

Exposing the Secret Science Behind The Indoctrination of Our Children in the Public Schools

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Parents know that something is wrong at their public schools, but they do not know the root cause of the problem. It seems that every time a new curriculum is introduced in the public schools, the effect is to dumb down the students. That is because the public schools are guided by a hidden agenda to modify the behavior of the students by changing their values.

Bloom's Taxonomy

You read correctly, the core objective in the public school system is to change the values of the students, so that they will act in accordance with the new internalized values. This hidden agenda of behavior modification is the cause of the dumbing down of America. The guide for this value changing is found in Bloom's Taxonomy. Bloom's Taxonomy is the educational bible that forms the framework for virtually all lesson plans in the public schools in the United States. Bloom's Taxonomy is the seminal authority for the system of instruction by educational objectives that has transformed the modern public school curricula. The entire public education system, from grade school to college, has been infected with the devilish behavior modification of Bloom's Taxonomy. The teachers are no longer instructors; Bloom describes them as "change agents." They are agents whose purpose is to change the values of the students.

One of the foundational philosophies of Bloom (and the other taxonomers who have followed in his wake) is that there are no absolute truths. The authors of Blooms Taxonomy state: "we recognize the point of view that truth and knowledge are only relative and that there are no hard and fast truths which exist for all time and all places." Benjamin Bloom, Editor, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*, at 32 (1969).

Bloom's Taxonomy is actually a two volume set that includes one volume on the "Cognitive Domain" and one volume on the "Affective Domain." Benjamin Bloom did not write all of the taxonomy that bears his name. He was the editor of volume one (Cognitive Domain), which was written by a committee of university examiners who attended annual conferences between 1949 and 1953 under the auspices of the American Psychological Association. Benjamin Bloom, Editor, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*, at 4-5 (1969). Volume two (Affective Domain) was co-authored by David R. Krathwohl, Benjamin S. Bloom, and Bertram B. Masia. Since the two volume set has commonly been referred to as Bloom's Taxonomy, I will continue that convention below. In addition, to avoid awkward phrasing I will refer to Bloom as the author of both volumes although the reader should understand that other authors contributed to the works.

Upon reading Bloom's Taxonomy I discovered that Bloom and his group knew at the outset that in creating a taxonomy of educational objectives that they were "attempting to classify phenomena which could not be observed or manipulated in the same concrete form as the phenomena of such fields as the physical and biological sciences." Bloom, Volume I, at 5. Their solution to this problem was to categorize behavior (rather than learning). "[I]t was the view of the group that educational objectives stated in behavioral form have their counterparts in the behavior of individuals. Such behavior can be observed and described, and these descriptive statements can be classified." *Id.* at 5.

Behavioralism

It was decided at the outset that the taxonomy would be based upon observed behavior. It was this principle that guided every aspect of the construction of Bloom's Taxonomy. What was the reason they decided upon descriptions of behavior as the basis for the taxonomy? Bloom and the others were behaviorists, who only value the behavior of a person. They value behavior not only because they could measure it, but also because they thought that they could manipulate it.

Bloom and the other behaviorists understood that a taxonomy based upon behavior would lead to what they called "atomization of educational purposes" where the classification may bear little resemblance to the overall objective of education. Bloom and the others did not have a solution to that problem, they simply tried to minimize it by creating categories of behavior that were more general. *Id.* at 5-6. There are three major "domains" in the taxonomy: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Oddly, only the psychomotor domain suggests that the taxonomy is focused on measuring behavior, when in fact the measure of behavior is the very point of the taxonomy. *Id.* at 7-8.

The labels used in the taxonomy are quite misleading. For example, the cognitive domain is defined by Bloom as a categorization of the "recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills." *Id.* at 7. However, the cognitive domain is strictly limited to being a classification only of behavioral outcomes of the educational process. *Id.* at 12. The cognitive domain is not truly a taxonomical categorization of intellectual abilities and skills, it is rather a categorization of observed behavior. The title and definition given for the taxonomy is misleading. The observed behavior is supposed to be a manifestation of how a person thinks, which Bloom calls "mental acts." *Id.* at 12.

