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ABSTRACT

State and federal educational policy is increasingly directed toward the use of business management techniques to introduce more accountability into the operation of public schools and, in the process, often to hold teachers responsible for objectives over which they have little or no control. This paper examines the concept of Management by Objectives (MBO), its mixed results in the business world, recent trends in management science, and some problems associated with setting objectives for human systems. Such concerns are related to basic differences between the educational and the industrial sectors of society, and it is concluded that business management techniques such as MBO are usually inappropriate at the instructional level with teachers and students. When MBO becomes immersed in the instructional process as a rigid mixture of behaviorism and business management, it becomes increasingly difficult for teachers to discover and nurture creativity. MBO stresses conformity and lock-step learning and discourages deviation from established objectives. Although there is little supporting evidence, MBO may be used to improve the administration of a total educational enterprise provided the unique differences between a school and a business are anticipated. (The paper includes suggested positions and strategy for local teacher associations.) (Author)

Is MBO the Way To Go?

A Teacher's Guide to Management by Objectives

National Education Association
1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

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Summary: State and federal educational policy is increasingly directed toward the use of business management techniques to introduce more accountability into the operation of public schools and in the process often to hold teachers responsible for objectives over which they have little or no control. This paper examines the concept of MBO and its mixed results in the business world, recent trends in management science, and some problems associated with setting objectives for human systems. Such concerns are related to basic differences between the educational and the industrial sectors of society, and it is concluded that business management techniques such as MBO are usually inappropriate at the instructional level with teachers and students. Although there is little supporting evidence, MBO may be used to improve the administration of a total educational enterprise provided the unique differences between a school and a business are anticipated. The paper ends with suggested positions and strategy for local teacher associations.

IS MBO THE WAY TO GO?

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES*

Management by objectives (MBO) is one way to run a business. For the past twenty years it has been tried, refined, and sometimes found useful in factories, in processing plants, and in sales organizations.

More recently, and much more quietly, the U. S. Office of Education (USOE) has supported such groups as the American Management Association (AMA) in efforts to train state department of education officials in the ways and means of introducing MBO into the schools of their states. Such federal policy, of course, is a logical extension of the Ford/Nixon Administration's penchant for cost-accounting and its approach to social problems.

Participants at some of these AMA-state department training sessions were cautioned, "Avoid using such terms as *accountability, MBO,* and *staff assessment* when you talk about this in public or with teacher groups....Call it *planning* and no one will feel threatened."

The most obvious result so far is that teachers get conflicting signals about what all of this will mean to them and to the way they teach. From the higher end of this federal cost-effective continuum, teachers hear the U. S. Commissioner of Education saying, "If properly executed, MBO can be democratic in the best traditions of involving professional colleagues in participatory management." At the other end of this "line" from Washington, in the local school district -- at faculty meetings and via administrative edicts -- teachers are often being *told* what "objectives" they will be held accountable for.

Participatory management, indeed.

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*A position paper written by Robert C. Snider, professional associate, NEA Instruction and Professional Development.

Increasingly, reports from NEA UniServ directors and local association leaders indicate that this latest brand of USOE-AMA innovation (call it anything but accountability or MBO) is causing as much confusion among district-level school administrators as it is causing among teachers. All too often these administrators view "participatory management" as just a fancy new term for the kind of administration they have always known. Their thinking often goes something like this: "We've always had participatory management in my schools. I manage and my teachers participate. My door is always open."

Among other things, participatory management in schools means that teachers will participate in shaping decisions and in developing objectives they will be expected to use in their work with students. As indicated below, there are many varieties of MBO. But all of them include such common elements as identification of goals, definition of objectives, and some regularly applied product assessment techniques. MBO as a national effort to make schools more accountable may or may not succeed. Certainly, districts should understand the nature and implications of what they are dealing with before attempting to introduce it.

What Is MBO?

To better understand what happens to the rhetoric of participatory management (which "can be democratic in the best traditions") as it flows from Washington into your classroom, it is essential to know something about the basic ideas behind MBO, where it comes from, where it works, and where it doesn't work.

