

Curriculum Management by Relationships of Guide Statements

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GUIDE statements provide a focus in a desired direction for educational endeavors. Their focus varies from general to specific. They are referred to in educational circles by a variety of coined terms, such as "goals" and "objectives," that often have overlapping or conflicting definitions. When communication confusion due to terms being used interchangeably or synonymously is eliminated, relationships between guide statements emerge that provide a mechanism for curriculum management.

A classification scheme of guide statements, generated by grouping previous guide statements from multiple sources and analyzing their components and properties, suffices for this type of management system. The classification scheme consists of four categories of guide statements. Each category is unique as judged by a combination of components and properties.

A brief characterization of each class of guide statements, with related examples, follows:

GOAL

Definition: Guide statements that give expectations of educational endeavors causing changes in environments or capabilities of learners.

Example: To develop the logical thought processes of preschool children.

Components: Anticipated accomplishment—to develop logical thought processes. Target group—preschool children.

Properties: Timeless—high probability that additional unconsidered processes exist. Animated—target group can only be humans.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Definition: Guide statements describing results of educational endeavors in measurable terms applicable for program evaluation.

Example: At least 70 percent of the kindergarten children should be able to answer correctly nine of twelve items on a test designed to assess conservation of length relations.

Components: Survey sample—kindergarten children. Educational factor (can be behaviors or objects)—answering conservation of length relation items. Criterion—70 percent correctly answer nine of twelve items.

Properties: Evaluative—program can be judged as successful or unsuccessful. Timeless—cannot predetermine when survey sample will satisfy criterion. Animate—survey sample can only be humans. Multiplicity—survey sample size greater than one.

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LEARNER OBJECTIVE

Definition: Guide statements describing educational outcomes at the individual level in measurable terms.

Example: Given four situations on conservation of "as long as," a kindergarten student should be able to conserve the relation in at least three situations after a perceptual conflict transformation.

Components: Behavior—conserve the relation "as long as." Who—kindergarten students. Conditions—given four situations on conservation of "as long as." Criterion—conserve in three of four situations.

Properties: Evaluative—learner performance can be judged as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Timeless—cannot predetermine when learner will satisfy criterion. Animate—who is a human. Singularity—involves only one individual.

ACTIVITY

Definition: A guide statement describing a process to be utilized in attempting to change learner behavior or environmental conditions.

Example: Between October 15, 1973, and November 15, 1973, John Doe will conduct six lessons in operational definitions of the relations "shorter than," "as long as," and "longer than" for the kindergarten children of Learn Quick School, using sticks and string.

Components: Operations—conduct six lessons in operational definitions of the relations "shorter than," "as long as," and "longer than." Operator—John Doe. Receiver—kindergarten children of Learn Quick School. Completion date—November 15, 1973.

Properties: Time dependent—can predetermine when activity will be conducted.

Every program objective is subordinate and relative to a particular goal. A unique code can be used to identify this relationship. Several objectives may be relevant to the same goal; in this case, achievement of each objective contributes a fractional part to evaluating program success. Attainment of goals is the result of successful programs.

Program objectives have one or more subordinate learner objectives. A number can be used to record this relationship, as well as to associate the learner objective with a particular goal. Satisfactory levels of performance according to the learner objectives

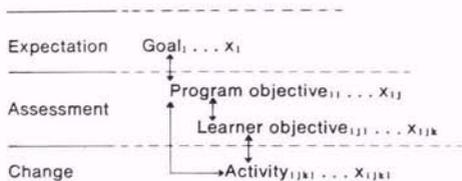


Figure 1. Model of Guide Statement Relationships

are combined in the program objective judgment process.

An activity may be directly related to a program or learner objective. The distinction depends upon the nature of the operations. Materialistic operations, such as constructing classrooms and supplying instructional materials, necessitate an activity-program objective relationship. Operations associated with behavioral changes subordinate an activity to a learner objective. More than one activity may be related to the same objective. A unique code can identify the relationship.

The cyclic nature of guide statement utilization for curriculum management can be discovered by analyzing the model in Figure 1. Goals provide information on collective expectations in education. Program objectives and learner objectives are then derived, if appropriate, to provide directions for identifying performance and environmental discrepancies during the assessment phase. Activities are initiated as change agents in an effort to eliminate discrepancies.

After completion of activities, an assessment is again performed. The information obtained is used to determine achievement of objectives and attainment of goals. Thus the cycle, as diagrammed by double-headed arrows, is completed. When appropriate, learner objectives are bypassed as indicated by the arrows. Multiple cycles may be performed as denoted by the possible addition of guide statement series. The same series can be utilized several times.

During a cycle, several pieces of information should be recorded and filed. The goal-activity half of a cycle requires recording each guide statement along with a unique code. Dates activities are completed, status of objectives as achieved or not achieved,

and status of goals as attained or not attained are desirable to record during the activity-goal portion of a cycle. One must realize that a goal is attained only in terms of selected program objectives relative to the goal being achieved. It may be possible to identify additional program objectives that were not incorporated into the management process.

Curriculum management by guide statement relationships can be adapted to any school system. Each institution would develop procedures for identifying guide statements, recording techniques, and storage-retrieval systems.

A by-product of management by relationships between guide statements is a logical and consistent alternative for determining quality education. Most people accept the fact that expectations in education as identified by consensus techniques vary from one

locale to another. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to argue convincingly that certain ones represent quality. Each identifier of expectations views quality education as being dependent upon expectations becoming reality. When goals are attained, quality exists.

The mechanism for providing the necessary information is guide statement relationships. The number of guide statements as well as the initiation of activities convey only quantity. A combination of guide statement relationships conveys quality. This approach eliminates the elusive nature of determining quality education. When constituents identify desirable educational outcomes for their educational organization, it is an open question whether any approach other than relationships between guide statements provides meaningful information relative to quality education. □

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