Bloom is not concerned with knowledge or understanding. He and his other behaviorists are concerned only with whether the student manifests "learned behavior." Bloom explains: "The emphasis of this Handbook is on obtaining evidence on the extent to which desired and intended behaviors have been learned by the student." *Id.* at 13. Note that it is not information that is learned, it is "behavior" that is learned.

Bloom stated that the categories in his taxonomy of objectives to have any real organization must be founded upon some psychological theory. He and his colleagues searched for an acceptable psychological theory, but could not find one. Since they could not find a theory for their taxonomy, they simply created the taxonomy which he said was consistent with what he described as research findings and decided that their taxonomy would be the basis itself of a psychological theory that would be defined later. *Id.* at 17-18.

No Absolute Truths

One of the foundational philosophies of the Bloom and the other taxonomers is that there are no absolute truths. The authors state: “we recognize the point of view that truth and knowledge are only relative and that there are no hard and fast truths which exist for all time and all places.” *Id.* at 32. The diminution of knowledge as an educational objective seems to be a theme of the taxonomy. Bloom states that “[b]ecause of the simplicity of teaching and evaluating knowledge, it is frequently emphasized as an educational objective out of all proportion to its usefulness or relevance for the development of the individual.” *Id.* at 34. Bloom grudgingly acknowledges that knowledge is generally recognized as an important outcome of education, however, he goes on to make the value judgement that “very few teachers would be satisfied to regard this [knowledge] as the primary or the sole outcome of instruction.” *Id.* at 38.

When it comes to defining knowledge, Bloom puts particular emphasis on behavior and defines knowledge accordingly. He states: “Knowledge as defined here includes those behaviors and test situations which emphasize the remembering, either by recognition or recall, of ideas, material or phenomena.” *Id.* at 62. It seems that he has defined knowledge as a manifestation of comprehension.

The problem is that he has a separate and distinct taxonomic category for comprehension, which accordingly must be made a term of art so as to distinguish it from his definition of knowledge. In explaining what is meant by comprehension, Bloom states: “the use to which it [comprehension] is being put here is a somewhat broader one . . . In another sense, the use of the term [comprehension] is somewhat more limited than usual . . . Here we are using the term ‘comprehension’ to include those objectives, behaviors, or responses which represent an understanding of the literal message contained in that communication.” *Id.* at 89 (emphasis in original).

Again Bloom has redefined another word (comprehension) to require some manifest behavior. Bloom’s and his colleagues’ efforts to redefine everything according to observable behavior have made their resulting taxonomical categories indistinguishable from one another and therefore the line between them is somewhat nebulous. There is a very fine distinction between “behaviors and test situations which emphasize the remembering, either by recognition or recall, of ideas, material or phenomena” (knowledge) and “behaviors or responses which represent an understanding of the literal message contained in that communication” (comprehension).

Behavior Modification

It becomes clear from the text that Bloom's taxonomy is not truly an system of educational objectives but rather is a system of behavioral modification. That fact is made clear when he explains the taxonomical category he titles "Application." He states:

A demonstration of "Comprehension" shows that the student can use the abstraction when its use is specified. A demonstration of "Application" shows that he will use it correctly, given an appropriate situation in which no mode of solution is specified."

Id. at 120 (emphasis in original).

Further evidence of this is found in the second volume of Bloom's Taxonomy, where it states that "objective = behaviors = evaluation technique = test problems." David Krathwohl, Benjamin Bloom and Bertram Massia, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook II: Affective Domain*, at 9 (1956). The authors explain that in their system "an objective has come to mean a particular set of behaviors." *Id.*

There are three domain classifications in Bloom's Taxonomy: Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor. Bloom describes the Affective Domain as "[o]bjectives which emphasize a feeling tone, an emotion, or a degree of acceptance or rejection." *Id.* at 7. However, when it comes to constructing the domain the focus is upon behavior. Bloom states: "Perhaps the most difficult part of the task of building the affective domain of the *Taxonomy* was the search for a continuum that would provide a means of ordering and relating the different kinds of affective **behavior**." *Id.* at 24 (italics in original, emphasis added). Bloom's Taxonomy is not a taxonomy of educational objectives it is rather a taxonomy of behavioral objectives! A fair reading of Bloom's Taxonomy makes that clear. For example, Bloom states: "When we speak of an individual as holding a value, the same range of **behavior** described for attitudes comes into play." *Id.* at 25 (emphasis added).