Management by objectives, as a concept and a term, was first used by Peter Drucker in his book *The Practice of Management* (Harper & Row, 1954), where he wrote:

> What the business enterprise needs is a principle of management that will give full scope to individual strength and responsibility and

at the same time give common direction of vision and effort, establish teamwork, and harmonize the goals of the individual with the common weal. The only principle that can do this is Management by Objectives and self-control.

It would be difficult for a business leader or an educator -- or anyone, for that matter -- to take issue with such general and high-principled rhetoric about a business enterprise. But Drucker's additive of "self-control" seems to have been lost during the 21 years since MBO was conceived. It may be that, during the interim, "self-control" has been superseded by "participatory management."

Today it is difficult to find specific and detailed definitions of MBO that go beyond the original generalization. As might be expected, the literature of business management contains many examples of this. George L. Morrisey (*Management by Objectives and Results*, Addison-Wesley, 1970) writes that his brand of MBO is "a clear and precise identification of objectives or desired results, the establishment of a realistic program for their achievement, and an evaluation of performance in terms of measured results in attaining them." Morrisey, a management and training executive with Douglas Aircraft, points out that the processes required to implement MBO "are much more complex."

In the world of education, MBO and its meaning are often handled with equally cavalier generalizations. U. S. Commissioner of Education Terrel H. Bell, in his recent book *A Performance Accountability System for School Administrators*, (Parker Publishing Co., 1974), writes about "a variety of significant benefits that result from school management by objectives...a proven systematic approach to educational accountability." Although Bell's book includes a section called "What MBO Will Do" and a chapter on "Getting an MBO System Started," it does not explain in so many words what MBO actually is.

In recent speeches, however, the Commissioner has been somewhat more specific about MBO as he describes USOE efforts to make school management "more results-

oriented." In July 1974, Bell told a meeting of school administrators that "we have been turning more and more to the system of management [MBO] utilized by industry wherein annual goals are set and the entire resources of an organization are focused upon attaining specific objectives."

From the teacher's point of view, MBO in education seems to be another deceptively simple, self-explanatory name for an extremely complex process that has yet to be tried in the schools on a large scale. In these ways MBO is similar to such complex nostrums as individually prescribed instruction and career education. By whatever name, MBO probably will not work in schools without major changes in how schools are organized and in the kinds of decisions teachers can make in relation to what they are expected to accomplish. Certainly, school administrators -- between Commissioner Bell and the classroom teacher -- must be more open with teachers at the outset if a consideration of MBO is to make any sense at all.

The American Management Association plays an important role in spreading the gospel of MBO throughout the business community, and increasingly into schools and other nonbusiness, social agencies. Now in its fourth printing, the AMA best seller *How To Manage by Objectives* (by John W. Humble, 1973) adds nothing to the original 1954 idea:

> At its best, management by objectives is a system that integrates the *company's goals of profit and growth* with the manager's needs to contribute and develop himself personally. *It is not a wonder tool* that can replace intelligent or sensitive leadership, and its misuse can cause *more harm than good*. [Emphasis added.]

Note carefully the last sentence above. It represents the most important lesson learned so far about MBO in the business world. Teachers will be well advised to keep this in mir when their school considers MBO. Although MBO will not replace intelligent and sensitive leadership, it might expose the lack of it. "Accountability," said Commissioner Bell back in 1970, "starts at the top."

All of this leads quite naturally to a closer look at the idea of management, what it means to manage, and who manages what and whom. But management, like MBO, is a concept educators have borrowed from the business community, and the value of this terminology in educational planning will depend on an understanding of the two very different worlds of business and education.

The Cash Register and the Curriculum

Despite the increased social consciousness of many business leaders, the world which they know best is not the world of education. Therefore, whenever efforts are made to introduce MBO and other "business-tested" techniques into the schools, it will be useful for both educators and business people to keep in mind some of the basic differences between private industry and public education.

1. Ownership. Plants and other property within the business sector are privately owned while most facilities in the educational sector are owned and operated by government in the public interest.

2. Responsibility. Beyond limited government control, a business is responsible only to its directors and to its owners. A public school is responsible to a board of education which represents the general public it serves.

