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A Study of Effective Evaluation of Teaching Performance

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A STUDY OF EFFECTIVE EVALUATION OF
TEACHING PERFORMANCE

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington College of Education

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Clyde Edwin Henry
July 1961

THIS PAPER IS APPROVED AS MEETING
THE PLAN 2 REQUIREMENT FOR THE
COMPLETION OF A RESEARCH PAPER.

Ernest L. Muzzall
FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Teachers have been compared, discussed, contrasted, and evaluated since the beginning of education. This evaluation has not been confined to the field of education. It is also true with people in other professional fields as well as people in various skilled crafts, technical fields, and semi-skilled trades such as farmers and laborers.

Most people that fit into the above classifications can determine their success and, consequently, evaluate their services by the amount of work they can do in a day, their final product, the neatness of the job they perform, the number of people that come to them for their services, or the salary they earn in a given period. These types of evaluation have shown that in some fields there are concrete ways of evaluating people's effectiveness.

I. THE PROBLEM OF EVALUATION

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was (1) to define the general areas that help determine teaching performance, (2) to find a way to evaluate these areas as objectively as possible, and (3) to devise a form on which the results can be placed and easily interpreted.

The problem was to study methods of evaluating the teaching staff without endangering their morale, without

criticism of favoritism, and with a final goal of detecting and correcting weaknesses in the teaching profession.

Importance of the study. It is desirable that school districts have a plan for evaluating teaching performance for improvement of instruction, promotions, re-employment, and salary increases.

During the last decade educators have been cognizant of an ever increasing interest in and criticism of public education in the United States. As schools have made increased demands on the public for financial support, it could be expected that those paying the bill would show added interest in how this money is used and whether value received is adequate. Weber says that when we ask for better salaries, we automatically open the hunting season on teachers, and many people are taking pot shots at us because we aren't as proficient as we should be (25:6). It is not hard to understand, then, that the American public feels that educators should have an effective means of evaluating their services.

Many agents are rallying to dishonor education as it now exists in America. Also, the current issues in the world situation are keeping constant pressure on society. Educators have an important role in helping to solve these two complex problems. We must graduate students who have the ability to read critically, think objectively, and plan logically in moving toward a world where "people can live in harmony with

one another" (22:8). Next to the home the school is in the best position to develop future leaders and statesman--if, that is, the schools do have a program of quality education.

Since the educational program is dependent in a large measure upon the staff, "much of our program for educating the youth of America suffers because we are not at all sure of what we expect and require of teachers" (25:6). We need to find a method of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching performance.

Brief history of evaluation. Research indicates that educators and the general public were not satisfied that measurement alone achieved the desired effects of improvement. Consequently, in the 1930's the term "evaluation" was first used by educators. Since then it has been used in many different respects and has had different meanings depending on the person using the term.

In 1940, Reavis defined evaluation as "the process by which we find out how far the objectives of the school program are being realized" (17:5). Five years later Monroe states, "it is maintained in 1945 that there is need for explicit measurement of all aspects of educative growth and as a means of emphasizing this thesis the term 'evaluation' has been introduced" (16:339).

Wrightstone expanded the meaning of the term in 1950, defining evaluation as follows:

The emphasis in evaluation is upon broad personality changes and major objectives of an educational program. These include not only subject matter achievement but also attitudes, interests, ideas, ways of thinking, work habits, and personal and social adaptability (26:403).

One year later Shane and McSwain said:

. . . It is a process of inquiry based upon criteria cooperatively prepared and concerned with the study, interpretation, and guidance of socially desirable changes in the developmental behavior of children (22:5).

A recent definition of evaluation is given by Harris:

Evaluation in education signifies describing something in terms of selected attributes, and judging the degree of acceptability or suitability of that which has been described. The "something" that is to be described and judged may be any aspect of the educational scene, but it is typically (a) a total school program, (b) a curricular procedure, or (c) an individual or group of individuals. The process of evaluating involves three distinct aspects: (a) selecting the attributes that are important for judging the worth of the specimen to be evaluated, (b) developing and applying procedures that will describe those attributes truly and accurately, and (c) synthesizing the evidence yielded by these procedures into a final judgement of worth . . . (11:482).