Changing the Values of Students

At its core, Bloom's Taxonomy is the basis for a system of behavioralism, which changes a person's values, so that the person will internalize and act in accordance with the change in his values. Bloom states:

"This ordering of the components [into his life outlook] seemed to describe a process by which a given phenomenon or **value** passed from a level of bare awareness to a position of some **power to guide or control the behavior of a person**. If it passed through all the stages in which it played an increasingly important role in a person's life, it would come to **dominate and control certain**

aspects of that life as it was absorbed more and more into the internal controlling structure .”

Id. at 27 (emphasis added).

What Bloom is talking about is an adjustment of a person’s values, where a person internalizes and acts upon the change in his values. Bloom calls this “internalization.” *Id.* at 33. Internalization seems to be Bloom’s goal. He states that “the internalization process represents a continuous modification of behavior.” *Id.* This internalization becomes “a pervasive outlook on life that influences all his actions.” *Id.*

Teachers Act as “Change Agents”

Bloom expressly states that his taxonomy is neutral. What he means by neutral is that the “taxonomic scheme should be broad enough to include objectives from any philosophic orientation,” *Id.* While Bloom views the taxonomy as value neutral, he states that “the scheme does provide levels for extreme inculcation of a prescribed set of values.” *Id.* at 43. That statement is significant in view of the fact that Bloom views educators as “change agents.” *Id.* at 29. In essence, the educational “change agents” can use Bloom’s Taxonomy as a tool to inculcate students into the change agent’s own “prescribed set of values.” The new values inculcated in the student by the change agent may be antithetical to the family values the student had when he arrived at school. Bloom’s Taxonomy is a tool to be used in behavior modification, where the student is conditioned to internalize new values, upon which he is expected to act in response to certain stimuli.

According to Bloom, the lowest level in the cognitive domain is found at the knowledge objectives. *Id.* at 77. That is because Bloom is primarily focused not on learning, but on modifying behavior. He illustrates this focus by explaining an example of a 1947 study done by Kurt Lewin for the National Research Council. In the study “Lewin was interested in finding a way of changing the food habits a group of women.” *Id.* at 81. Simply providing the women with information about new foods did not cause the women to change their food usage habits. That method of instruction was deemed inadequate to the instructional objective, which called for a change in behavior. It was irrelevant to Lewin that the women learned the information and determined to disregard it, the objective was to change their behavior.

Lewin then decided upon a new method of instruction to include a group discussion that ended with a verbal commitment from the women to change their behavior to use new foods. That is not education, but a rather blatant and ham fisted method of convincing the women to do something they ordinarily would not do. Lewin was not concerned with whether the women learned anything; he was concerned with changing their behavior. What Bloom is implicitly advocating with that example is not education, it is behavior modification.

Bloom is not only concerned with changing behavior for the short term. He and his

colleagues are concerned with an internalized change in values that will last for years. He states: “It seems clear that the retention of affective changes produced in schools is a function of how early in the individuals’s career the objective was developed, how deep-seated the learning has been, and the environmental forces to which the individual is subjected over the school and post-school years.” *Id.* at 88.

A person’s environment would have only a very slight and indirect impact on whether someone retains what they have learned in school. So why is Bloom concerned about the environment during the school and postschool years? Because he is not addressing the issue of learning and understanding information; he is concerned with the student internalizing changes in values that will cause a resultant change in the student’s behavior. He gives us a hint of that fact when he points out that “Newcomb (1943) suggests that **social liberalism** is likely to be retained after college only when the environment reinforces these attitudes.” *Id.* (emphasis added). Bloom describes “social liberalism” as a “cognitive objective.” *Id.* Apparently, changing a person into a social liberal is an educational objective within Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Bloom indicates that the higher objectives in the affective domain, if achieved, may cause a personality change in the student. He asks: “Is it possible for an individual to develop some the more highly internalized behaviors without changing the entire personality of the person?” *Id.* at 89. After asking the question, Bloom then proceeds to answer it by explaining that “Allport (1954) emphasizes the basic organization that must take place in the individual if really new values and character traits are to be formed.” *Id.* Bloom then gets to the heart of the issue:

Is it possible for individuals to take on the new without rejecting the old? Is it possible that programs of the Higher Horizons type (Mayer, 1961) help individuals become motivated toward higher education and the new values involved in academic work without at the same time bringing about great conflict and tension between the individual and his home?