3. Goals. The purposes of individual establishments in each sector are set by their respective governing bodies. For this reason (and for other reasons) the goals and objectives of business tend to be more restricted and more specific than are their counterparts in education.

4. Competition. Some organizations within the business sector compete with each other to attain certain objectives. Organizational survival

and growth, therefore, are usually more important aspects of business goals than is the case in public education.

5. Publics. The size, character, and location of the publics it serves are usually controlled by a business organization, which in some cases may decide to increase the size of its public or market. Schools typically have much less control over such matters.

6. Criticism. Public dissatisfaction with and criticism of business performance is not as widespread, not as articulate, and not as organized as is criticism of schools. Several reasons for this include the fact that the public usually has a much wider freedom of choice among business products and services than it has among schools. Since nearly one of every three people is either a student or a teacher in a public school, schools affect more people directly than does any one industry. And finally, since nearly everyone is either in school or has spent many years in school, the public feels better informed about school matters than it does about making steel, selling insurance, or repairing cars.

7. Products. Products and services are usually much easier to measure, describe, and evaluate in business than in schools.

8. Privateness. Since private enterprise can carry out more of its activities in private than can public schools, it is much easier in business to conceal plans and other managerial activities.

9. Social responsiveness: Due to public pressure and/or legislative action, schools are often required to help solve social problems by setting up new courses of study in such areas as sex education,

driver education, drug education, and racial understanding. Major business involvement in solving such social problems -- with the possible exception of the textbook industry -- is a rarity.

10. Rewards. Employee rewards, incentives, and opportunities for on-the-job growth and rapid advancement are greater and more frequent in business than is usually the case in schools.

11. Research and development. The business sector, taken totally, spends a much larger portion of its budget on research (most of it applied research) and on new product development than does the education sector.

12. Technology. The business sector -- because of its competitive nature, and sometimes with government support -- makes a far greater investment in and use of recent technological innovations than do schools.

13. Advertising. Business is much more concerned with using public relations techniques and the mass media to sell its products and to curry public favor.

14. Change. Business and industry claim to be more attuned to change and more capable of change than are schools. Of course, a major amount of "change" in the business world is concerned only with style, packaging, and other marketing frills.

No value judgments are intended in this brief listing of some of the more obvious differences between business and education. Both types of enterprise continue, in quite different ways, to make important contributions to the public well-being. However, before MBO is transplanted from business and applied as

an elixir to improve schools, these basic differences between the two kinds of enterprise should be better understood than is now the case in some school districts.

As might be expected, there are equally basic differences between the role of management in business and the role of management in such nonbusiness social institutions as schools, health care facilities, and law enforcement agencies. Management in business is the name of the game and managers are the most important and most highly paid people in a business organization. Here management has become a science. This is not to say that schools, hospitals, courts, and prisons should not be well managed; the point is simply that social agencies require a kind of management dichotomy, a situation in which professionals such as teachers, physicians, and lawyers must share decision-making responsibility with professional managers (whose sole function is to practice management). Areas of management responsibility in social agencies such as schools, therefore, must be clearly assigned to those individuals who are best equipped to make certain kinds of decisions.

Managers and Management

All of this raises a fundamental question about MBO in schools: *Is the teacher a manager?* This question is at the heart of much misunderstanding between local teacher associations and school administrator-managers in districts where MBO (by whatever name) is being introduced.

From the classroom teacher's point of view, there are two quite separate areas within an educational system where rather different kinds of management are required. One area is the learning locale -- the classroom -- the point where the goals of the school are transmitted to students. Here the professional teacher clearly has management responsibility. The other area, which might be

described as supportive, deals with the many other kinds of management functions necessary for the operation of a complex school system. MBO, at its present stage of development in education, may prove to be more useful at the system level than at the learning level.

Management is obviously a key concept in MBO but a relatively new term in educational circles. It is useful to note here how it is most frequently defined in AMA publications and at AMA workshops: "Management is the art of getting a job done through other people." In the growing literature of school management, this function is usually categorized into three kinds of activity: planning, organizing, and controlling. Planning, incidentally, is always cited as the most important element of school management.

