

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 159 114

95

SO 011 128

**TITLE** Instructional Objectives in Citizen Education: Final Report.

**INSTITUTION** Research for Better Schools, Inc., Philadelphia, Pa.

**SPONS AGENCY** National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.

**PUB DATE** 31 May 78.

**NOTE** 23p.; For related documents, see SO 011 124-130

**EDRS PRICE** MF-\$0.83 HC-\$1.67 Plus Postage.

**DESCRIPTORS** Citizen Participation; \*Citizenship; \*Civics; Educational History; Educational Improvement; \*Educational Objectives; \*Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; Environmental Education; Ethnic Studies; Filing; Futures (of Society); Global Approach; \*Information Storage; Inquiry Training; Learning Characteristics; Legal Education; Literature Reviews; \*Skill Development; Social Studies; Values

**IDENTIFIERS** \*Citizenship Education

**ABSTRACT**

This report presents information about citizen education objectives since 1966. The document comprises three major sections. The first section describes strategies used in searching for objectives, examines trends in citizen education, reports on increasing interest in writing objectives since 1966, and identifies skill and knowledge objectives. Knowledge objectives are identified for civics, environmental education, law-related education, ethnic education, and global studies. Skill objectives are suggested for inquiry training, values education, conflict resolution, and political participation. The second section identifies problems in locating objectives (methodological issues) and difficulties relating to the content and form of objectives (substantive issues). Section III recommends developing an objectives handbook and an objectives reference file which include objectives for various grade levels, content areas, and instructional modes. A final suggestion is to explore the possibility of coordinating the objectives reference file with a compendium of instructional materials in citizen education. (Author/DB)

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INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES IN  
CITIZEN EDUCATION:  
FINAL REPORT

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Submitted to  
National Institute of Education

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Suite 1700/1700 Market Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

May 31, 1978

SP 011 128

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## INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES IN CITIZEN EDUCATION:

### FINAL REPORT

As part of the knowledge-building/synthesis effort, the Citizen Education component of RBS has established a reference file on citizen education objectives. With respect to the development of this file, this report contains the following information: the scope of the objectives search and the search strategy; methodological issues uncovered; substantial issues uncovered; patterns in the objectives; significant discoveries; and recommendations for further work.

#### Scope of Search and Search Strategy

The year 1966 was set as the starting point of the objectives search for several reasons. First, the ERIC system was begun in 1966. As the major source for educational information on a nationwide basis, ERIC is essential to any search that attempts to investigate a field thoroughly.

Second, the widespread use of objectives-based instruction is a relatively recent phenomenon. The last 10 years have seen a tremendous growth in the use of objectives and in the skill of writing quality objectives; pre-1966 objectives typically do not reflect this skill. Again, because of terminology and substantive shifts, pre-1966 objectives often seem anachronistic and rarely deal with learner outcomes in the increasingly stressed affective domain.

A third reason for beginning the search in 1966 is the changing focus of citizen education. Citizen education conceived as the social development of the individual toward responsible citizenship, as opposed to a textbook civics course, is a new approach. Too often, early objectives focused only

on the narrow "civics" conception of citizen education rather than the current expanded social conception.

#### Content Area Included in the Search

An initial list of content areas to be included in the objectives search was developed through a series of consultations and brainstorming meetings with RBS staff, and national education leaders, as well as through discussions with tri-state education leaders and contacts in the three state departments of education. The original list of content areas included: career education, consumer education, civics, community education, environmental education, energy education, family life/parenting education, global perspectives/ international education, government, history skills, law-related education, moral/values education, personal development, political-participation skills, social development, and social studies, skills.

The composition of this list was revised, based on the results of the following activities: (1) refined conceptualization of the citizen education domain, (2) evaluation of the substance of the objectives in the various content areas, and (3) a clearer conceptualization of what the three states wanted, and how citizen education programs could fit into statewide school improvement programs. Career education was dropped from the revised list because it was not considered a central concern of citizen education. Consumer education was not included in the revised list because those areas of this domain that are of interest to citizen education are typically covered under economics education.

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Added to the revised list were equity education (specifically women's studies and feminism), multiethnic/multicultural education, futuring education, conflict-resolution skills, decision-making skills, organizational-development skills, and inquiry skills.