Id.

Bloom assumes that there will be conflict between the traditional home values and higher education objectives. He asks whether one can accept the higher educational values without rejecting the traditional values of the home? He goes on to cite to Allport and states that “Allport (1954) emphasizes the basic reorganization that must take place in the individual if really new values and character traits are to be formed.” *Id.* at 89. Bloom states that the basic question is what changes in values are desirable and appropriate. “Here is where the philosopher, as well as the behavior scientist, must find ways of determining what changes are desirable and perhaps what changes are necessary.” *Id.* at 90. This reveals that Bloom’s Taxonomy is a tool in a system of behavior modification, the goal of which is to change the values of students. Although the changed values are not specified, Bloom hints that they will be bring conflict between the new values and the traditional values that the student brings from home.

Bloom recognizes that the beliefs and values a person holds about God, home, and family are traditionally viewed as private matters that should not be targets for change in the conventional educational setting. Bloom acknowledges that efforts to change a person's values would be considered indoctrination and not education. He explains the distinction between indoctrination and traditional education. He states that traditional education is based upon exploration of many aspects of the world in an environment of individual decision and choice. He states that "[i]ndoctrination, on the other hand, is viewed as reducing the possibilities of free choice and decision. It is regarded as an attempt to persuade and coerce the individual to accept a particular viewpoint or belief, to act in a particular manner, and to profess a particular value and way of life." *Id.* at 18.

Indoctrination

He admits that the taxonomy, particularly the affective domain, is a tool to categorize and measure indoctrination. *Id.* at 18. He states that "education has come to mean an almost solely cognitive examination of issues. Indoctrination has come to mean the teaching of affective as well as cognitive behavior." *Id.* Bloom admits that he views the teaching that creates the behaviors listed in the affective and cognitive domains of his taxonomy is actually a process of indoctrination, which coerces a person to accepting a new and different set of values, which are then manifested in changed behavior toward a given stimulus. He believes that "a reopening of the entire question would help us to see more clearly the boundaries between education and indoctrination, and the simple dichotomy expressed above between cognitive and affective behavior would no longer seem as real as the rather glib separation of the two suggests." *Id.* It seems that Bloom is concealing indoctrination under the guise of educational objectives. In fact, Bloom states that "[a] major long-range outcome of education is the development of a consistent philosophy of life by the student." *Id.* at 171.

Bloom states that at the valuing stage, the concern is with the "internalization of a set of specified, ideal, values." *Id.* 139. Bloom states that "the teacher will have great difficulty in achieving his goals at this deeply internalized level" if the values sought to be inculcated deviate from the "norm the learner has adopted (be it peer-group, parents, or community)." *Id.* The objectives classified under the "valuing" category are referred by Bloom as the "prime stuff from which the conscience of the individual is developed into active control of behavior." *Id.* at 140. Again, we see that which Bloom is ultimately concerned is indoctrination of new values as a way of changing behavior in conformance with the new internalized values. "Thus the individual acts consistently in accordance with the values he has internalized." *Id.* at 165. Bloom gives an example of how a teacher might change a student's values on the death penalty. He states that the teacher could assess the basis of the student's opinion. The teacher may be able to establish that the student's opinion is based upon hearsay or emotion and then the teacher can present information that is contrary to the student's beliefs with the hope that it could change his sentiment on the issue. *Id.* at 170.

Transformational Marxism

Most teachers today are trained on Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy. One of Bloom's foundational beliefs behind his taxonomy is that "we recognize the point of view that truth and knowledge are only relative and that there are no hard and fast truths which exist for all time and all places." Detective Phil Worts, *Communist (Community) Oriented Policing*, NewsWithViews.com, at http://www.newswithviews.com/community_policing/community_policing.htm (June 1, 2001).

Another of Bloom's principles is: "The purpose of education and the schools is to change the thoughts, feelings and actions of students." Berit Kjos, *Reinventing the World, The Mind-Changing Dialectic Process*, at <http://www.crossroad.to/articles2/Reinventing2.htm> (quoting Benjamin Bloom, *All Our Children Learning* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1981), at 180). What does Bloom mean by that? He means: "[A] large part of what we call 'good teaching' is the teacher's ability to attain affective objectives through challenging the students' fixed beliefs and getting them to discuss issues." Kjos, *supra* (quoting David Krathwohl, Benjamin Bloom and Bertram Massia, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook II: Affective Domain*, at 55 (McKay Publishers, 1956)).