With a $55, 68-page three-ring notebook called *Getting Results Through MBO* (1974), the AMA may have established a record of sorts for getting results through MBO. This programmed text draws a fine line between *administration* and *management*. In it we discover that there is now a surplus of administrators and a "crucial shortage of managers." From an organization that derives a substantial income from educational programs to transform administrators into managers, this may make sense. But beyond the administrator-retreading business, there are other indications of an emerging difference between the older idea of administration and the new concept of management.

Teachers who are trying to penetrate the MBO mystique will be interested in this arcane but important difference. According to the AMA, managers actively direct and manipulate the business environment in ways that often involve personal risk. Administrators, on the other hand, passively adapt their work to conform with the environment, usually with little risk, with no rocking of the boat, and with an eye to personal survival. "Managers without personal commitment to risk and the possibility of personal failure are

bureaucrats," says George Odiorne, an MBO guru often quoted in AMA literature.

It will come as no surprise that the AMA's use of the term *administration* is not the same as it is in the publications of the older and more pompous American Association of School Administrators (AASA). An AASA publication on MBO favors yet another term -- *executive* (*Management by Objectives and Results: A Guidebook for Today's School Executive*, 1973). Here the AASA explains that "until recently school executives viewed management as a demeaning term that emphasized the mechanical aspects and failed to recognize the leadership dimensions of their positions."

The rare human quality of leadership is as scarce among managers as it is among administrators, although managers -- perhaps because they tend to be younger than administrators -- are more apt to confuse management with leadership. It should be kept in mind that the least remembered American president, Chester Arthur, was the greatest "manager" ever to occupy the White House. He organized the federal civil service system.

With the silly statement about management quoted above, the AASA may have touched inadvertently on an important difference between *management* and *administration*. It has to do with the ways in which, and the basis on which, decisions are made today. Management is not -- or need not be -- more "mechanical" than administration. However, management began as a business term and in many ways it seems more closely related to industrial technology than does the older concept of administration.

On the other hand, management makes the most of information-handling technology in such a way that all useful information is available to decision makers before their decisions must be made. In theory, this is why planning gets so much attention in the management process today. It is now possible to plan with much greater reliability because of a better information base. In business this often makes it possible for managers to anticipate problems and to

establish organizational structures that will provide better control over the entire system. The new technology of information processing, storage, rapid retrieval, and instant distribution has in some cases made it possible to delegate management functions more widely throughout a corporate system so that appropriate decisions can be made at the appropriate time and at the appropriate level -- sometimes by a digital computer.

The Technology of Management

Management, with its information support systems (and such "cookbooks" as MBO), is basically a practical application of systems theory, which in turn is a logical, and probably unavoidable, outgrowth of a technological society. In many ways the modern science of management is dependent on technology. Certainly it is no longer possible to have one without the other -- administrators, executives, and leaders notwithstanding.

This significant fact is usually overlooked in school systems and other more humanistic, nonindustrial social institutions whenever they attempt to borrow and use parts from a very different technological system. To a large degree, the idea of putting MBO into a school system is an example of this phenomenon.

Technology is best understood as a total effort within a tightly controlled (managed) system with goals, objectives, and subobjectives that are unequivocally stated and well understood by all managers. Within this technological milieu such concepts as cost-effectiveness, quality control, MBO, product standardization, and even zero-defects are integral parts of the system. The quality of management at every level in such a system is highly visible. When MBO works well, it works only within this order of systems technology. Since schools are organized and run in quite another way, there is a serious question about the success of MBO in such an educational enterprise.

Present efforts to impose MBO on schools would seem to be an example of putting the cart (of MBO technology) before the horse (of human needs and logic). MBO cannot be usefully applied to schools until schools are reorganized to function as an industrial-technological system. This changes our basic question about MBO to something like: Should massive changes be made throughout the educational system so that it can accommodate MBO effectively? Are such changes possible? Are they necessary? And, will the benefits of MBO be worth the cost?

Such thinking leads to a fundamental question of our time. Can technological models from the industrial sector be applied successfully to social institutions? Technology, simply put, is the organization of knowledge for practical purposes. It generates techniques which increase human capacity to do -- to put a man on the moon, to wipe out polio, to get us to London in three hours, to kill with unbelievable efficiency.