The list was then consolidated and oriented to RBS' broad citizen education goals as follows:

Areas with Objectives Primarily Related to Knowledge

- Civics (federal, state, local)
- Community/Neighborhood Education (Building community)
- Economics Education
- Environmental Education
- Equity Education
- Family Life Education
- Futures of Society Education
- Global Perspective Education
- Law-Related Education
- Multiethnic Education

Areas with Objectives Primarily Related to Skills -- Process Rather Than Content

- Conflict-Resolution Skills
- Inquiry Skills
- Moral/Values Education
- Organizational-Development Skills
- Political-Participation Skills

## Areas with Objectives Primarily Related to Dispositions

### Individual and Social Development as a Citizen

(This area includes human relations, interpersonal relations, development of personal characteristics, such as altruism, that are necessary to internalize democratic attitudes, and social characteristics, such as cooperation, necessary to be a democratic actor.)

### Search Strategy

A four-pronged search strategy provided a comprehensive view of citizen education objectives. Each component of the strategy was reviewed and refined as the search progressed.

The first component was a comprehensive search of the ERIC system on-line. ERIC on-line accesses the RIE report, practitioner literature, and the CIJE periodic literature. This collection obviates the necessity of searching other indexes to educational literature such as Education Index. In consultation with the Computerized References Service librarians at the University of Pennsylvania's Van Pelt Library, a list of ERIC descriptors for the content areas was generated and crossed with a list of ERIC descriptors for objectives. Results from this first search were disappointing; although some useful documents were retrieved, most documents were about objectives or about "how to write" objectives, rather than actual listings of objectives. A new on-line strategy was devised that crossed the content-area list and synonyms with curriculum guides, teaching guides, and synonyms. This search yielded a plethora of practitioner documents containing objectives from state and local educational agencies.

The second strategy component was examination of the collections of exemplary repositories of practitioner documents. The results of the ERIC search had indicated that these documents would be a rich source of objectives. The Zahn Instructional Materials Center at Temple University has a collection of curriculum guides and related documents, some of which yielded objectives for the reference file. Unfortunately, the collection has not been updated since 1974. The Pedagogical Library of the Philadelphia Board of Education also has a collection of curriculum guides and related documents. Most of these were produced in the Philadelphia School District, and few of them offered objectives useful for the file. One of the best collections of practitioner documents in the country is located at the South Jersey Regional Educational Improvement Center. Although this collection features mostly documents from New Jersey, it also includes current documents from all over the country, many of which contained useful objectives. Another excellent practitioner document collection is the San Mateo Educational Resource Center (SMERC) in San Mateo, California. SMERC is the official repository for all curriculum guides produced in California, but it contains a collection of non-California materials as well. Under the direction of the RBS staff, SMERC searched for and listed their collection of documents containing objectives in the various citizen education content areas.

A third major search component strategy was telephone and correspondence contacts with selected experts in the citizen education content fields and in educational information and dissemination services. (See Appendix.)



Practitioner document repositories offer a rich source of objectives, and this richness helped to shape the questions that RBS posed to the experts. These questions dealt with the location of exemplary objectives; the location of exemplary repositories of practitioner documents, particularly social studies documents; and the location of objectives banks, either in citizen education content areas or other interdisciplinary fields similar to citizen education. Respondents were also asked to comment on the RBS search strategy and to make suggestions for improving that strategy.

Many persons consulted mentioned sets of objectives which were subsequently obtained and added to the file. The existence of SMERC was made known to RBS through this telephone and letter campaign. The only objectives banks that were actually located focused on basic skills and career education, and there was consensus among those persons surveyed that the creation of a citizen education objectives bank would be a worthwhile project.

The final component of the search strategy was to examine the objectives in textbook collections. This was completed using the resources of the Pedagogical Library of the Philadelphia Board of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, as well. In addition, RBS staff who were engaged in compiling a compendium of instructional materials in citizen education provided for review those materials that contained objectives. Although some objectives were located in this way, textbook objectives are typically so closely tied to their content as to be inappropriate for general use.

