of history and its role in elementary, secondary, and higher education are being criticized. The cry for relevancy in education may be shopworn, but it is still alive. The importance and practicality of historical knowledge, understanding, and perspective are being questioned. This scrutiny and questioning emanates from many spectrums: concerned laypersons, educators, students, legislators, and historians.¹ The queries about the value of historical investigation are not unique—the entire realm and scope of education is being analyzed. The threat of reduction exists. We should meet this threat head-on and turn it to our advantage.

The call for relevancy in education is a tired, trite term. Most historians, justifiably, consider the expression abhorrent. Nevertheless, the demand continues and presents a real challenge. Students in the classroom clamor for the pragmatic applications of historical phenomena; they ask for the simple straight-forward answer.² The historian's response of disdain for the simplistic, easy answer, and plea for the study of the complex, intertwined, essentially non-repetitive nature of historical events are rejected by many—perhaps most—students. Fellow educators sneeringly ask the historian how the study of history assists the student in attaining satisfactory employment. Social scientists criticize the historian's imprecision, reluctance or inability to tie events together in meaningful
patterns. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the social scientists seem to be faring little better in comprehending or predicting the course of events. The citizenry, sharing the demands for pragmatism and employment success, add their own—teaching patriotism, nationalism, and citizenship. The public expects history teachers to impart the values, traditions, and mores of society through the exposition of our heritage. The historian who wishes support knows that relevancy is essential.

Widespread questioning of the role of education coupled with a restriction of available financial funding has raised the idea of accountability. The teacher becomes directly responsible or accountable for certain tasks or for inculcating certain knowledge or values to the students. In public education this has resulted in legislators demanding a means of measuring the effects and results of teaching; hence we are confronted with legislative accountability. Legislators, desirous of reducing expenditures and duplication of state services, are supporting statewide systems. Some forty-two states have adopted statewide goals to direct public education. Fears of the restriction of academic freedom in the classroom are legitimate. It does matter who and how the areas and concerns of academic instruction are formulated. Historians must participate to insure the amplification and articulation—not the subversion—of the goals of the historical profession. Yet, these formulations often appear alien because they are expressed in the terms of behavioral objectives, competency or performance based education, for the student.
Behavioral objectives or competency based education should not strike fear in the hearts of academic history teachers. In part, educationese is involved—behavioral objectives was the term used one year and competency based was used the next. To further allay your apprehensions, one recent book on the subject begins:

behavioral objectives are statements which describe what students will be able to do after completing a prescribed unit of instruction. For example, a behavioral objective for a unit in history might be: "The student will be able to list three major factors which gave rise to the Industrial Revolution." There is nothing startling here! Historians have been asking this question in the European history survey courses for decades. The use of behavioral objectives in education has increased. The movement towards behavioral objectives began in the mid-1930's, but only in the last four or five years has so much attention been directed to their usage. In higher education, the teacher education faculties are the major proponents of behavioral objectives. The training of teachers for the elementary and secondary schools is being conducted with programs which are competency based. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education urges the use of behavioral objectives, as a recent team visit to the Missouri Southern State College campus illustrated. In the fall semester of 1972 the faculty of Missouri Southern had to attend a seminar on the topic of competency based education. Recently, I began participation in a needs assessment of the social studies curricula of the Joplin, Missouri, public schools. The local school administration, buttressed by the Missouri State Department of Education,
instructed the committee to present recommendations in terms of behavioral objectives. Behavioral objectives have been accepted in the elementary and secondary schools—higher education is next.

The academic historian, scholar and teacher, must respond to the events occurring in higher education and within the profession. It is imperative that action be taken by the historian—knowledgeably and positively. We must open more fruitful communication with students, colleagues, and the public about the role, importance, and necessity of historical study. We must better define, explain, and discuss the values—or, if you wish, relevancy—of historical knowledge, understanding, and perspective. We must develop or employ new methods, programs, and forms of communication. The historian cannot provide easy, quick, simple answers where none exist, but we must explain why the easy, quick, simple answer is often the wrong answer.