Technology and its management subsystems represent a "*can* do" rather than a "*should* do" approach to human objectives. Since what man can do is not always what man should do, there are several problems related to technology. For example, what do we want to do? What should we do? What will it cost (and will it be worth it)? Who shall decide? Can we anticipate all the results in human terms? Such questions are increasingly important today since it is impossible to develop new technology without a very large national commitment.

Another technological problem that has become obvious during the second half of this century is that, once a new technology is introduced into a society, it tends to become irreversible and pervasive. Technology is amoral and its results, which are usually both positive and negative, are difficult to anticipate and control as they spread throughout society. Guns, drugs, birth control pills -- and perhaps even MBO -- are examples of this phenomenon.

Rather than accepting the results of technology as they are thrust upon us, educational leaders might better serve society by making technology an object of study -- and in the process give technology (and such related processes as MBO) some much needed direction.

To quibble over the terminology of *administration* versus *management* in education today may be needless in those schools where learning is recognized as an objective that is already managed by teachers. However, when management techniques are introduced in an effort to run schools as if they were supermarkets, teachers will want to be well informed about such a development and familiar with its nomenclature.

Words, after all, are what contracts are made of, and words gain meaning and stability only by how they are used, how often they are used, and by whom they are used. By whatever name -- administration, neo-administration, participatory management, cost-effectiveness, or MBO -- a new kind of systematic approach to educational accountability is being borrowed from the world of business and laid on the schools. Although this unholy alliance may "mean business" in a school system, the results thus far at the learning level are experimental at best.

Some Objections to Objectives

Like the concept of management, the idea of objectives is also central to an understanding of what might be expected from MBO in schools. Certainly it would be difficult to teach anyone anything without first having in mind some kind of learning objectives. And some teachers with specialized training in behavioral science have had a certain amount of success in using behavioral objectives, often in special education. During the past decade, however, a complex "objectives mystique" has grown out of the earlier teaching machine movement,

and the situation today is a confusing mixture of behaviorism and humanism. Today any serious consideration of educational objectives can quickly lead into the cultish thicket of behavioral gobbledygook -- "transitional objectives," "turnstile objectives," "behavioral objectives," "functional competence," "principle-centered strategy," and finally that fearsome phrase "terminal objectives."

We often hear that objectives are more singular in business than in education: "Profit is the only objective in business, while schools have a bewildering range of objectives." Teachers who have been asked to write objectives for their students may find small comfort in knowing that the business community also finds the concept of "objectives" to be elusive, confusing, and, according to Drucker, "perhaps even a metaphysical" idea. "It may be as difficult for Management Science to define 'objectives,'" says Drucker, "as it is for biology to define 'life.'...There is no area as yet [in business] where we can really define the objectives, let alone measure the results." (*Technology, Management & Society*, Harper & Row, 1970.)

There are two major difficulties with the use of objectives as control mechanisms for human activity in school or in business. First is the problem of stating and defining objectives. Words are not people, and words are limited in their ability to describe what people do, feel, and think. This limitation is further compounded by the fact that people who write objectives vary in their ability to express ideas in clear English.

Charles J. Hitch, formerly an assistant secretary of defense and a vice-president of the RAND Corporation, has been a leading scientist in the development of systems theory, the grandfather of such things as MBO. Hitch once pointed out that RAND had never undertaken a major systems study where satisfactory objectives could be defined. As a senior member of Robert McNamara's notorious Department of Defense "systems team" during the 1960's, Hitch indicated

that uncertainty about goals was to him the "quintessence of military systems analysis." Incidentally, there is now some speculation and study among historians who are trying to determine the role of MBO in our dismal Vietnam involvement.

The second difficulty with objectives is the problem of measurement. An objective is something to be met, to be reached, to be accomplished, to be attained. Therefore, some kind of measurement is obviously needed to determine if and when an objective has been achieved, how well it has been achieved, and who deserves the credit (or blame) for the degree of achievement. Teachers (as well as the NEA Task Force on Testing) will quickly see weaknesses in this approach to accountability in the classroom. Tests used in schools to measure student achievement are increasingly open to question since they may tell us far more about a student's socioeconomic status than about what the student has learned in school. One teacher recently put it this way: "Each of my pupils is a unique reason why MBO won't work here."