What are the fixed beliefs that Bloom seeks to change? One reviewer of Bloom's book, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook 1: Cognitive Domain*, explains that Bloom's taxonomy is a method for challenging and changing the values and beliefs that a person is imbued with by his parents, family, and religion.

Benjamin Bloom is a second generation transformational Marxist, dedicated to the destruction of the founding ideals that have made America great. Namely, accountability to a higher authority, the existence of revealed and absolute truth, and that man's heart is desperately wicked, in need of internal or external restraints. Bloom and his buddies have simply cleaned up Theodore Adorno's work *The Authoritarian Personality*, for public consumption in teachers colleges. Bloom's work is based on false assumptions of human nature; there is no God, no absolute truth, and man is basically good, evolving, and perfectible. Read pg. 32 where Bloom claims there is no lasting truths for all time and all places. Compare Bloom's statement with Engel's claim in Ludwig Feuerbach, "nothing is final, absolute, or sacred." In Bloom's affective domain book he blatantly acknowledges Adorno and another Frankfurt School Marxist as forming his "world view". The progressive restructuring educational movement has destroyed what was great in America. Read it and weep. Protect your children.

Customer Reviews, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook 1: Cognitive Domain*, at <http://www.amazon.com/review/product/0582280109?sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending> (last visited February 16, 2008).

Dr. Dennis Cuddy concluded that Bloom's philosophy of moral relativism codified in Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives has made teaching "less and less about teaching students academic knowledge, and more and more about changing their values." Dennis L. Cuddy, Ph.D., *Mental Health, Education and Social Control, Part 4*, NewsWithViews.com, at <http://www.newswithviews.com/Cuddy/dennis18.htm> (October 7, 2004).

Mastery Learning

Bloom further developed his taxonomy into what he called "Mastery Learning," which later became known as "Outcome Based Education." Professor Benjamin Bloom has been called the Father of Outcome-based Education. Benjamin Bloom was not interested in educating a person so they attained knowledge, but rather with changing the way a person thinks, feels, and behaves. He was a behaviorist, cut from the same mold as Skinner and Pavlov.

Bloom's Mastery Learning was implemented in a Chicago area school district and it was a resounding failure. As explained in an article in the Eagle Forum:

The best test of an OBE-type system was Chicago's experiment in the 1970s with Professor Benjamin Bloom's Mastery Learning (ML), which is essentially the same as OBE. ML was a colossal failure and was abandoned in disgrace in 1982. The test scores proved to be appallingly low and the illiteracy rate became a national scandal. Bloom, the father of ML, is well known for his statement that "the purpose of education is to change the thoughts, feelings and actions of students."

What's Wrong With Outcome-Based Education?, Eagle Forum, VOL. 26, NO. 10, at <http://www.eagleforum.org/psr/1993/may93/psrmay93.html> (May 1993) (quoting *All Our Children Learning*, at 180).

Outcome Based Education

Why was the title of Bloom's Pavlovian/Skinnerian "Mastery Learning" changed to Outcome Based Education (OBE)? "Due to the Chicago disaster in 1981 when one half of the Chicago inner city school children dropped out due to Benjamin Bloom's ten year mastery learning experiment on minorities, Spady et al changed the label to OBE [Outcome Based Education]." Charlotte Iserbyt, *No American Left Alone!*, NewsWithViews.com, at <http://www.newswithviews.com/iserbyt/iserbyt.htm> (April 12, 2002).