### Search Criteria

For the purpose of the objectives search, nonevaluative criteria were adopted. No attempt was made to select objectives on the basis of a notion of "good" objectives or "bad" objectives. If a document listed objectives stated in terms of some kind of learner behavior, it was placed in the file. Broad goal statements were discarded, as were lists of concepts to be mastered by students. Neither of these items fit the standard definition of objectives in that they do not list conditions for learning or expected student outcomes. An attempt was made to avoid redundancy. As the search continued, documents that covered the same ground in the same manner as earlier selections began to appear; these were disregarded.

The use of nonevaluative search criteria does not mean that qualitative issues of the collected objectives have not been addressed. It is clear that there are important issues in the use of objectives. These questions, however, will be addressed in the next part of this report.

### Organization of the Reference File

At present, the reference file is organized by content areas arranged by grade level. The issuing agency is noted for each listing of objectives. Insofar as possible, objectives which are issued as sets of sequential units are kept together. An exception to this situation is when there is wide content area variation. In such cases, sets are broken up and individual objectives are filed by content area. At present there are approximately 800 sets of objectives in the collection, with a total of

about 5,000 individual objectives. Entries are added regularly.

### Issues Discussed

In the issues section of this report, the following definitions have been stipulated. Methodological issues are defined as issues relative to locating suitable objectives. Substantive issues are defined as issues relating to the content and form of the objectives that were/located.

Patterns in the objectives are defined as broad continua along which the objectives may be placed.

### Methodological Issues

The first methodological issue concerns the inherent limitations of sources for materials in which objectives may be found. The ERIC system, the chief vehicle for dissemination of educational information, is severely limited as a source of instructional objectives. The identification of objectives is not a major focus of ERIC. Instead, ERIC has a content focus. Therefore, to avoid repetition, it limits document entry on the basis of content overlap. This approach, while valid, does not reveal the diversity of instructional objectives possible within a content area. The lack of emphasis on collecting objectives is reflected in ERIC indexing. It is virtually impossible to locate instructional objectives in ERIC by searching directly for "objectives", "course objectives", "behavioral objectives", etc. One has to adopt a more circumspect strategy which yields mixed results.

The primary sources of instructional objectives are curriculum and teaching guides, written by local or state educational agencies. The documents generally fall into that mass of educational literature labeled

"fugitive" materials because they exist outside normal dissemination channels. Typically, fugitive documents are produced for in-house use and vary greatly in format and quality. Each document represents the particular concerns of the issuing agency. Dissemination is, at best, a secondary consideration and is often highly idiosyncratic, making it difficult to locate such documents.

The best place to locate fugitive materials is in educational resource centers that specialize in collecting practitioner documents. As might be expected, the scope and depth of these collections vary greatly. The San Mateo Education Resource Center (SMERC), for instance, collects documents primarily from California. Educational Improvement Center-South (EIC-South) collects documents primarily from New Jersey.

The varied terminology of the objectives field is another methodological problem. The terms "goals," "objectives," "learning activities," "student outcomes," and "indicators" are used by different objectives writers to describe similar statements. Thus, searching for "objectives" is difficult because of the imprecise terminology. Yet another methodological problem is the paucity of resources for objectives in certain fields within the citizen education domain. Few objectives were located for personal development, social development, organizational development for students, the development of skills areas as an end of instruction, moral-values education, and community-neighborhood education. There are several reasons for the lack of objectives in these areas: they are not traditional school disciplines; they are often thought of as by-products of education rather than

specific ends of instruction; and they are areas just becoming accepted as part of the school curriculum.

A final methodological issue is the shortage of elementary level objectives in the citizen education domain. Aside from general social studies, very few of the citizen education component areas have objectives for elementary school students.

### Substantive Issues

Objectives vary greatly in format, content, and quality from writer to writer, district to district, and publisher to publisher. As mentioned above, part of the difference can be attributed to the lack of standard terminology and also to the variety of popular formats for objectives. However, the variation is usually of a more fundamental nature. Many people who write objectives have little training for the task and do not understand the principles of sophisticated objectives-based instruction. Objectives tend to be oversimplified statements, more reflective of an administrator's desire to have written objectives in a curriculum guide than of a desire to have systematic, pragmatic guides to classroom instruction.

This variation in quality and format is present throughout the objectives literature, not just in the citizen education area, and points to several recurrent faults. Many statements labeled "objectives" are actually broad goal statements. The learner outcomes specified or implied are so vague as to be impractical as guides to classroom instruction.

