

Step 5: Developing Program Goals**DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF GOALS**

Goals are open-ended, long-range general statements that provide direction for the entire arts education program, from kindergarten (or preschool) through Grade 12. Goals are worded in terms of what the student should learn, such as “The student shall understand the music of various cultures and historical periods.” Goals should describe learning that threads through all levels of the program, K-12; i.e., most if not all of the goals should be taught or reinforced to some extent in every grade level or course, and they may be addressed in virtually every unit. Because goals span the entire schooling process, they often are referred to as “overarching statements.”

Goals help teachers, administrators and others grasp and retain a concise overview of the K-12 program. It is important, therefore, that there be a reasonable number of goals, and that it be possible to remember them. The number of goals for a program typically ranges from 4 to 10, with a total of between 5 and 8 being most common. They are usually presented in the form of a numbered list. Goals should be written in language that is easily understood by arts educators and, to the extent possible, by students and other members of the community.

QUALITIES OF WELL-WRITTEN SETS OF GOALS

The following are the qualities of well-written sets of local goals:

Accuracy

- Each goal is open-ended, providing for continued growth, K-12, and potentially on into adult life.

Linkage

- Each arts goal grows logically out of the arts philosophy, and the linkage is clear.
- Each arts goal links clearly to a district goal.

Breadth and Depth

- The goals include each of the outcomes of arts education suggested by the philosophy.
- The goals are comprehensive enough to provide the basis for a quality K-12 arts program.
- The goals provide for lifetime involvement with the arts.

Effectiveness

- Each goal is realistic.
- There is a manageable number of goals (usually between 4 and 10).
- Each goal lends itself to developing one or more objectives.

COMMON OR DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC GOALS?

Curriculum development teams have the option of creating either a single set of goals for all of the arts or a separate set of goals for each art form. Either approach can be successful.

Goals emanate logically from a well-written philosophy. Districts that choose to write a single philosophy of arts education for all of the arts may, therefore, also choose to develop a single set of goals. Such districts might base their goals on the arts program goals presented in Chapter 2 of this guide. An example of a single set of goals, developed by the Middletown, Conn., visual arts faculty, can be found in Appendix D.

Districts that choose to develop a separate philosophy for each arts discipline also may elect to develop separate goals for each arts discipline. Such districts might base those goals on Connecticut’s content standards, which are presented in Chapter 2.

FORM FOR EVALUATING SETS OF DRAFT GOALS

The following work sheet can serve as a checklist and comment form for evaluating sets of draft goals.

A. Accuracy

1. Each goal is open-ended, providing for continued growth, K-12, and potentially on into adult life.
Comments:

B. Linkage

1. Each arts goal grows logically out of the arts philosophy, and the linkage is clear.
Comments:

2. Each arts goal links clearly to a district goal.
Comments:

C. Breadth And Depth

1. The goals include each of the outcomes of arts education suggested by the philosophy.
Comments:

2. The goals are comprehensive enough to provide the basis for a quality K-12 arts program.
Comments:

3. The goals provide for lifetime involvement with the arts.
Comments:

D. Effectiveness

1. Each goal is realistic.
Comments:

2. There is a manageable number of goals (usually between 4 and 10).
Comments:

3. Each goal lends itself to developing one or more objectives.
Comments:

Step 6: Developing Objectives, Assessment And Content

DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF OBJECTIVES

Curriculum objectives are clear, measurable statements of what students should be able to do by the end of a particular grade level or course. Curriculum guides should not provide daily instructional objectives, such as might be found in lesson plans; instead, they should describe the end points – sometimes called “culminating objectives” – toward which those lessons should help students progress. Culminating objectives describe what a student should be able to do by the end of a grade level or course.

Objectives are stated in terms of observable, measurable student behaviors. Although general verbs, such as *understand* and *experience*, often are used in program goals, vague words are inappropriate when writing objectives. Instead, objectives describe student behaviors using clearer verbs, such as *describe*, *create*, *perform* and *analyze*. An objective often specifies the assessment dimensions that will be looked at or listened to when determining whether students have been successful in achieving that objective.

Each objective must address one or more program goals. For example, consider a dance program that includes among its goals the following two:

- *Students should understand dance from a variety of cultures and historical periods.*
- *Students should be able to describe dance works and performances using appropriate vocabulary.*

A corresponding objective for a grade level might read:

- *Students will compare the classical dance styles of two specific cultures, using dance vocabulary to describe the qualities that are common and different.*

This objective specifies a clearly observable task which addresses both goals. The objective also suggests that the criteria for assessment will include students’ abilities to describe and compare performances and to use

dance vocabulary appropriately.

Goals can be thought of metaphorically as ladders leading from rudimentary levels of achievement to adult involvement in the arts and beyond. The objectives for each grade level or course are clearly defined rungs or steps on that ladder which students climb with the assistance of their teachers. Effective instruction empowers students to continue their climb independently after graduation.