When the ability of teachers to write precisely what it is they want to do for a student is further limited to what can be easily measured, the art of teaching will become less of a profession and there will be no room for such human input as intuition and creativity.

The "measurement limitation" of objectives (the O in MBO) is well expressed in a four-step fable from the field of systems engineering. It is called "The McNamara Fallacy" and goes something like this: The first step is to measure whatever can be easily measured. The second step is to ignore what can't be measured. Third, assume that what can't be measured easily is not very important. The fourth step is to say that what can't be measured easily really doesn't exist. This, of course, is no way to run a system -- business, military, or school. Should important and complex objectives be abandoned only because they cannot be simply stated and easily measured?

When individual performance is measured and rewarded only on the basis of objectives accomplished, there is a natural tendency (among teachers, students, shop foremen, etc.) to accept only those objectives which can be met with ease. In this climate challenging and difficult objectives are avoided since they will increase one's chance of failure. The result is an organization characterized by trivial objectives, a complacent staff, and mediocre accomplishment.

The Teacher and MBO

Many teachers have already learned the hard way that MBO in the classroom can mean trouble for everyone concerned. At the outset MBO can be dangerous since it looks so simple and is so easily misunderstood. Like Mary's little lamb, it comes to school as a disarming, simple, and logical idea with great appeal to school boards and to the public. After all, what can be wrong with the straightforward idea of managing by objectives? Isn't that the way most of us manage our own private and public affairs from year to year, from week to week, and from one hour to the next?

In this continual and more-or-less rational process of deciding what we will do before we do it, nearly all of us profit from past experience, and we keep trying to improve our ability to do whatever it is we do. This tendency toward improvement, incidentally, seems to be a universal and genetic characteristic of all living things, particularly humans. We, of course, are different because we can make tools, try new ways of doing things, communicate with each other, and store information. In the process of all this we have produced a Bach, a Shakespeare, a Lincoln, and countless others who have improved the human condition. Obviously humans are more divergent, more unpredictable, and more creative than are trees, bees, or even pigeons.

When MBO becomes immersed in the instructional process as a rigid mixture

of behaviorism and business management, it becomes increasingly difficult for teachers to discover and nurture such fragile and unique student gifts as creativity.

Teachers report several major difficulties with MBO as it becomes a more "advanced and sophisticated" part of the instructional process. MBO increasingly stresses conformity and lock-step learning as it discourages deviation (by both teacher and student) from established objectives. Flexibility, measurement, and origin of objectives are all critical factors here, and frequently teachers are not involved in such things.

By the time MBO becomes entrenched as a classroom routine, many of its objectives turn out to be based on cost-effective averages calculated in the business office by "managers of instruction" who are somewhat removed from the arena of learning. Flexibility in this situation becomes little more than a bureaucratic shibboleth involving vast amounts of paperwork. And concerns about measurement soon become the determining criteria for both the origin and the flexibility of objectives.

When this brand of instructional MBO is added to such present school problems as educational neglect, gradedness, and standardized achievement, teachers will lose another degree of freedom to teach -- together with a certain amount of professional self-respect. Because of the often nefarious nature of MBO as a way to manage instruction, the following considerations will be of interest to teachers who have reason for concern about MBO where they teach:

1. MBO is only one aspect of a concerted effort on the part of federal, state, and business agencies to cut educational costs by holding schools accountable for funds spent and for the quality of their products.

2. As a control technique in business and industry, MBO was developed on the "factory" or "beehive" model where workers are managed in an effort to improve their productivity.

3. A major source of difficulty when MBO is transplanted to education arises when school boards and administrators fail to understand the differences between schools and factories in terms of such critical concepts as workers, products, and goals.

4. One result of this misunderstanding of MBO is that attempts are made to diminish the teacher's role as a manager of instruction to the role of a cog in the standardized treadmill of behavioral objectives.