Historians are responding. Communication is being improved as articles in Social Education, The History Teacher, and papers presented at conferences attest. Renewed interest in historiography, intellectual history, philosophy of history, and classroom techniques show that historians desire to know more about effective teaching of history. New forms are developing with growing interest in the study of music, novels, films, oral history projects, etc. Numerous teaching experiments are listed in the American Historical Association Newsletter, in The History Teacher, in Social Education, in the mimeographed publications of the Committee for History in the Classroom, and in books such as Teaching for a Change. Additional opportunities are
available through the National Endowment for the Humanities and the forthcoming American Revolution Bi-Centennial celebration. Each historian must contribute to the retention, furtherance, and advancement of historical study and teaching. The status quo is not an acceptable alternative. Even now, a fundamental question is whether it is too little, too late.

As a historian employed as a classroom teacher at a small state college, I became concerned over my ignorance and lack of innovativeness in the advancement of the teaching of history. Although much of my time is spent teaching, my undergraduate and graduate training had not included teaching methodology. I doubt that I am at all unique in this educational shortcoming. Therefore, I decided to alter this situation by organizing an experimental approach with an United States History (1492-1877) survey course taught during the 1974 spring semester. The acquisition of practical and concrete experience in conducting a class based on behavioral objectives presented through multi-media learning centers provided a prime motivation. An additional incentive was the desire to exert a larger influence on prospective teachers of secondary school social studies. Furthermore, I hoped to make this course, required in the State of Missouri, one in which all students would be interested and actively involved.  

This course offered special advantages and opportunities for experimentation. First, most of my study and teaching has been directed towards European history; so I always felt inadequate when it came to teaching an United States history course.
Yet, in past semesters, student response had been positive; they felt it was clear, straight-forward, and simple. I suspect that my expressions were more simplistic than concise and precise. Second, the three hour evening course met only once a week from 6:30-9:15 p.m. This long time span made a lecture and discussion format difficult and tedious, for the student and the instructor. Third, many of the evening session students are older, engaged in full time occupations, bring wider backgrounds and experiences to the course than found in the day classes populated by eighteen year old students. Fourth, since it met in the evening it was easier to schedule the day-time upper division social science students to assist in the presentations.

A fervent wish was that the students would come to understand why this required course is important, vital, and relevant to their future. It was intended that the student discover history to be interesting, varied, and interpretative. Students had to actively search for the meaning of past events rather than passively receiving it ex cathedra from the mouth of a teacher. Learning centers were designed to increase enthusiasm by providing a wider choice of subjects, topics, and interests. The learning centers provided for frequent small group presentations and discussions. The student received a clear expression of what was expected through stating and posting the objectives which had to be achieved at each center. Also, it was anticipated that this method would lead to more frequent, personal, direct student-teacher contact. A secret wish was that the
students would become so engrossed that the course and examination grades would soar, making all other history classes pale in its reflection.

The structure of the class organization did not abandon all traditional methods, tools, and techniques. Many students are well tuned to the lecture method of assimilating knowledge; hence certain topics, especially those presented by out-of-class speakers, were presented to the class meeting as a whole. Group discussions were initiated in both the interest centers and in the entire class portion of the sessions. The same textbooks, *The American Republic*, and the same reader, *The American Spirit*, were retained.\(^{13}\) Traditional methods of testing and grading prevailed. The fear existed that if everything was altered it would prove impossible to determine cause-effect relationships.

The topics and chronology of the course were confined to the development of America through Reconstruction. Each session was devoted to a specific area or grouping of topics proceeding throughout the semester in an approximate chronological order. For example, the first week consisted of orientation, pre-testing, and exploration of the methods, values, and uses of history. One week was devoted to the American Revolution and the Gaining of Independence, another to the Age of Jackson. Essentially, the content of the course remained the same as found in traditional survey courses covering this period of United States History.

The content and sixteen weeks allotted to this study
were organized as one teaching unit. The stated goal was "to establish the importance, value, and significance to our personal lives of the events, people, and institutions occurring through the history of America from its inception to 1877." Each of the sixteen weekly meetings, designated a session, assisted in meeting the overall unit goal. A number of key concepts were developed for each of the sessions. For example, in session two, one of the six key concepts was: "the students should be aware of the existence of viable native cultures in the Americas prior to the European penetrations." Probably, most history teachers develop courses in a similar fashion.