QUALITIES OF WELL-WRITTEN OBJECTIVES

The following are qualities of well-written objectives.

Accuracy

- Each objective describes observable student behaviors in assessable terms (task, condition, criteria) or is paired with an assessment strategy which provides the other components.
- Objectives are clarified, when appropriate, by illustrative student work.

Linkage

- Each objective links with a program goal and the overall philosophy.
- Each objective provides, or is coupled with, an assessment strategy.
- Objectives evolve sequentially (articulate) from one grade level or course to the next.

Breadth And Depth

- There is at least one objective for each program goal.
- Whenever possible, objectives describe higher-order or culminating student behaviors.

Effectiveness

- Each objective is attainable by most students in that grade or course.
- Each objective is realistic in terms of sufficient resources (time, equipment, etc.).
- There is a manageable number of objectives.

FORM FOR EVALUATING OBJECTIVES

The following work sheet can serve as a checklist and comment form for evaluating objectives.

A. Accuracy

1. Each objective describes observable student behaviors in assessable terms (task, condition, criteria) or is paired with an assessment strategy which provides the other components.

Comments:

2. Objectives are clarified, when appropriate, by illustrative student work.

Comments:

B. Linkage

1. Each objective links with a program goal and the overall philosophy.

Comments:

2. Each objective provides, or is coupled with, an assessment strategy.

Comments:

3. Objectives evolve sequentially (articulate) from one grade level or course to the next.

Comments:

C. Breadth And Depth

1. There is at least one objective for each program goal.

Comments:

2. Whenever possible, objectives describe higher-order or culminating student behaviors.

Comments:

D. Effectiveness

1. Each objective is attainable by most students in that grade or course.

Comments:

2. Each objective is realistic in terms of sufficient resources (time, equipment, etc.).

Comments:

3. There is a manageable number of objectives.

Comments:

SUGGESTED SEQUENCE FOR DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES

Start With Grade 8 Objectives

Beginning by developing objectives for Grade 8 is effective in most arts programs because eighth grade typically is the end of the required portion of the curriculum, i.e., the end of the general or core sequence received by all students in each arts area. Clearly defining what students should know and be able to do by the time they complete the required program in each arts discipline enables curriculum teams to “anchor” that program, by focusing the direction of the objectives they develop for Grades K-8 and by providing a reliable base on which to develop objectives for electives in Grades 9-12. The fact that state and national standards have been developed for Grade 8 should be very helpful to districts that adopt this approach.

Whenever possible, the entire department should be involved in reaching consensus on Grade 8 objectives. One common mistake in arts curriculum development is to allow each grade level (elementary, middle and high school) or each strand (such as general, vocal and instrumental music) to meet separately to develop objectives for their areas, then try to patch the results together. Curriculum produced through such a process inevitably ends up resembling the proverbial “horse designed by committee,” lacking coherence and sequence. All members of an arts department should take ownership of their Grade 8 objectives and, preferably, the Grades 4 and 12 objectives as well. Sharing authorship of the curriculum increases the likelihood that teachers also will share a sense of ownership.

One effective strategy for focusing Grade 8 objectives, the “Big Three,” is discussed on page 183. This strategy is a variation of the “backward design” approach advocated by several contemporary curriculum theorists.

Next, Write Grade 4 Objectives

Once objectives have been developed for Grade 8, it is helpful next to “split the difference” between the beginning of the program in kindergarten and the objectives for Grade 8 by developing objectives for Grade 4. State and national standards also exist for Grade 4 and, therefore, provide a useful reference when developing objectives for this grade level.

Again, it is desirable to involve the entire department in reaching consensus on the Grade 4 objectives. Teachers of elementary school have an obvious interest in the objectives at this level, and teachers of middle school should be interested in determining the types and level of learning for students who will be feeding into their courses.

Some districts may choose to deviate from this approach due to factors such as structure of their buildings. For example, if they have a middle school which houses Grades 6-8, they may choose to develop Grade 5 objectives next, because they may want to establish culminating objectives for their elementary program.

Then Write Objectives For The Remainder Of The Curriculum

Once the Grades 8 and 4 objectives have been developed as “anchor points,” it is much easier to develop the remainder of the curriculum. It is still desirable to involve the entire department in reviewing and revising drafts, but once the Grades 4 and 8 objectives have been clarified it is possible to divide into subcommittees to draft the rest of the guide, using full-group meetings to discuss the drafts and provide input.

There are other effective approaches to continuing the curriculum development process after the Grades 4 and 8 objectives and assessments have been developed.