5. MBO tends to remove the instructional decision-making function from the professional teacher, who more than anyone else in a school system has the information required to manage instruction for individual students.

6. Goals, major objectives, and the nature of subsequent educational products should be developed, agreed to, and described in detail at the school system level by the board of education *before* efforts are begun to use MBO at the instructional level. (This, incidentally, is seldom the case.)

7. The system-level goals, objectives, and product descriptions should not be translated into classroom management procedures without the full knowledge and participation of all teachers whose work will be affected by such decisions.

8. Although the ostensible purpose of the categorical control of MBO is to abolish or limit wasteful and unnecessary instructional activ-

ity (i.e., to save money), it can at the same time have a negative effect by limiting tolerance for differences, diversity, and discovery as students (each of whom is a unique human being) strive to understand, to know, and to learn in their own very different ways.

9. An equally limiting effect of MBO can be anticipated in the professional growth of teachers who must work within the narrow intellectual environment of a bureaucracy of objectives.

10. Measurement of the degree to which an objective has been met by each student poses major problems since test results are not good measures of what has been taught -- unless, of course, the test itself has been the course of study.

11. As part of an MBO program teachers are sometimes tyrannized by administrative efforts to evaluate their effectiveness on the basis of their students' test scores.

12. This invalid -- and in some states illegal -- MBO teacher evaluation has occasionally been used as the basis for teacher dismissal, demotion, and other punitive action.

13. A disproportionate amount of responsibility for success is fixed upon an individual teacher who has little control over the variables necessary for such success.

Will MBO work in schools? The father of MBO, Peter Drucker, has often called attention to the impossibility of transferring management techniques, willy-nilly, to nonbusiness institutions. According to Drucker, the first thing a nonbusiness agency must learn from business management is that "management

begins with the setting of objectives and that, therefore, noneconomic institutions, such as universities and hospitals, require very different management from that of a business." Drucker, who is occasionally critical of schools ("The dropout is the quality control of education.") takes a dim view of MBO in schools since "there are no measurements for education." (*The Age of Discontinuity*, Harper & Row, 1969.)

A question neglected so far in this paper is: How well does MBO work in the business world? The answer, of course, depends upon who is asked. Independent management consultants tell us that about 70 percent of the business people now attending AMA training sessions on MBO are there to find out why MBO has not worked in their own business establishments. These AMA sessions are not to be confused with the government-sponsored AMA efforts to introduce state education department staffs to MBO.

In the introduction to an AMA publication, *Readings in Educational Management* (1973), John M. Goode states: "The educational administrator who is looking for the latest-model panacea for the ills of education will not find it in the use of improved management practices." MBO is yet another management practice which, for reasons already indicated in this paper, cannot be expected to work very well in schools. Certainly it will not neutralize the effects of bad administrative decisions in a school system.

Can MBO work in the schools? Probably not, says Congressman John Brademas (D.-Ind.), chairman of the House Select Subcommittee on Education:

> ...there are few effective ways of judging the effects of educational expenditures. In fact, we haven't *yet* developed adequate standards of performance for human behavior of most sorts, let alone for the behavior specific to the educational setting. [*CAP Commentary* 1:1; March 1974.]

The Local Association and MBO

As this paper has indicated, there are many shortcomings to the use of MBO techniques for the management of instruction in schools. This rather obvious truth, however, can easily be lost sight of at school board meetings and in the realities of local politics, where MBO can easily become a lively public issue. In this climate the local teacher association will need to be well informed on the several aspects of MBO so parents and other publics can be told what to expect from this bland, businesslike approach to latter-day behaviorism in their schools.

At present no particular variety of instructional MBO is preferred by those who are attempting to establish it as a means of making teachers more accountable for student productivity. As already noted, such plans can go by many misleading names, and in some cases they are kept "under administrative wraps" as long as possible. Such divisive administration (certainly it isn't good management) does not make for mutual trust, professional respect, or even sound personnel practice. In this environment, association leaders must be alert to spot administrative behavior that will signal a movement toward MBO.

In districts where MBO is just getting started, organized teachers should be aware of such developments. Certainly, teachers should participate and have major influence on decisions that will affect their teaching. This should be accomplished through the process of collective action.