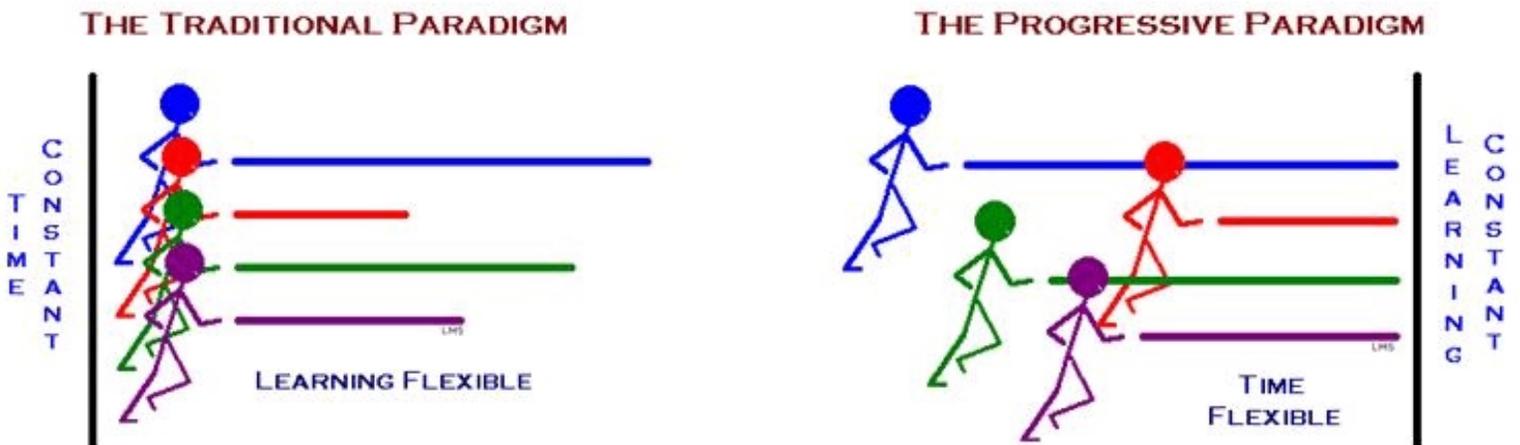
What is the underlying method of OBE?

OBE is based on the unrealistic notion that every child in a group can learn to the designated level and must demonstrate mastery of a specific outcome before the group can move on. The faster learners are not allowed to progress, but are given busy work called "horizontal enrichment" or told to do "peer tutoring" to help the slower learners, who are recycled through the material until the pre-determined behavior is exhibited.

What's Wrong With Outcome-Based Education?, Eagle Forum, VOL. 26, NO. 10, at <http://www.eagleforum.org/psr/1993/may93/psrmay93.html> (May 1993).

Under Bloom's system, the entire class would have to wait for the least able student to learn a lesson before they could move on to the next lesson. Under the traditional instruction, time was static and learning was variable. Under Bloom's system learning became static and time was variable. Bloom assumed that time was unlimited.

Bloom's philosophy had the effect of dumbing down curriculums so that little advanced instruction was imparted to the students. If one were to apply Bloom's Mastery Learning to basketball, the basket would have to be lowered so that all could score equally.



Under the traditional teaching paradigm, education is the acquisition of knowledge. The student is challenged to use the scope of that knowledge to formulate a reasoned conclusion as an individual. Traditional instruction cultivates and disciplines the mind.

Outcome-based education calls for a shift in that model or paradigm. The model is shifted from content to process. The student under the OBE model is called upon to demonstrate

what he knows and can do against pre-established instructional objectives. Instead of core knowledge being the focal point of education, the focal point becomes some conduct that manifests an instructional objective.

If the curriculum and instruction are not moving the student to mastery of the exit outcomes as measured by assessment, then the instruction is changed. This process is repeated until the instruction aligns with the exit outcomes and produce in the student the desired conduct. Bloom stated: “**What we are classifying is the intended behavior of students** - the ways in which individuals are to act, think, or feel as the result of participating in some unit of instruction.” Education Reform, *at* http://www.learn-usa.com/education_transformation/~education.htm (quoting Bloom, Benjamin, editor; *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives; Book 1: Cognitive Domain*; New York: Longman (1956)). Lynn Stutter explains:

There is a vast difference between how traditionalists and progressives view the brain. Traditionalists view the brain as an inexhaustible sponge that can soak up an infinite amount of knowledge and information – factual and nonfactual. Traditionalists believe that the capacity and capability of the brain is infinite, given mental discipline and the abilities that spring therefrom. Traditionalists believe that properly disciplined, the brain provides the path to intellectual capability. Traditionalists also believe that the brain is unique to the individual.