- The classic approach is to develop grade-to-grade objectives for all of the other grades (K-3, 5-7 and 9-12) and course objectives for elective sequences, e.g., band.
- In a unit-based approach, the approach visual arts programs often use, curriculum teams first develop a number of units designed to lead toward mastery of the Grade 4 and 8 objectives, then assign them to appropriate grade levels [see North Haven and Farmington art curriculum excerpts in Appendices G-2 and G-3, respectively]. In this approach, once the “anchor” Grades 4 and 8 objectives are established, other grade-to-grade objectives are determined by the grade level to which particular units are assigned.
- Another approach combines the above. The curriculum team first develops objectives for each grade and course, then designs at least one common unit either for each grade level (see Middletown art unit in Appendix G-1), or for selected key grade levels, such as Grades 4 and 8. This approach provides an opportunity for comprehensive (summary) assessment either at each grade level, or at key grade levels, by using student work from the common units.

Regardless of the approach used, it is essential that the curriculum clearly define what should be learned in each grade or course.

HOW TO DEVELOP AND ORGANIZE OBJECTIVES**Building Objectives And Assessment Based On Standards**

The state and national arts standards are not designed to serve as curriculum objectives. They do, however, provide the basis for writing objectives. Local curriculum teams should use the standards as a reference, but then must make the standards more specific and select the content that students should master.

By design, Connecticut's arts standards do not dictate the content of instruction. That is, they do not specify certain artists or art works (repertoire or literature) that must be studied or performed. (Districts seeking guidelines for the selection of content can refer the section titled Choosing Content or Literature on page 185.) The standards also allow latitude in the media students should study. The visual arts standards, for example, do not suggest that all students study oil painting or linoleum block printing. Nor do the standards require a particular pedagogy. In each discipline the standards can be taught using a variety of instructional methods. Such decisions have deliberately been left to local curriculum teams, based on the needs and priorities of their schools and their own expertise.

The Connecticut arts standards also are written to allow considerable flexibility in the ways that students can demonstrate mastery of content. For example, standards in each of the disciplines call for students to evaluate works of art, but teachers might assess their students' mastery of these standards by asking them to write or speak critiques of others' work, or to use scoring scales to evaluate their own work. Local districts are free to develop appropriate criteria for assessing their students' mastery of the curriculum.

Districts that use the standards as the basis for their curriculum objectives, therefore, will make local decisions about content, teaching methodology, the means of assessment and the criteria for evaluating student work.

Establishing Levels Of Expectation

Objectives should be realistic, based on the level of the students and the resources that will be provided. A culminating course or grade objective must be attainable by a significant majority of the students. The level of achievement called for in the objectives must be attainable, given the resources – such as instructional time, facilities and equipment – provided by the district.

One challenge to arts curriculum writers is the impossibility of describing many artistic behaviors adequately in words. Some artistic understandings, such as the ability to analyze the historical context or form of artistic works, can be expressed verbally. However, the

arts exist precisely because the world cannot be fully captured in words; the corollary is that it is impossible for words to adequately capture the arts.

A key component of setting and clarifying common standards or levels of expectation in the arts is, therefore, to collect samples of student work – including created art work and performances, as well as more traditional products such as written papers – which illustrate those levels of expectation. The collection, selection and discussion of student work is one of the most important steps in the curriculum development, standard-setting and professional development processes.

The most obvious sources of student work are assessment tasks. For example, if a dance teacher had her or his students complete a unit which required them to write about a particular dance style they had viewed in a video, and create a dance in that same style, then the students' written work and videotape of their dances could be collected. This process is discussed further in the section titled Assessing Student Learning on page 184 and in the assessment article in Chapter 5: Issues. One example of how an assessment task can be presented in a complete curriculum guide may be found in a unit from the Middletown Visual Arts Guide [see Appendix G-1]. Individual units, complete with scored student work, may be found at the website www.CTcurriculum.org

Providing Flexibility

Objectives should not prescribe everything a teacher does in the classroom but, rather, should delineate the core of expected learning while still providing individual teachers with the flexibility to pursue special interests or opportunities that emerge as their classes progress. For example, the visual arts curriculum may not call for students to work in a particular medium, but if that medium is their teacher's specialty, students might derive special benefit from such work. Similarly, if there is a student (or parent of a student) in the class who possesses a special talent or cultural background, the wise teacher uses it as a springboard for sharing and learning in the entire class or grade. One useful rule of thumb is that curriculum objectives should dictate about 70-80 percent of what occurs in classrooms. In districts that provide inadequate instructional time (see recommendations on pages 147 and 148), however, a larger percentage of that time will necessarily be required to achieve curriculum objectives.

To the extent possible, objectives should be designed to establish expectations for student learning while still allowing teachers the latitude to use a variety of instructional techniques and methodologies. It is important for teachers to be able to bring their individual skills and knowledge bases to their classrooms. There should be general agreement, however, on key aspects of methodology that must be consistently sequenced through