Some successful teachers begin their planning by listing objectives, but others use different approaches.

Another Look at Lesson Planning

Shirley Koeller and Elton Thompson

At about the time Henry Ford was establishing his assembly-line methods for mass-producing a low-cost automobile, managers of industrial plants were developing the basic principles of scientific management, which Bobbitt (1918) tried to extend to education. One of Bobbitt's most important ideas that still flourishes is the identification of objectives as the first and most important step in curriculum planning.

A direct descendant of Bobbitt's plan for curriculum development is that of Ralph Tyler (1950). The Tyler rationale is based on the idea that ends are separate from means. Decisions about objectives (ends) are made first because objectives "become the criteria by which materials are selected, content outlined, instructional procedures are developed, and tests and examinations are prepared" (p. 3).

During the last quarter-century, the Tyler rationale has been modified in that educational objectives are often stated behaviorally, forming in effect a blueprint drawn in minute detail for how children will behave once they are processed through the instructional program. The Tyler rationale, plus behavioral objectives, has provided the conceptual model of curriculum planning taught in most schools of education in the United States.

Hilda Taba (1962) proposed a model that amplified two parts of the Tyler rationale and added a new factor, diagnosis of needs. In her model, assessment of needs takes place before objectives are formulated.

Zahorik (1975) notes that recent curriculum thinkers such as Macdonald (1973) and Eisner (1967) challenge the use of behavioral objectives and the separa-

tion of means and ends. They suggest that some purposes of education may not be capable of being stated behaviorally and caution that stated objectives may impose rigid formality at the expense of creative teaching. They claim that in reality, teachers do not always begin their planning by first deciding about objectives and then moving to decisions about learning experiences, organization, and evaluation. Teachers often make curriculum plans by first considering the type of learning experience or activity they can provide, based on available materials and their knowledge of the subject area. Ends are integrated with means, and objectives arise from and exist within an activity. Zahorik comments, "Although Macdonald's prescription is less well known than Tyler's and possibly has fewer supporters, his model may well be descriptive of what teachers actually do" (p. 134).

Students enrolled in the multiple subjects credential program at California State College, San Bernardino, were required to learn and use a lesson planning model based on the Tyler rationale. If teachers did not really plan that way, we thought, our students should learn a more realistic model. Because few attempts had been made to gather data concerning teachers' planning models, we decided to ask a group of successful teachers what they actually do as they prepare to teach.

Members of the faculty and students enrolled in student teaching were asked to identify outstanding teachers from among the resident teachers assisting in the student teaching phase of the teacher education program. Eighty-seven teachers were selected to receive a questionnaire based on the one used by Zahorik. Fifty-six teachers (64 percent) returned completed questionnaires. All had at least three years of teaching experience. About half were kindergarten teachers, about one-fourth were teachers of grades 1-2, and the others taught grades 3-6.

Figure 1.

Typical responses of teachers to the request: "List the planning decisions you make as you prepare a lesson. List your planning steps in the order in which you actually make them."

Typical Tyler Response	Typical Macdonald Response	Typical Taba Response
1. Identify objectives to be taught.	1. Look at the general area to be taught.	1. Assess the needs of students.
2. Identify abilities of students.	2. Decide the general time frame.	2. State objectives or purposes.
3. Plan a variety of learning experiences; suit individual styles.	3. Read basic resource materials, checking each to see if students can read.	3. Plan motivation to focus the attention of the learner upon stated objectives and the purpose of the activity.
4. Plan a variety of ways to evaluate the lesson to meet individual needs.	4. Write out areas to be covered; write out skills to be covered.	4. Plan instruction that will provide the learner information; check for understanding.
	5. Decide how to introduce the lesson.	5. Plan guided practice.
	6. Check other curriculum areas to see if the lesson can be integrated with other subjects.	6. Plan independent practice.
	7. Plan individual or group evaluation.	7. Evaluate to determine if each learner has met the objectives.
	8. Tie lessons together for a general review.	

How Do You Plan?

Teachers were asked to list the planning decisions they make as they prepare a lesson, class period, unit, or course. The directions specified that planning steps be listed in the order in which they were actually made so that it might be possible to determine the planning model each teacher used. A teacher using the Tyler rationale would be expected to place the determination of objectives as the first task on the list of planning steps, while a teacher using the Taba planning model would be expected to put needs assessment first. Those who began their list with learning experiences or learning activities identified themselves as following the Macdonald planning model.

Typical examples of teacher responses are shown in Figure 1. These examples represent the answers actually given by three teachers. We found it remarkably easy to classify responses as Tyler, Macdonald, or Taba.

Figure 2 summarizes the data concerning planning models used by teachers at various grade levels.

More than half of the re-

Figure 2.

Planning Models Used by Teachers at Each Level

Grade Level	Planning Models Tyler	Macdonald	Taba
K	8	9	8
1-2	7	4	5
3-6	9	4	2
Total (N = 56)	24	17	15

spondents said they use a planning model in which a statement of objectives is not the first step taken in the planning sequence. Each list of planning decisions was read carefully to determine the number of teachers who included objectives at some point. Forty-two respondents included a statement of objectives, while 14 did not.

With only one exception, teachers included *learning experiences* or *learning activities* as one step in the planning sequence. *Assessment* was included by 30 of the 56 respondents.

According to the data in Figure 2, more than half the respondents used a planning model that differed in some degree from the model used and taught in methods classes. One teacher reported using two planning approaches: "(1) I determine objectives, minimal competencies, and individual needs for my class, then look for materials and methods to teach them; or (2) if I find really good materials that my children will learn from and enjoy, I find a way to work them into my program, or I substitute these superior materials for something I am presently using." This teacher's flexible approach to planning may be superior to any single planning model.

No Single Model

Our study found that successful resident teachers, all of whom were considered outstanding, differed in their preference for specific planning models. College supervisors must consider the existence of several models and acknowledge that personal preference may determine what is a workable planning model for a given teaching situation. Student teachers will be advised of the criteria for acceptable planning, and together with both resident teachers and college supervisors, can decide at the onset of student teaching on the model to be used. EL

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