Another common fault lies in the opposite direction. In the "atomized instruction syndrome," objectives often are so narrowly specific as to

reflect only trivial instructional goals. Creative generalization and concept learning are often lost as ends of instruction when the focus is on such short range and conceptually limited objectives. This problem is magnified in the social studies and related disciplines. It may be sound educational practice to atomize instruction in mathematics, but to apply this model to social studies ignores the fundamental importance of generalization and concept formation in that discipline.

A more technical set of problems has to do with the lack of or the problematic nature of the performance criteria by which student achievement of the objective is measured. Many objectives are written without performance criteria. Because neither teacher nor student has a clear idea of what constitutes satisfactory achievement of such an objective, its utility for instruction is limited. At best, such an objective can serve as a goal statement. Even when performance criteria exist, they often are less than satisfactory as instructional aids. Performance criteria are sometimes tautological; the criteria are simply restatements of the original objective. It is difficult to see an objective such as "students participating in the interracial understanding component will show a significant gain in interracial attitudes as measured by their attainment of project objectives" serving as a guide to teaching and learning.

Another common problem is restrictive performance criteria. Given an objective of significant importance, the performance criteria can label one of many appropriate behaviors as the only way to satisfactorily meet the objective. Take, for example, the objective "student will demonstrate

an understanding of a citizen's ability to participate in the political process by listing five ways he or she can effectively participate."

Regardless of the fact that listing five areas of participation may or may not demonstrate understanding of political participation, it is clear that there are several other (and perhaps better) ways of demonstrating this understanding. For example, the student might write an essay discussing the issue of citizen participation in a democracy or actually participate in some aspect of public affairs.

A related weakness in many objectives is the assumption of truth implicit in certain performance criteria. Consider this example: "A student will demonstrate an understanding of the American economic system by listing four ways free enterprise contributes to personal freedom." That the American economic system is a free enterprise system and contributes to personal freedom is, of course, a completely tenable idea. However, alternative notions are also tenable. Generally, a student's understanding of important concepts should be based on empirical inquiry rather than on indoctrination.

Within the domain of citizen education, there are several specific weaknesses in the objectives literature. There is an overwhelming preponderance of cognitive task objectives. Affective or dispositional outcomes are seen almost exclusively as by-products of cognitive objectives. Few objectives are written calling for the development of critical inquiry skills as a specific outcome of instruction. These skills are regarded as implicit in satisfying cognitive task objectives. Similarly, action-related

skills, political participation skills, and organizational development skills are rarely seen as specific outcomes of instruction.

The cognitive objectives that exist are usually keyed to informational aspects, leading to an overemphasis on factual information. Seeing trends, synthesizing information or drawing conclusions and generalizations from the data is usually subordinated to learning facts. This problem, of course, is related to the atomized approach to instruction implicit in many objectives.

Most objectives in citizen education call only for reasoning, reflecting, or other mental activities and experiences: Active or participatory behavior are rarely mentioned as alternative ways to demonstrate achievement. This approach ignores a whole range of behaviors and situations in which students can learn important citizen education lessons. Out-of-school situations, for example, may offer the students the opportunity to learn key skills, facts, and attitudes and to demonstrate their understanding of key citizen education concepts.

Another major weakness of citizen education objectives is that controversial issues are often filtered out. Some schools are hesitant to address issues that arouse emotional responses within the community. Schools, of course, are vulnerable to special interest group pressures; however, dealing forthrightly and rationally with controversial issues is an essential part of good citizenship. Avoiding areas of controversy and conflict promotes a mythical version of the legal, social, political and economic systems, which is hardly one of the goals of citizen education.



### Patterns in the Objectives

Various models have been developed by organizations for displaying groups of citizen education objectives. These models fall into two broad categories. Some, like those of the Center for the Study of Global Perspectives, indicate the derivation of the objectives by presenting a hierarchy of broad goals, specific instructional objectives, and performance indicators. Other models, like those in the Instructional Objectives Exchange, simply present objectives arranged by content area and grade level. Most locally produced objectives fall into one or the other category, either choosing to show the process of objectives derivation or simply listing instructional objectives for a particular level in a particular discipline.

