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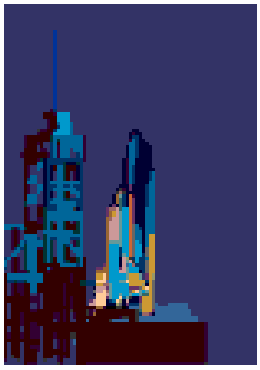
Behavioral Objectives: Central Theme of a Well Planned Lesson

Teachers are the instructional leaders in their classrooms and laboratories. An instructional leader uses a plan to assure a positive experience for the learners. The theme of that plan is one or more behavioral objectives. The objective has three important components:



1. Performance
2. Criterion
3. Conditions

To establish the performance expectations start the planning process by asking: ***What do I expect learners to know and/or be able to do at the end of this experience?*** Be careful here, too often teachers approach this process with a favorite activity already in mind. Planning the activity is actually the last step in this process. You may want students to understand something but avoid using that verb. Remember, we must be able to prove that the learning has occurred and it is much easier to assess overt, observable actions. Verbs like explain, describe, and demonstrate create a target you can measure. This is why the adjective "behavioral" is used with objectives.

Exactly what evidence will demonstrate the successful accomplishment of your goal? To set the criterion, answer the question: ***How will we know when the goal is met?*** Ultimately, we want learners that can set their own goals and measure their own success. As we coach them toward this end it is important to model the kind of expectations that are measurable.

A good way to determine the conditions is to ask the question: ***What environment must be created to assure that the learners have what they need to successfully meet the target you have set for them?*** Usually, you start by building a knowledge base of terms, procedures, and system components. These are necessary tools for the learners as they began the design sequence. You may need several objectives or one rather complex one.

It is important that you communicate all three components of the behavioral objective with students before they began the activity. Your job is to set clear and significant targets for your students, to help them understand how they will know they hit the target, and to create and environment in which they have the prerequisite knowledge, tools, equipment and facility to be successful.

A Case Study

The same process we have examined for lessons can be used to set goals for units, courses and other learning experiences. Let's apply the process to the student teaching experience.

Step one – decide what performance you expect

What is our target? Certainly, we want solid evidence at the end of your student teaching experience that you are the kind of instructional leader that deserves a teaching position. We could rely on a simple recommendation from your cooperating teacher and your university supervisor. But wouldn't it be better to have some hard evidence that superintendents, principals and department heads can interpret for themselves? Can we agree that it would be a good idea to set the goal of creating a portfolio of evidence which clearly demonstrates your abilities? This will be a powerful tool as you interview for your first teaching experience.

Step two – set the criterion

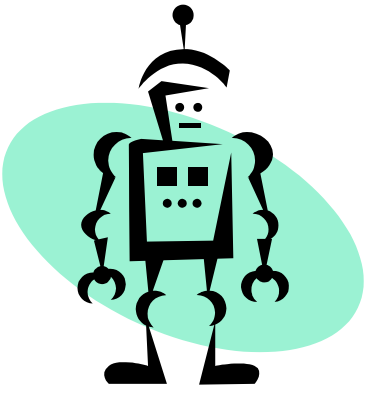
How will we know when you have demonstrated the instructional leadership capabilities necessary to become a teacher? Once again the part of the object can provide a broad outline for these skills:

- You should be able to set challenging goals for your students based upon local, state and national standards.
- You should be able to devise assessment systems that result in clear evidence that the standards have been met.
- You should be able to plan and implement an instructional setting including all the resources (e.g. discussions, books, demonstrations, Internet sites, worksheets, lab equipment, tools, materials, local experts, time) the learners need to be successful.

The true measure of a leader's success is the achievements of those who follow. Accordingly, a teacher's success can best be measured by the success of his/her students. You will want not only evidence of your good planning but evidence of student's work at every step in their own design process.

Step three- design the learning environment

What kind of environment must we build to help you become a successful technology teacher? The prerequisite knowledge is certainly extensive. You invested your undergraduate career in preparing for this challenge. You have amassed a considerable amount of both professional and technical knowledge and skill. Now we put all that theory into practice. The entire student teaching experience is designed to give you increasing responsibility for the learning environment. Planning instruction, preparing activities, assuring tools and materials are available, working with learners, peers and administrators, evaluating your students and yourself, these are all things that will take on new meaning as you practice teaching.



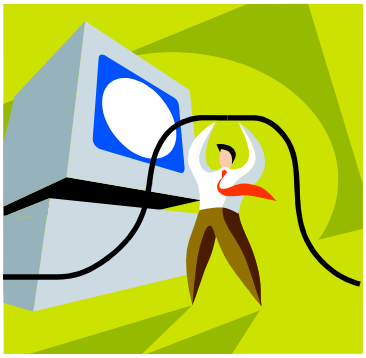
We want to set clear expectations for you, help you understand how to measure them and create an environment that brings success. One in which you can make mistakes in a protected environment but grow. After all, in a few months you will be a first year teacher and these are the things you

must continue to do in order to be successful. Your students deserve the same consideration.

Examples of Behavioral Objectives

Our first step will be to determine what we should study in technology. We do this by asking the question: What concepts and experiences are necessary to develop the understanding and capability that learners will need in a constantly changing technological world? This question comes from the Standards for Technological Literacy. We are naturally enthusiastic about teaching our students what we have been taught. Hopefully, this question will lead us to some new material as well as reinforce the importance of what we already know and do. The standards (state and national) are an operational definition of what technological literacy is and provide some significant help in answering this question.

We will select computers, one of the more confusing aspects of technology. It is unquestionably important that students understand computers but what is most important for them to know and do? Will computers be taught by business educators, technology educators, and/or computer educators? In the *Content for the Study of Technology*, Standard 17 offers some help: **Students will develop an understanding of and be able to select and use information and communication technologies**. Does this mean that technology educators should teach students how to use word processing software? Others are probably better suited for this task. Technology educators have become more comfortable with helping students learn to create web-pages. The World Wide Web has evolved into an important communication technology. This can lead us to the conclusion that students efforts in developing web sites should be evaluated based upon how well they communicate. How the computer actually works is another task that seems to fit education about technology better than it fits education with technology. Computer networking has a huge impact upon our society. Connecting computers together is an important aspect of technology worth study in technology education. The three objectives below are from a short middle school unit on computer networking. Notices that not only are these three objectives in the context of computer networking, they are teaching learners significant things about design – technologies mode of inquiry.



Networking Concepts

Given a worksheet with questions, terms and concepts and access to on-line resources students will utilize their information literacy skills to gather information about computer networks. They will demonstrate their understanding of these terms by completing a quiz with 90% or better accuracy.

Building Computer Networks

Given computers with NIC cards and network software installed, the appropriate cables, connectors and hubs, students will design, build and test computer networks. They

will demonstrate two working networks and obtain an instructor's initials. Students will also demonstrate their understanding by preparing and presenting a proposal for a new network in their lab.

Analyzing Computer Networks

Given the knowledge from the first two lessons on computer networking students will predict the performance of a network design they have not built and make a presentation about which system design to use based upon an analysis of advantages and disadvantages of each.