Types of evaluation. Regardless of whether educators have a formal, informal, or no form of evaluation, teachers will be evaluated. This evaluation may be transmitted to the parent by the student, who partially forms his opinions by the way the teacher conducts the class. If there is no definite method of evaluation in a school district, the superintendent may form his opinions of a teacher's worth by questions directed to the principal. The principal probably would not be able to give valid answers unless he had given serious thought to this problem.

It is interesting to note here the results of a survey conducted by Hicks and Jameson. They used Professor Harold Shane's six appraisal techniques in this survey. The people they questioned included representatives from colleges and universities and school leaders throughout the country. The 80 people the forms were sent to were chosen because of their success in school administration, for outstanding university work, or contributions in the field. Seventy of the 80 completed the form and returned it (12:221-22). The results were as follows:

These six techniques were . . . from most representative of current practice to least representative.

- First --No formal Rating Plan
- Second--Rating Scale or Check List
- Third --Verbal Reports by Principal to Superintendent
- Fourth--Written Reports Following Classroom Visitation
by Administrators
- Fifth --Self-Appraisal by the Teacher
- Sixth --Group Evaluation by Teachers and Principal (12:222).

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Evaluation. In this study "evaluation" refers to the teacher's teaching performance. The three aspects needed to complete this definition are: (a) selecting the areas important for judging the worth of the teacher, (b) developing procedures to determine the level of performance the teacher has attained, and (c) using these procedures to form a judgment of worth.

Teaching performance. Teaching performance as used

in this study means the degree of success the teacher has as evaluated co-operatively by the teacher and administration.

III. METHOD OF CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

A format was selected after investigating several periodicals, books, and pamphlets. One that seemed to represent the opinion of several authors was found in a book published by The University of Chicago Press (17:86-99).

The Educational Index was used for locating the writings of authorities in the field. After listing the many articles and books written on the subject, the Card Catalog was used to locate articles and books in the library. Books and articles from the Sunnyside School District professional library were also used.

The general areas that help determine evaluation of teaching performance were selected because of the importance various authors placed upon these areas. A book compiled by Reavis (17:89-90) and another written by Reeder (19:186-87) were used as two main sources for compiling a list of such areas. Upon finding valid support for these areas, quotations were extracted to validate the areas selected.

Since all the writings on the selected subject were not titled as such, it was necessary to scan the books written on administration, personality, and teacher-pupil relationships.

There is much to be accomplished in the field of

evaluating teaching performance. This feeling was developed by reading and comparing what various writers felt were the important factors determining teaching results.

CHAPTER II

CRITERIA AND METHODS FOR EVALUATION

Teachers do not have a choice between evaluation of performance and no evaluation of performance. The choice they do have is between planned systematic evaluation and general impression or unorganized evaluation. In making this choice the personnel should understand "the nature of evaluation, its philosophy, and its objectives" (23:344). Unorganized evaluative techniques are subject to spot estimates, prejudice, and personality conflicts. A systematic plan of evaluation will help the teacher to be "cognizant of the characteristics of good teachers, and occasionally to take inventory of his own virtues and of his own shortcomings in terms of those desirable characteristics" (18:188).

I. METHODS OF EVALUATING

Most authors who have written in this field feel that if a score card is to be used in the evaluation of teachers in a particular district, it should be devised co-operatively by the teaching staff and the administration. It is necessary that the staff does not confuse measurement with evaluation. "To state it briefly," Shuster writes, "measurement tells 'how much,' while evaluation tells 'how good'" (23:345). The principal's responsibility, then, is to get staff agreement on a definition of evaluation.

Before proper leadership can be shown, the principal must try to answer these questions:

1. What is the nature of evaluation?
2. What is a philosophy of evaluation?
3. What are the objectives of evaluation?

In attempting to answer partially the nature of evaluation, Wrightstone has this to say:

. . . The emphasis in evaluation is upon broad personality changes and major objectives of an education program. These include not only subject matter achievement but also attitudes, interests, ideals, ways of thinking, work habits, and personal and social adaptability (26:403).

Later in this paper, these areas will be expanded with opinions from authorities to substantiate their selection.

In considering the philosophy of evaluation, the answers must be consistent with district policies and concepts in modern education. Most authorities and school districts agree that the ultimate goal in education is the fullest self-realization of each child. The school must see that this goal is achieved in accordance with the American way of life (23:346). Keeping in mind these main points, the school personnel may arrive at a written philosophy of evaluation.