The progressive, on the other hand, treats the mind like a computer – take information in, process it, and output it – all on command. They deny the ability of the brain to function beyond input, process, and output mode as they believe the individual brain is not more than part of the Universal Mind, the collective mind. In other words, someone else should do your "thinking" for you, and you should simply be conditioned to a perceived environment so you act in all the "proper" ways. . . . This is all based on Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives and other taxonomies . . . This is one of the reasons that those who have researched education reform say that the purpose is to produce robots.

Lynn M Stuter, *Teaching Children to Think*, Learn USA, *at* http://www.learn-usa.com/education_transformation/er014.htm (last visited on February 20, 2008).

Bloom’s Taxonomy is the foundational principle underlying OBE. One thing that becomes immediately apparent when applying Bloom’s Taxonomy is that the practitioner of his system of learning dissuade teachers from having an objective that involves knowledge or

understanding. For example, we find the following instructions on the St. Edward's University website that explains the use of Bloom's Taxonomy in framing instructional objectives:

Since the first two levels in the taxonomy reflect literal-level thinking, **questions classified as Knowledge or Comprehension should be avoided.** (emphasis added)

Bloom's Taxonomy, Developing Higher-Order Questions, St. Edward's University, at <http://www.stedwards.edu/cte/content/category/13/27/51> (last visited on February 19, 2008) (citing Eanes, Dr. Robin, *Content Area Literacy: Teaching for Today and Tomorrow*, Chapter 5, 1997, Wadsworth Publishing, ISBN# 0-8273-5954-3).

Robert F. Mager

Robert F. Mager has written an authoritative book on writing instructional objectives that builds upon Bloom's Taxonomy. Mager considers an objective that describes knowledge or understanding as being "fuzzy," and therefore such an objective is to be avoided. Mager explains: "Until you say what you mean by 'knowing' in terms of what students ought to be able to DO, you have said very little at all." Robert F. Mager, *Preparing Instructional Objectives*, 2nd Ed., at 21 (emphasis in original). Mager lists examples of preferred objectives, all of which involve action. For example he lists the following suggested objectives: to write, to recite, to identify, to sort, to solve, to construct, to build, to compare, to contrast, to smile." *Id.* at 20.

Why would Mager limit instructional objectives to actions? Because he is an experimental psychologist. As is Bloom, Mager is a behaviorist, who sees man only in terms of what he manifests behaviorally. He sees the world in terms of response-stimuli. In his view, a person is a manifestation of conditioned behavior. It is not important what someone knows or understands, but only what he does. There is no compromise with Mager. Mager is emphatic that "[a]n objective always says what a learner is expected to be able to *do*." *Id.* at 21 (emphasis in original). According to Mager, all instructional objectives require the learner to do something.

An objective will communicate your intent to the degree you describe what the learner will be DOING when demonstrating achievement of the objective, the important conditions of the doing, and the criterion by which the achievement will be judged.

Id. at 87 (emphasis in original).

Mager's book is viewed by many as an authoritative text on instructional objectives. In fact, his book is in such demand among teachers that in one resource library used by instructors, I found six copies of his book. However, Mager cites only three authorities in his entire book, and he is the author of every one of those authorities. It is notable that Mager is described on the back cover of his book as an "experimental psychologist," yet he does not cite a single

experiment in his book to support his theory on the effectiveness of behavioral objectives. Amazingly, Mager's book does not even contain a bibliography! Apparently, Mager is his own authority for his theories on instructional objectives.

Eschewing Knowledge

Samuel Johnson, who is the most quoted English writer outside of Shakespeare, stated that "integrity without knowledge is weak and useless." Johnson's statement is based upon an ancient precept that "wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." Proverbs 4:7. Mager and Bloom are adverse to that precept.

Destruction is the end of those who lack knowledge. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Hosea 4:6. Why were his people destroyed? James Madison explains that "knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives." By eschewing knowledge and understanding as instructional objectives, Mager's and Bloom's behaviorist system of objectives create a dumbed-down, weak, and destructive curriculum.

Under Bloom's OBE, however, the objective is no longer knowledge, but rather the objective becomes an exhibited behavior. Because in many courses the only exhibited behavior that can be measured would be answering questions on a quiz or exam, the instructional objectives are reduced to the goal of getting correct answers to exam and quiz questions.