The local teacher association is the most important link between the united teaching profession and the realities of accountability (and its MBO handmaiden) in a school. Although local situations are seldom exactly alike, information about trends, comparable problems, and similar experiences will be helpful to UniServ directors and local leaders. It is important, therefore, that communication channels within the organized profession be used for this purpose.

Of course, the usefulness of accountability information will depend on its relevance to a particular local situation at a particular time. The following suggested positions and program goals for local associations are presented with this in mind. Clearly they will be more appropriate in some districts than in others for establishing strategy and for planning action.

1. The strength of association action is built on facts and detailed information about what is being planned and what has already been done. Rumors and hearsay do not build a good case and can weaken an association's position. Since district-level MBO programs are usually instigated by the state department of education, this agency is a very important -- but not the only -- source of information.

2. In gathering information and data on the extent and nature of MBO in its district, the association will want to concentrate its efforts on the instructional aspects of MBO rather than on such administrative applications as inventory control and bus maintenance.

3. Collective bargaining between school officials and association representatives should be the basis for dealing with any MBO plans.

4. The agenda for meetings which are open to the public should include such questions as:

   a. Is the primary purpose of our MBO effort to improve the quality of instruction or to save money?

   b. No matter how the prior question is answered, what evidence do we have that this can be accomplished by MBO?

   c. Since MBO was developed as an industrial technique with business goals and products, how has (or will) it be adapted for use in our schools?

d. Have the goals and the major objectives of the school system been agreed upon and clearly defined?

e. If learning objectives are to be assigned to individual students, how will these objectives be developed and how will their attainment be measured?

f. How dependable will the results of this measurement be, and how will the evaluative data be used?

5. Regular district level staff planning for MBO should include the early involvement of association-appointed teacher representatives (for various grade and subject areas) who will be active participants when instructional decisions are considered.

6. The ease with which an association can gather information about MBO in its own district will determine the size and scope of its "intelligence gathering" activities. The amount of tension or openness here will be reflected in the tone and nature of the association's public information program.

7. When and if MBO techniques are actually used for major instructional changes, the situation will often represent a giant step backward to behaviorism and the days of teaching machines. In this extreme situation, the association can expect strong support from many parents as well as from groups who understand such problems, who are seriously "anti-Skinnerian," and who want to humanize education.

8. Since most kinds of instructional MBO cannot withstand close scrutiny by experts on tests and measurements, the association will be well advised to emphasize this very weak aspect of MBO, an effort which may require a special study group and outside specialists.

9. If the association does not succeed in efforts to stop MBO before it reaches the classroom, it will then be essential to ease the introduction of MBO by preparing teachers for it. School boards, therefore, should be expected to provide special (in-service) training for all teachers who will be expected to work as a part of the new MBO system with its range of objectives, definitions, and evaluation techniques.

10. As pointed out earlier in this paper, the matter of developing and writing usable "learning objectives" is an extremely technical and specialized professional process, and one for which few teachers have been prepared. Teachers should not engage in this activity without special preparation and/or the continuing services of a qualified specialist.

11. Experts on MBO in business agree that it must have a large degree of built-in flexibility to succeed. The association should see to it that this is also the case with instructional MBO, for flexibility can be a safety valve to protect teachers and students from anticipated (and unanticipated) MBO problems.

12. The association should prepare its members for quick and decisive reaction to badly managed efforts to put MBO in the classroom. In some districts all teachers have been given a list of objectives (objectives they have had no hand in developing) and told to report at once the percentage of their students who will "attain" these objectives by the end of the year. In one building all teachers refused to make such irresponsible guesses. In a nearby high school all teachers did respond -- with predictions of one or two percent.

13. Other associations have countered MBO proposals by "costing-out" in some detail how these new techniques will actually *increase* the total cost of the program.

14. The most dire threat to association members is the tendency on the part of some school administrators to evaluate teachers -- to hold them accountable, and in some cases to dismiss them -- on the basis of their students' test scores in an MBO program effort. The association must be constantly alert to such examples of mismanagement by objectives.

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