In giving consideration to the objectives of evaluation, the overall objectives of education must be kept in mind. So that a high degree of fairness may be obtained, an effective method must be developed for identifying and

correcting weaknesses in the school program. Also of extreme importance is recognition and identification of teacher strengths. Elsbree and McNally have written, "The chief objective is to help teachers to develop an attitude of self-evaluation, for without the teacher's own disposition to evaluate himself, no self-evaluation is possible" (9:186). It is the principal's task to provide the leadership necessary to approach this problem systematically rather than to rely upon the casual appraisal.

II. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Research indicates eleven areas in which the effectiveness of the teacher manifests itself. When developing standards for evaluating teacher performance, the administration and staff working co-operatively may add sub-topics to the following areas.

1. Instructional effectiveness. This relates strictly to classroom performance. "It is impossible," says Green, "to plan effectively for the improvement of instruction except when such plans are based on careful and exact studies of the present success and failures of instruction" (10:33-45). Good teaching involves an awareness of the purpose and direction of the educational process (5:269).

To help teachers determine their instructional effectiveness, "probably the most useful and valid

evaluation . . . is that given by students themselves" (25:116). Some of the areas that are of prime importance to students are knowledge of subject, fairness, interest in pupils, sense of humor, understanding pupils, and likeableness (25:117).

Instructional effectiveness is of paramount importance. If a teacher is poor or unsatisfactory in this area, his continued service as a teacher would be questionable. On the other hand, teachers who have reached the highest achievements in this and other general areas affecting teacher performance deserve special recognition.

2. Personality. The personality factors to be taken into account should be all of those required to define personality (8:718). "A teacher emotionally well balanced and physically well," states Baxter, "is the most important single element in teaching." To reinforce its importance, Baxter again states, "The teacher's own teaching personality is the most important single factor in the guidance and direction of learning" (4:111).
3. Classroom Management. This area gives attention to the routine handling of pupils, materials, physical environment, and appearance of the classroom (15:78). Avent (1:2) says, "Management means

control and direction of school and classroom conditions so as to make them favorable to children's studying and learning."

4. Teacher-Pupil Relationship. Teacher-student relations properly evoke serious effects upon the student's choice of career, his attitudes toward learning, his personal value system, and social viewpoint (21:11). Spears (24:53) advocates kindness as a desirable characteristic of a good teacher. "Better to close a classroom than to subject children to an unkind teacher under the guise of education."

". . . The one valid way to estimate a teacher's true worth is to know the personal effect of teachers upon learners" (4:11).

5. Co-operation. Co-operation can mean the exchange and thereby the utilization of the best ideas. This integrated effort as Ayars (2:142) states, means that one "works well with others; promotes harmony; strives to develop and maintain high professional morals; cheerfully accepts appropriate share of extracurricular activities."
6. Professional Growth and Interest. The greatest professional sin teachers can commit is to become mentally stagnant. Many teachers permit themselves to get in a rut and soon become old fogies (18:155).

The function of evaluation should be based on a policy which recognizes that growth is essential for the teacher's own sense of well being and for the improvement of educational opportunities for children (7:221).

7. Physical Fitness. The teacher must have alertness, cheerfulness, and emotional stability to meet the day-to-day demands of the modern school.

Reeder (18:566) gives three reasons why teachers should have a high standard of health. It is necessary for the teacher's happiness, economic welfare, and pedagogical efficiency. It affects the welfare of his students as well as his own. Communicable diseases as well as irritability and nervousness can be transmitted to the children. The students have a right to expect a teacher who is strong physically. The third reason he gives for a teacher's good physical fitness is to keep teacher absences at a minimum. This in turn will save the school district the expense of hiring substitute teachers. Teacher absences may also cause disruption of the regular classroom procedure.

8. Contributions to Good Teaching Conditions. The significance of this area is indicated in the definition of "superior" achievement. This area can best be illustrated by a teacher who takes advantage of all situations and causes them to be

a learning process, whether it is a class party, hallway conduct, or playground activities. As Briggs says, "the teacher assumes responsibility for general conditions in the school whenever occasion arises for exercise of teacher influence" (5:269).

Children to a great extent are products of their environment. Because their reactions are influenced by their setting for work and play, an attractive school home is essential to building desirable relationships (20:310-11).