The next step involved the writing of behavioral objectives for the key concepts. This process is not difficult. The main advantage is that it forces the instruction to be student oriented. It constantly raises questions of if and why a student needs to be exposed to and act upon a specific bit of information. The mode of the behavioral expression is not paramount; although it is important to allow for a variety of expression in any one session. The behavioral objective developed for the concept of native American cultures was: "the student will be able to orally discuss one pre-Columbian native culture." If the student achieves this behavioral objective, the key concept has been met. Of course, quality still enters in; the student who can more comprehensively discuss or who can discuss more than one culture is obviously more knowledgeable.

Once the key concepts and behavioral objectives are written, the planning of how to present the material in the
session begins. Caution—choose the concepts and objectives before selecting the method of presentation. Sometimes the two coincide, but it must remain uppermost in your mind that the concepts and objectives direct the choice of the media rather than the reverse. A variety of media in each session is conducive to student stimulation, but avoid using a poor quality film, filmstrip, or recording if it does not fit your objectives. It is, of course, your choice whether the concepts and objectives can or should be altered to fit the available media.

The basic session structure involved the division of the material into presentations in self-contained learning centers. Each center met one or two of the behavioral objectives. It was noted what objective was to be met in the center. The method, procedure, and equipment for each center was listed. Any organizational activities, preparation, study, or research which had to be completed prior to the session was duly noted. The instructor is not relieved of the necessity for preparation and homework. Preparation is time consuming; the organization must be complete. Playing it by ear as the session develops will not suffice.

Signs denoting the topics, concepts, and objectives to be covered were lettered and posted at each center. Students appreciate being given an approximate idea of the minimal amount of time which they should spend in each center. This allowed them to make the best use of the available time. Centers of about twenty-five to thirty minutes in length were the more successful. I suspect this is attributable to a persons' average
attention span. Some centers such as locating sites on outline maps were self-directed and self-paced. There are no objections to a student repeating a center; especially when slightly different versions were presented. For example, the center on the native American cultures consisted of three different filmstrips, one each on the Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas. The viewing of just one satisfied the achievement of the objective, but the student could view all three filmstrips with profit. Occasionally, some objectives were not stated to the students. Deane C. Thompson in the February, 1974 issue of The History Teacher explains that in value change situations it might warrant not letting the student know the expected behavior. Yet, the instructor must write the objective and strive to assist the student in meeting it.

To stimulate and maintain student interest, a variety of media was used. Small lecture and discussion groups were frequent and easy to arrange. Self-operating reading research centers, map location sites centers, and self-examination centers took minimal direction. The use of films, filmstrips, and tape recordings did present problems. Teaching in a relatively thinly populated evening session, I had the blessing of using two rooms; therefore, I could darken one for the showing of films. A film of high merit could, of course, be shown to the entire class eliminating the need for separate facilities. Filmstrips can be shown using rear screen projectors; slides can be shown in a partially darkened room. Audio headsets allow for the use of simultaneous audio-visual resources without undue
disturbances. The instructor does have to be on the alert for problems with the operation of the audio-visual resources; although students usually keep the centers operating smoothly.

Normally, the class met together the last portion of the session. Lectures on new materials, discussions of outside readings or of the learning centers, question and answer periods worked well. These all-class meetings added, reinforced, or reiterated materials. These meetings provided the student the opportunity to integrate new knowledge, clarifying any problems or questions which had arisen during the session.

To illustrate the organization, the plan for session ten of the sixteen week unit follows:

Unit Goal: To establish the importance, value, and significance to our personal lives of the events, people, and institutions occurring through the history of America from its inception to 1877.

Session Key Concepts: Jackson and Jacksonianism
1. Political Parties changed with the times from 1789-1860.
2. Jackson had the support of popular democratic forces in an age when sectionalism continued.
3. Election of 1824 created political and constitutional crises as well as the resolve of Jackson to win in 1828.
4. The legacy of Jackson and Jacksonianism has been variously interpreted.
5. Jackson supported states rights, within the Union.
6. Review the examination given previous week.