A depth of knowledge is no longer required. The instructor changes the teaching from teaching the substance of the material to teaching the students how to obtain the correct answer on the test. The course becomes a course on honing the test taking skills of the students. The test should not be the objective, but should simply be a way to measure understanding. Understanding should be the objective.

Mager suggested objectives list behaviors that are to be measured. The fact that is lost is that when a behavior becomes the objective, the student only needs to learn that which is sufficient to exhibit the listed behavior. Now the objective goes from acquiring understanding to displaying some change in behavior. Under the traditional educational system the student acquired understanding and then he was tested to determine if he has the requisite understanding. Under the Bloom's Taxonomy the cart is being put before the horse. Rather than the student being educated so that he can be competent in a variety of circumstances he is trained to respond with a correct answer to a given question.

In Bloom's and Mager's world, a student does not need to know why something is so, because that is irrelevant to the need to change behavior. Applying that philosophy to courses requiring knowledge, according to Bloom and Mager, it is only necessary for the student to know how to answer a question correctly. Such a system of instruction leaves the student unable to reason through the innumerable circumstances where his depth of knowledge and good

judgement are needed.

Fuzzy Math

An example of the OBE system at work in our school systems today is the so-called fuzzy math that has found its way into the school systems today. The students are able to pass tests that are the instructional objectives of the course, but in the process they do not learn the necessary math skills to perform adequately at the next level in math because they do not have an adequate “understanding” of math.

One example of the fuzzy math is a program called Everyday Math (EDM). The fifth grade workbook allows the students to use calculators to solve almost two-thirds of the problems. What is the effect of that? The child can perform his lessons on the examinations and meet the instructional objectives, but he has no actual “understanding” of basic math or algorithms. That is because passing the examination is the instructional objective of the course, not attaining an understanding of math concepts. The course it taught to get the child to pass the exam, however, the child is left completely ignorant about the math concepts that underlay standard algorithms, because the standard algorithms are passed over as being inefficient. The objective is not “understanding” math, but efficiency in math. A calculator is more efficient. Andrew Isaacs, Algorithms in Everyday Math, http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/educators/Algorithms_final.pdf.

The preferred Everyday Math methods (calculators) used for solving problems are crutches. The crutches are needed because the children are not taught the standard algorithms. The lack of skill in standard algorithms ends up crippling their ability to solve math problems without their crutches. The EDM crutches become cumbersome and hold children back when they are later exposed to more advanced math problems. Their crippled minds are unable to sprint ahead in math, because they trip all over the crutches imposed upon them by EDM.

David Klein, Professor of Mathematics at California State University made the following findings regarding Everyday Math: “The high degree of integration of calculators in the curriculum--even as devices to teach Kindergarten children how to count--defies common sense and could cause significant educational harm to children.” David Kein, EVALUATION OF SUBMITTED CHANGES FOR EVERYDAY MATHEMATICS, July 5, 1999, <http://mathematicallycorrect.com/everyday.htm> (last visited on January 20, 2008).

The EDM advocates point to studies based upon achieved outcomes that show that EDM is a good math program. The studies may show that very thing. The problem is that EDM teaches to the instructional objectives, which require the student to pass an exam. Once the objective (passing the exam) is framed, the course is designed to attain passage of the exam. Mager states clearly in his book that “[a]n objective describes an intended *result* of instruction, rather than the *process* of instruction itself.” Mager at 5 (emphasis in original). Mager’s system is not concerned with what is taught, as long as the objectives are met. His system “describes the intended results rather than the means or achieving those results.” Id. at 7.

The instructional objective should be to attain understanding of math, with the exam only being a measure of that understanding. In actuality, under EDM the students have not really learned math, because understanding is not the stated objective, indeed it cannot be, as according to Mager, such a “fuzzy” objective is simply not allowed. The objective of EDM is some measured behavior - passing an exam. The objective should instead be an understanding of math, with the test a measure of that understanding. When the test is no longer the objective, but is framed to measure what is learned, we see a very different result regarding the effectiveness of the instruction.

Below is the result of changing from EDM and Mathland, which were both outcome based math programs, and Saxon Math, a traditional basal math program, in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. When the test is not the objective, but is rather designed to measure the knowledge attained by the students, the Saxon Math program is shown to be clearly superior to the outcome based programs.

All 14 improve with Saxon Math