9. Extra-Curricular and Extra Class Service. This relates to services rendered to all activities of the modern school program not a part of class work. The success of any program of extra-curricular activities depends largely upon the willing and intelligent co-operation in the program of the teachers of the school (18:165).
10. Clerical Skill. The appraisals are embodied in office records, the preparation and keeping of which are regarded as necessary duties of the school staff (14:215). There are several kinds of paper work which classroom teachers need to consider. Some of it is clerical. Some of it is highly professional and very important in the teaching-learning process (20:215).

11. Community Relationship. If teaching is to be a profession, teachers are obligated to define their relationships to society (25:243). Working hand in hand, these forces--administrators, teachers, parents, lay citizens, and students--can do much to build up essential public understanding and support of schools. Effective teamwork on the part of all individuals and groups is one of the prerequisites of a successful school program.

Research indicates as many areas to help determine teaching efficiency as there are items in the field of education that a teacher can answer "yes" or "no" or with "superior," "satisfactory," or "unsatisfactory." It is feasible, then, that these general areas serve only as main points of emphasis. These points can be organized into a form the school personnel feels would best suit their needs.

If the results of an evaluation are placed on a rating card without co-operative action with the teacher, this process will not cause an improvement of instruction. The one exception might be the teacher who, because of fear of how he is rated, searches and somehow finds his weaknesses and endeavors to correct them.

One of the main purposes of evaluation is to help direct the teacher to be more effective. In fact, Hicks says (12:222):

According to such writers as Otto, Shane, Yauch, Corey, Wrightstone, Elsbree, McCall, Reutter, and Barr, the technique in teacher evaluation should be emphasizing self-evaluation. Recent surveys by several state departments of education, and by classroom teachers' organizations also indicate that to the extent to which we are able to evaluate our own work, we are taking real steps in the improvement of our own teaching.

Self-analysis of the teacher's effectiveness with subsequent positive change in her pattern of operation is the goal toward which we must strive.

The fact cannot be overlooked that teaching efficiency is not evaluated only in terms of improvement. As cited earlier in this paper, it is also for justification of promotion and renewal or release of contract. It seems appropriate at this point to ask the question: "How is teaching efficiency evaluated?" Reavis best answers this question:

We must never forget that teacher effectiveness is to a great degree a product of subjective factors and the product itself is to the same degree subjective, and therefore its measurement, both method and results, must be in the subjective terms. If this be true, it seems we must not direct our efforts toward translating subjectivity into objectivity but rather toward making subjective judgment more definite, more specific, more fair, and more defensible. If we work far enough toward this, subjective judgments rendered by professionally trained people very likely can be made more nearly fair and just, more nearly true measures than mathematical scores can ever be (17:87-88).

The Achievement Profile based upon the statement of standards used in the Indianapolis, Indiana, Public School appears to be a good method of objectively appraising subjective factors (17:91-92). Each teaching area previously described may not fit in a given level such as "honor" or "superior." An example of this is the teacher's personality

and its effect upon the students. The student is the only person able to evaluate this area accurately, and his opinions may be influenced by remarks he has heard other people make. Following are five levels of teaching efficiency and the criteria developed to determine teaching efficiency (17:91-92):

HONOR

Instructional Effectiveness--Develops new teaching procedures for the school; stimulates pupils to unusual achievements; encourages pupils to establish and maintain worthwhile personal goals.

Professional Interest and Growth--Gives definite evidence of productive and constructive work in the professional field.

Contribution to Good Teaching Conditions--Renders distinctive service to the school in establishing and maintaining wholesome teaching conditions.

Extra-Curricular and Extra Class Service--Creates, develops, and promotes desirable extra-curricular activities.

SUPERIOR

Instructional Effectiveness--Develops successful practices in instruction which stimulate pupils to self-activity and pronounced growth in knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits.

Professional Interest and Growth--Has secured advanced training or preparation in own field of work; and keeps alert to progress and development in this field of instruction.

Contribution to Good Teaching Conditions--Assumes responsibility for general conditions in the school whenever occasion arises for exercise of teacher influence.

Extra-Curricular and Extra Class Service--Renders an especially valuable service to the school in extra-curricular and extra class duties.

GOOD

Instructional Effectiveness--Maintains interest of pupils, follows accepted practices in instruction which promote in pupils normal growth and improvement in knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits.