Session Objectives:
1. Students will be able to identify three major interpretations of Jackson from the handouts and discussion.
2. Students will be able to describe the life of Jackson and Calhoun.
3. Students will be able to identify the major political parties, and explain the changes from 1789-1860.
4. Students will be able to describe the nullification controversy and identify the major participants.
5. Students will review and discuss examination from previous week.
6. Students will be able to explain the issues, crises, outcome, and significance of the 1824 and 1828 elections. Also identify the major candidates involved.

Set-Up Assignments:

Session Presentation:

I. Schafer: Introduction and Instructions, 6:30-6:40
II. Interest Centers, 6:40-8:15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Obj.</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crosby</td>
<td>Jackson &amp; Jacksonianism</td>
<td>Lecture &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hand-out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Operating</td>
<td>Jackson &amp; Calhoun</td>
<td>Two reel-to-reel tapes</td>
<td>2 &amp; 4</td>
<td>tapes &amp; recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becker</td>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td>Filmstrip, discussion &amp; hand-out</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>DuKane, filmstrips hand-out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>1824-28 Elections</td>
<td>Lecture &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Overhead Posters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schafer</td>
<td>Review Exams</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Exams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Break for 15 minutes
IV. All Class Meeting, 8:30-9:15. Becker will lecture and discuss the events and problems of the nullification controversy.

All four teachers were provided a copy of this session plan.

For this approach, team teaching is ideal. Unfortunately, I was unable to arrange a single team teaching approach. My compromise involved using upper division social science education major students in the planning and presentation of the
sessions. One student, Brian Becker, volunteered to serve as an aide throughout the semester and his assistance proved invaluable. The sessions were planned as a team, insuring that each understood not only their role but the overall objectives and concepts. Not only did the social science education majors gain valuable classroom experience, but it provided the instructor an opportunity to view them in a teaching environment. Also, it freed the instructor to present small group activities or to float among the students discussing problems as they arose. Graduate assistants could be profitably used in this arrangement; they could gain experience in teamwork and in teaching without having the entire responsibility of the conduct of a class thrust upon them.

Evaluation of the endeavor includes student examinations and grades, student evaluations, responses from campus colleagues, and self-evaluation by the instructor. The results are neither spectacular nor startling. Yet, they do show the experimental organization to be a valid, effective, instructional method. In comparison with other methods, no apologies need be made, and some definite advantages are evident. Instructors can use different methods and attain satisfactory results. This method may not be for every historian, but if one is so inclined, try it without fear of chaos, failure, or being taken in by an educational fad.

Testing indicated that students did learn. Four examinations, consisting each time of forty multiple choice items and ten map location sites, were given. Each correct answer
was scored as two points so that the grades could be placed on a numerical basis of a maximum total of one-hundred points for each examination. The results of the exams were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examination Number</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Tests</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Numerical Score</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest Numerical Score</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of Scores</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Score</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Score</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scores compare favorably with the lecture-discussion method, which I had used the last time. The scores that semester were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examination Number</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Tests</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Numerical Score</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest Numerical Score</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of Scores</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Score</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Score</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The test scores did not soar; however they are acceptable. The range of scores also narrowed more in the experimental class. While the mean score was not as high, it does appear that more students were making better progress.

A comprehensive, fifty-item multiple choice examination was administered at the start and the end of the semester. The results, with one exception, showed that knowledge had increased. No rewards were given for taking the examination; so the results are subject to legitimate doubts as to validity. The results for the thirteen students who took both exams follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Number</th>
<th>No. of Items correct on first taking</th>
<th>No. of Items correct on second taking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The method appears appropriate for the better and the poorer student. In the future, these results will be compared with other classes. One regret is that I did not ask one of my history colleagues to allow me to use one of their classes as a control group.

Student evaluation of the course was positive. An evaluation form, unsigned by the student, was administered during the last session of the course. A tabulation of answers to some of the more interesting questions follows.

