

Outcome-Based Educational Planning

Citizens and educators in Whitmore Lake, Michigan, have agreed on the relative responsibilities of the individual, home, school, and community for helping students become self-sufficient adults.

GAIL M. STEPHENS AND JERRY J. HERMAN

More and more people these days want to be involved in educational planning and to know what is being accomplished in the schools. Decision makers in the Whitmore Lake, Michigan, Schools have responded to this interest by devising a plan to guide curriculum development and policy formulation in the district. This outcome-based planning model increases the potential for success because it starts by obtaining consensus on desired results (Figure 1).

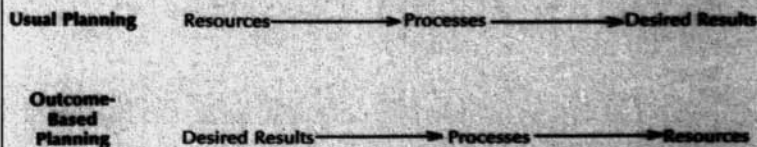
For the most part, decisions about schooling made by educators and policy makers have traditionally been based on

assumptions about desired results, some of which were outdated, too narrowly or broadly based, or simply not widely agreed upon. The outcome-based planning model:

1. Emphasizes planning that starts with desired outcomes.
2. Involves students, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, and community members in the planning process.

3. Spells out the responsibilities of students, the home, the school, and other social institutions in helping students achieve the desired outcomes by the time they graduate from high school. The power of outcome-based planning lies in directing all instructional elements toward thoroughly defined and highly desired educational goals. Once planners have defined the desired

Figure 1. Outcome-Based Planning Compared With the Usual Approach



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results, resources can be efficiently mobilized to bring about required changes.

Desired Results

From the beginning of the project, it was clear to all planning members that students graduating in the future will need knowledge and skills in addition to, or different from, those currently being developed in schools. The team agreed that attitudes and values should also be reexamined in light of the knowledge and skills that will become the new basics.

The planning team reviewed trend extrapolations and futurist materials, held numerous discussions, and participated in a series of exercises, all of which culminated in agreement on what the future should be for Whitmore Lake students who are to enter kindergarten in 1984 and beyond. The team also reached consensus on the desired result of schooling at Whitmore Lake: graduates who would be *self-sufficient adults*—defined as individuals who produce for society a greater amount than they consume.

The team then focused on ten major planning areas. Nine of the areas were further divided into subcategories of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The tenth area was totally devoted to general attitudes and values not specifically subsumed under the other nine. The ten areas were:

1. *Basics for Survival*: skills, knowledge, and attitudes considered to be essential building blocks for all other learning.

2. *Planning and Problem Solving*: skills, knowledge, and attitudes that help learners think more productively.

3. *Interpersonal Relationships*: skills, knowledge, and attitudes that help learners get along with other people.

4. *Physical Health*: skills, knowledge, and attitudes that help learners keep fit.

“... the desired result of schooling at Whitmore Lake: self-sufficient adults—defined as individuals who produce more than they consume.”

5. *Mental Health*: skills, knowledge, and attitudes that help learners to feel fit.

6. *World Interdependency*: skills, knowledge, and attitudes that help learners understand and appreciate other people, how they live, and how their life styles affect them.

7. *Employability Awareness*: skills, knowledge, and attitudes that prepare learners for the world of work.

8. *Technology*: skills, knowledge, and attitudes that help learners to be comfortable with and in control of machines and new scientific discoveries.

9. *Life Enrichment*: skills, knowledge, and attitudes that help learners use free time well.

10. *Attitudes and Values*: beliefs that guide learners' actions.

Shared Responsibilities

The planning team next concentrated on defining the responsibilities of the

four key partners in the educational process—the individual, the home, the school, and community. They devised a scheme to represent graphically the relative responsibility for achievement of each skill, attitude, and component of knowledge. The distribution of responsibility is different for the various outcomes, and frequently differs at the five levels: kindergarten entry, kindergarten through 4th grade, 5th through 8th grade, 9th through 12th grade, and graduation from high school. In general, the school has more responsibility for skill outcomes, the individual for knowledge outcomes, and the home for attitude outcomes. The individual learner's share of responsibility increases for all outcomes as the child grows older. Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of responsibility borne by each party for two specific outcomes: handwriting and knowing how to plan.

What's Next?

Having determined the desirable outcomes of schooling in Whitmore Lake, planners next analyzed the instructional elements currently in place in the school system. This involved several tasks, which were carried out simultaneously.

An instructional audit was conducted to analyze such factors as use of available learning time, student test results, student attendance, degree to which teachers teach to objectives, and other instructional elements.

Professional staff members conducted a systematic review of key areas of the curriculum. With the ten goal areas providing a new classification of curriculum, the development of mastery objectives was a critical second phase activity.

Basics for Survival was the first goal area under review and development. This year mastery objectives were writ-

ten; introduction, reinforcement, and mastery expectancy levels were identified; and test items were developed for language arts and math outcomes. Next year the district will apply this review and development process to the remaining Basics for Survival outcomes, which include such items as general under-

standing of the law, study habits, and typing and keyboard techniques.

We also expect in the coming year to complete the development of mastery objectives for the Planning and Problem Solving goal area, which covers what is traditionally included in the science curriculum as well as such items as the

principles of logic, higher level thinking skills, and resource utilization. Within five years the review and development process should be completed for the remaining eight goal areas.

Policies have been written to provide a solid structure and direction for subsequent implementation of future changes. The board of education has adopted policies on mission and goals, school climate, mastery learning, time for learning, a testing and monitoring program, effective instructional practices, enrichment and accelerated learning programs, homework, curriculum development, teacher supervision and evaluation, attendance, and grading and reporting to parents.

In addition, the board of education is reviewing graduation requirements, including a way to align student outcomes with traditional Carnegie units. This should ultimately result in major revisions in the high school instructional program, including changes in course content and scheduling.

Enroute and longitudinal indicators of outcome achievement are being identified and a monitoring system developed. Concurrently, the professional staff has begun to review, refine, and restructure the district's curriculum guides based on the desired outcomes, and to develop mastery assessment materials.

Benefits

The understandings and awareness created by using an outcome-based planning model, which involves and defines the responsibilities of students, parents, community members, and school people, have been very beneficial to the Whitmore Lake School District. The process has given us the support we need and a method we can use to develop and implement an innovative delivery system that promises to achieve the desired outcomes we have agreed upon. □

Figure 2. Shared Responsibility Consensus

Major area: Basics for Survival
Outcome subcategory: Skill
Specific outcome: Uses good penmanship

Levels			
I 10%	H 70%	C 20%	K Entry
I 30%	H 20%	S 40%	K-4
I 50%	H 10%	S 30%	5-8
I 60%	H 10%	S 20%	9-12
I 70%	H 10%	C 20%	12-Graduation

Major area: Planning and Problem Solving
Outcome subcategory: Knowledge
Specific outcome: Understands the steps in planning

H 90%					C 10%	K Entry
H 60%				S 30%	C 10%	K-4
I 10%	H 40%			S 40%	C 10%	5-8
I 20%	H 20%	S 50%			C 10%	9-12
I 80%					H 10% C 10%	12-Graduation

I = Individual
H = Home
S = School
C = Community

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