Professional Interest and Growth--Gives evidence of keen interest in the profession and seeks to strengthen work in classroom through study and through active professional effort.

Physical Fitness--Is physically able to carry normal teaching load without special consideration; rarely absent.

Contribution to Good Teaching Conditions--Under normal circumstances assumes responsibility for and maintains good standard of discipline on own power of personality and influence.

Extra-Curricular and Extra Class Service--Willingly responds to and acceptably performs assigned duties in extra-curricular activities and extra class duties.

Clerical Skill--Does clerical work in a manner which makes special administrative attention unnecessary.

Community Relationships--Engages in a normal program of community activity.

FAIR

Instructional Effectiveness--Follows accepted practices in a routine manner; lacks resourcefulness; fails to adapt procedures so as to bring about expected growth on part of all pupils.

Professional Interest and Growth--Meets standard requirements of accrediting agencies in professional preparation for work assigned.

Physical Fitness--Must receive some administrative consideration in assignment of teacher load or extra duties.

Contribution to Good Teaching Conditions--Often needs support of administration in maintaining discipline in normal circumstances.

Extra-Curricular and Extra Class Service--Accepts assigned extra-curricular and extra class duties as necessary responsibilities. Shows limitations in appreciating their educational significance.

Clerical Skill--Does clerical work in a manner which occasionally requires administrative attention.

Community Relationships--Gives little evidence of community interest.

UNSATISFACTORY

Instructional Effectiveness--Follows questionable practices; fails to maintain pupil interest, fails to secure expected pupil growth.

Professional Interest and Growth--Lags behind accepted current standards.

Physical Fitness--Possesses physical defects which make work ineffective; frequently absent.

Contribution to Good Teaching Conditions--Relies unnecessarily upon the support of administration to maintain discipline in normal circumstances; seems satisfied to proceed in an atmosphere of general restlessness and inattention.

Extra-Curricular and Extra Class Service--Performs assigned extra-curricular or extra class duties reluctantly and without attaining their educational values.

Clerical Skill--Is frequently careless and inaccurate.

Community Relationships--Community relations brings adverse reaction of community to the school.

The foregoing criteria can be used for self-evaluation, group evaluation, or evaluation of the teacher by the principal. Research indicates that improvement of instruction is most effective when a set of standards is developed by the staff. However, the staff must first feel a need for this type of evaluation before they can be expected to have a truly sincere approach to the problem. When this feeling is not present, authorities agree, it can be an administrative responsibility to help develop a feeling among the staff that there is a need for a systematic form of evaluation. "Without such critical evaluation," Elsbree and McNally state, "the dead hand of complacency and crystallization rests heavily upon the entire enterprise" (9:187).

Reports, whether they detect teacher weaknesses or strengths, should not be called to the teacher's attention and then placed in a file and forgotten. The next step is to give recognition to teacher strengths which may induce professional pride.

Of equal importance with recognition of teacher strengths is attention to teacher weaknesses. Attention must not only be given to areas of weaknesses, but there must be an endeavor to correct or improve them.

Correction of the problem can be as complex as the personnel involved. In contrast, when the correct attitude is developed, the teacher may be so receptive "it is highly

probable that he will welcome assistance" (9:186).

An evaluative form can be of great help to both the teacher who needs assistance with a problem and the person who is assisting. Therefore, the next logical step is to set up an evaluative form that can be used in evaluating teaching performance. (See Appendix).

In using an evaluation form, Burton says:

On the school summary blank which is graphic in form, the rating for each item on the scale provided on the blank is recorded. There it is possible to make a profile by connecting various ratings with lines. This profile gives as graphic picture of the practices . . . (6:215).

It must be remembered that the overall objective of any evaluation plan is improvement of instruction. Huggett points out that the school is a means of furthering the desirable growth and learning of boys and girls (13:94).

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

TEACHER EVALUATION FORM

Honor
Supr.
Good
Fair
Unsat.

ITEMS

1. Instructional Effectiveness
2. Personality
3. Classroom Management
4. Teacher-Pupil Relationship
5. Co-operation
6. Professional Growth and Interest
7. Physical Fitness
8. Contributions To Good Teaching Conditions
9. Extra-Curricular And Extra Class Service
10. Clerical Skill
11. Community Relationship

TEACHER EVALUATION FORM

Name

School

Subject or Grade

Remarks:

Signed

Date