Question 1. How clearly are your responsibilities in this course defined?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Answers</th>
<th>A. Among the best in stating my course responsibilities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>B. I almost always know what is expected of me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>C. He is average in this respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D. I am too often in doubt of what is expected of me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>E. I seldom know what is expected of me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 2. How interesting does the instructor make the material?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Answers</th>
<th>A. Much more interesting than I expected.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>B. Somewhat more interesting than I expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>C. About as interesting as I expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D. Less interesting than I expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>E. I expected it to be a bore, and it was.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 3. How clearly does your instructor present his subject matter?

4  A. Very clear in presentation.
7  B. Clearer than most instructors.
3  C. Somewhat clear.
2  D. Not very clear.
0  E. Not at all clear in presentation.

The evaluations are not exactly rave notices, but for a first-time experiment they are satisfactory.

Space was provided on the evaluation form for written comments. Only a few chose to make comments and they were generally positive. The only consistent complaint was that the tape recordings were difficult to follow, too easy to miss important points, or that they were too long. The learning centers were complimented. One comment sums up the others.

I must apologize for having misgivings about you and this class. I was blaming you for what I was getting out of the class and I was ready to quit. I didn't like the interest centers—Now I must say that I give you credit for venturing out on your own. Partial credit must go to Brian for taking an interest and showing me how to study history. Although I really found out that the main lacking was my own interest. I believe this last three sessions were much better—thanks for not using tapes this time. My apologies for my thoughts. Keep up the work!!

Another, experienced student wrote, "I believe this is a new approach to Hist. U.S. 1877—It is my second time in this class and the material was presented much better this time."

Responses from my colleagues were not so flattering. At about the midpoint of the semester the Department Chairman hinted at an overuse of un-coordinated audio-visual resources. An attempt to enroll Brian Becker in Independent Study was rejected by an administrator on the grounds that the training of teachers should be reserved to the education faculty. My
teaching colleagues were not hostile, just disinterested. Their only serious concern, and it is misplaced, was that behavioral objectives could not be used in the affective domain of learning. My general impression of their responses is that the attempt was fine, as long as they did not have to follow, and as long as the boat was not rocked too violently.

The experimental approach improved student interest, response, participation, and activity. Some interest learning centers proved to be excellent, others did not work well. Solace can be taken in that a weak center does not spoil the entire session. I do not fully share the criticisms of the tape recordings, but I shall strive to improve either the quality of the recordings or the quality of the listening. The use of the social science education majors went well and I shall increase their participation in the future courses.

Unexpected events did arise. I was unprepared for the students working and moving through the interest centers in groups; nevertheless, I see no strong reason for outlawing the practice. Yet, greater emphasis will be placed on the student making choices on the basis of their individual interests, strengths or weaknesses. Students became upset when they failed to make it to all of the centers; however the centers and sessions were not designed to replace the textbook; so I do not take this complaint too seriously.

This method of instruction allows for greater opportunity in presenting topics of interest to individual students. Special topics can be easily included as an interest center, if the
student is uninterested, then they just skip that particular center and go to another. Also, alternate methods of gaining the same objectives and concepts can be provided. There is no reason, if the historian participates in any creation of a state-wide set of goals and objectives, why comprehensiveness should be lost. I suspect that the bane of the historian, having to pick and choose from an over-abundance of information, will remain.

The historian in the classroom will find behavioral objectives to be an effective educational tool. They assist in explaining what the teaching and study of history attempts to do, and why it is relevant to all ages. Even if you disagree, there is the negative incentive of formulating behavioral objectives to prevent their imposition from the outside upon the discipline. Behavioral objectives in the history classroom are not a panacea to the ills of education or the historical profession. On the other hand, behavioral objectives in the history classroom are not a bug-a-boo to be ignored and feared.
FOOTNOTES

1Robert R. Palmer, "The American Historical Association in 1970," American Historical Review, LXXVI (February, 1971), 1-15. Part of the concern of this Presidential address was to improve the quality of the teaching of history and to raise interest in the subject of history.


3George Q. Flynn, "History and the Social Sciences," The History Teacher, VII (May, 1974), 434-447, discusses the pitfalls of historians becoming social scientists and the need for a cultural expansion of what knowledge is relevant for our contemporary society.


16 Jean Fair, "What is National Assessment and What Does it Say to Us?" *Social Education*, XXXVIII (May, 1974), 399-400.