The individual objectives in citizen education also display a common pattern. Generally they fall along one of two continua. One continuum involves the cognitive processes involved in demonstrating achievement. Objectives may range from those which specify broad terminal behaviors to those calling for highly specific terminal behaviors. Typically, objectives that feature broad terminal behaviors use verbs like "to learn," "to understand," "to comprehend," etc. Those with highly specific terminal behaviors use verbs like "to recall," "to list," "to identify," etc.

The other continuum involves the instructional materials required for achievement. At one end of this continuum are those objectives which depend on specific textual materials. On the other end are those that can be applied to a great variety of textual materials. The former often

refer to case study material, i.e., "use the case study presented to show how individual rights are protected by the Constitution." The latter type of objective might read, "Demonstrate how the Constitution has been used to protect individual rights by citing examples of U. S. Supreme Court cases that have protected First Amendment rights." A student could use a wide variety of instructional materials to acquire the information necessary to satisfy this objective.

#### Significant Discoveries

One major discovery was the fugitive nature of the objectives literature. It was expected that locating instructional objectives would be a straightforward, easy process. In reality, the literature is diffuse and not very accessible. Teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers would experience difficulty in locating objectives to use in instructional programs or to use as models.

Another significant discovery was the existence of collections of objectives in various disciplines. Obviously, some educators have begun to address the difficulty of finding suitable objectives by issuing collection of objectives. Typically, these collections are in a standard subject area; no one has put together an objectives bank in citizen education or in a similar interdisciplinary field. People contacted by RBS during the objectives search expressed an interest in the creation of a collection of citizen education objectives. It was seen as a potentially valuable resource in curriculum planning and development:

#### Recommendations

Recommendations for further work and for the type of objectives that may prove most useful in the future are related to the response nature of

the RBS citizen education project. In conjunction with RBS and the state improvement plans, each school district involved in citizen education programs will articulate its own citizen education needs and concerns.

Because districts will be focusing on different grade levels, different content areas, and different instructional modes, the type of objectives needed by each district may be different. Therefore, it is necessary to have as wide a coverage as possible in the objectives reference file so as to meet widely divergent needs.

The existence of a large repertoire of objectives will aid program development in several ways. As districts go through the process of clarifying needs and setting instructional goals, the objectives collection will help planners focus on the instructional component of the project. There will be no need to go through the lengthy and difficult process of writing objectives de novo.

In order for the objectives collection to fulfill this role, an objectives handbook should be created. This handbook will contain exemplary objectives culled from the present objectives reference file and new objectives identified through continual awareness of the objectives literature. These exemplary objectives will serve as guides for curriculum developers and teachers in planning programs of instruction to meet particular citizen education needs. In many cases objectives will have to be modified to meet local needs. In some cases, where local citizen education needs are in areas without satisfactory objectives, committees of teachers, administrators, and scholars will have to write suitable objectives. Such areas might include social and personal development, organizational

development for students, community-neighborhood education and moral/  
value education.

The objectives handbook would be organized by grade level and content area and cross-indexed by skill areas and standard school disciplines. An introduction will discuss the process of adapting the exemplary objectives to local needs. A constant awareness will be maintained to see how the handbook is used by teachers and how it can be modified to improve the systematic nature of instruction.

Another possibility to explore is the coordination of the objectives reference file with the Instructional Materials Compendium. This may involve making the objectives file machine-readable and accessible through a thesaurus identical to that being considered for instructional materials. This would lead to a unified on-line system which client districts could use to help select appropriate instructional objectives materials that would meet those objectives.

APPENDIX

LIST OF AUTHORITIES CONSULTED  
IN CITIZEN EDUCATION OBJECTIVES  
SEARCH

AUTHORITIES CONSULTED

Judith Gillespie - Indiana University, Social Studies Development Center

Howard Mehlinger - Indiana University, Social Studies Development Center

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Fred Newmann - University of Wisconsin

Mary Jane Turner - Social Science Education Consortium

Donald Bargaw - New York Department of Education

Thomas Hutchinson - Objectives Co-op, University of Massachusetts

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Joseph Barrett - Philadelphia Community College

Linda Falkenstein - American Bar Association, Youth Education for Citizenship

Instruction Objectives Exchange, Los Angeles, California

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