

## The Perception of Graphics; Goal Analysis

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## The Perception of Graphics; Goal Analysis

### Abstract

Reviews of "The Perception of Graphics," in *Editor & Publisher ; Goal Analysis*, by Robert F. Mager.

# Reviews

**“The Perception of Graphics,” in *Editor & Publisher*, Vol. 117, No. 44, November 3, 1984, p. 14.**

Since the 1970s newspaper editors have followed a growing trend to shed the all-gray look on their pages and use more graphics. However, the trend now is to have these graphics packed full of information, according to an article in *Editor & Publisher*. Part of this trend is due to the success of *USA Today*, with its colorful charts and illustrations. Part of it is due to the positive response from readers to these changes as they crept into other newspapers.

Newspapers can compress complicated information into a chart and make it easier for readers to understand. For example, the *New York Times* used a chart to illustrate a chronology of U.S.-Soviet relations after World War II at the time Konstantin Chernenko was named the Russian leader. *Times* assistant managing editor Louis Silverstein said these charts can show facts in a way that “words or pictures could not do alone.”

The increase in regular science and technology sections in newspapers has further encouraged the use of newspaper graphics. They will doubtless further be boosted by increasing computerization of design departments at newspapers.

This trend is something extension information staffs should capitalize on. Few others are capable of sending to newspapers the volume of information that extension staffs are. We need to compress some of this information into well-designed graphs and charts. This extra effort might enhance our chances of getting our copy used.

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**Goal Analysis.** Robert F. Mager. Belmont, CA: Pitman Learning, Inc., 1984, 138 pages, ISBN-0-8824-4339-2. \$9.95

Because extension directors and college deans face increasing demands for accountability, we may be asked to measure the performance of our communications programs. Mager's book, *Goal Analysis*, provides ideas in a step-by-step format for developing a means to determine whether a goal has been reached. He presents ideas in a light, easy-to-read format that makes his programmed-learning-type book short and direct.

Mager provides examples for each point and gives the reader opportunities to practice his suggestions. Running summaries build on each point so the key ideas are constantly reinforced. He talks "to," not "down to," the reader, making the process of goal analysis more palatable.

Mager defines goal analysis as the final outcome or what the instructor, writer, or communicator intends the audience to be able to do. The process of goal analysis separates performance from abstraction. Mager cautions communicators and instructors to avoid writing desired outcomes (goal) "fuzzily." Goals involve purposeful activity that reinforces the skill to produce the desired outcome of learning.

In *Goal Analysis*, Mager follows his own advice. He outlines five easy steps as the process to follow for formulating a goal and discusses each in a chapter. *Step One:* describe the outcome not as a process but as a positive end. *Step Two:* write things that represent the meaning of the goal. Questions involved are: Through what evidence will the instructor know the goal has been achieved? What performance criteria will be used to judge achievement? At what level is performance to be accomplished?

*Step Three:* remove duplicate statements, checking the list for fuzziness and abstractions. *Step Four:* write a complete sentence to describe each of the items in step three. These sentences should tell *who* does it, *what* they do, and *how well* they do it. The end result is a blueprint for action.

*Step Five:* test the sentences for completeness by asking, “If someone achieved or demonstrated each of these performances, would I be willing to say he or she has achieved the goal?” If the answer is yes, then the goal analysis is complete.

The final chapters provide complete examples of training activities under different conditions. Variations include task analysis flow charts of the process. A final summary is a unique open-ended dialogue. Mager poses a list of possible questions on goal analysis. The reader is to supply the answers based on the preceding text. After the reader goes through the questions, Mager provides the answers.

The book’s table of contents makes it easy to skim for specific points. Its light, humorous style make it an easy two hours’ reading. For more information on program planning, look at the entire Mager library. Topics include preparing instructional objectives, performance appraisal, and measuring results.

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