



Dr. Jackson is Professor of Education and Chairman of the Department of Educational Administration and Supervision at the University of Hawaii. He is involved in working with the Leadership Training Program, a joint College of Education—State Department of Education Project designed to prepare school administrators. He received his doctorate from the University of Southern California and speaks from a broad background: consultant, teacher, principal, and superintendent of schools.

What is teaching? This question has long been the subject of debate. Although most lay and professional people think they have a definition, it is only recently that researchers have begun to construct theoretical formulations which can be used in the systematic study and analysis of teaching behavior (1). A lack of common agreement as to just what teaching is has been the basis for much emotionalism and misunderstanding among educators and between educators and lay citizens.

Sensitivity has been increased by such biting definitions as that found in George Bernard Shaw's *Maxims for Revolutions*: "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches." Mencken perpetuates this feeling in his *Prejudices* with the comment: "The average schoolmaster is and always must be essentially an ass, for how can one

Evaluation: Dare Teachers Accept the Challenge?

Lowell Jackson

imagine an intelligent man engaging in so puerile an avocation?"

It appears that little has been done to counter or dispel such devastating images. Evidence collected from nation-wide surveys indicates that the major energy of teachers has not been directed toward building professionalism and quality personnel, but rather toward an extensive fight for security. Yauch appraises this as follows:

In defense against the insecurity and exploitation that have resulted from uncontrolled judgments of administrators, teachers have successfully mounted a counter-offensive—tenure and the automatic salary schedule. In their desperate efforts to avoid the nastier consequences of arbitrary rule by a minor dictator, teachers have covered themselves with a protective blanket of anonymity. Instead of being treated as real individuals with unique personalities and distinctive contributions to the profession, they have become steps on a salary schedule and positions in a hierarchy of seniority . . . but in their efforts to find a better way to job security teachers may have manufactured a remedy worse than the disease (2).

It is within this framework that we find most discussions of teacher eval-

uation taking place. Fear, uncertainty, confusion, and suspicion prevail. Research has been of little value in providing clarification until recently because many of the areas of education do not lend themselves to the scientific tools we have available. Howsam indicates that "until those in professional education are ready to undertake the serious and disciplined study of the processes of teaching and learning and the behavior of people, both as individuals and as members of organized groups, there can be no truly professional approach to evaluation of teachers nor any genuinely effective performance of the task" (3).

PROBLEMS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Research over the years has dealt with many areas in an effort to develop objective definitions and criteria. Much effort has been expended attempting to determine exactly what teaching is, but with little general agreement. There have been attempts to define what is meant by "teacher effectiveness," only to conclude that there are many meanings. An effective teacher in one area may not be effective in another. Many variables

such as "teacher adaptability" still defy control or understanding.

There are many studies concerned with teacher characteristics. Although many professional and lay people believe such characteristics exist, research has not been able to identify them, even though some interesting findings have been obtained. There appears to be, for example, only a slight relationship between intelligence and the rated success of an instructor. In most instances a knowledge of subject matter has shown little correlation with success. Additional years of teaching, after the first five or six, do not improve teaching effectiveness. Cultural background apparently has little to do with teaching ability. There is a very low correlation between effectiveness and socio-economic status.

Extensive research has also been conducted in the areas of personality characteristics, teacher behavior, and pupil gain. Here too there has been found nothing of a conclusive nature. Only one area of consistency appears and that is that pupils more than any other group are able to make valid and reliable ratings of teachers.

Too often, perhaps, the result has been a reluctance of administrators and teachers to attempt any form of organized evaluation. Many may assume that no evaluation is taking place. This is far from the truth, however, since an informal program is unavoidable in any organization. Seldom does the teacher receive a report of this informal assessment. Its existence can be verified by the practice of "passing on to another principal" certain teachers year after year. The results of such a continued practice can have dire effects upon staff morale and upon the educational program as a whole.

The challenge, then, of effective evaluation is laid directly at the feet of the professionals. There is a strong indication that if they do not accept it some other agency will make the

determination for them. Such an imposed program cannot bring beneficial results.

With this background let us turn to Hawaii to see what is being done and what should be done. Certain basic issues must be given careful and thoughtful consideration before any move to initiate an evaluation program is initiated.

ISSUE NO. 1: IS EVALUATION NECESSARY?

Evaluation is not only necessary, it is unavoidable. The question is not shall we evaluate or not, but how best to do it. Evaluation may be of a formal or informal nature. In Hawaii a formal evaluation of experienced teachers has not been required by policy for many years. As a result, a variety of practices has developed, mainly upon the initiative of the principal and his staff. Existing practices range from good to indifferent. Too often decisions are made with "a sixth sense" rather than with established criteria. Because of the informal nature of many of these programs, those being evaluated seldom are aware of these "feelings." Those performing in a satisfactory manner may never find it out and those performing unsatisfactorily may find it out only at a time of crisis.

A serious responsibility rests also with those who are to be evaluated. They should be anxious to strive continually for improvement, but this can happen only if there is an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and provision is made for a variety of possibilities for growth. The ultimate and consuming desire should be the improvement of the program for the students and not a search for personal security or anonymity.

All persons carrying out delegated responsibilities should accept the fact that evaluation of their performance is essential if goals are to be achieved.

Teachers and administrators have their jobs only because the State has seen fit to delegate this responsibility to them. The opportunity to carry out these functions is a privilege and not a right. Teachers and administrators should demand that an organized program of evaluation be developed by the State for their protection, and they should be extensively involved in its development.

ISSUE NO. 2: CAN AN ACCEPTABLE PROGRAM OF EVALUATION BE DEVELOPED?

There are some who will seek shelter behind the fact that research has failed to provide the necessary basis upon which a program should be built. Others will express concern and fear that those performing the evaluation lack adequate training and knowledge. These are important concerns, but the glaring fact remains that some form of evaluation is constantly taking place. It is inconceivable that teachers, who perform numerous daily pupil evaluations with confidence, will maintain that an evaluation of their own work is an impossibility.

Any successful program of evaluation must be based upon mutual respect and confidence between the evaluator and the person being evaluated. A significant development in the establishment of such a desired relationship can result from a planned two-way communication of day-to-day impressions and concerns. A mutually acceptable set of usable standards can be developed from the understandings obtained. Differences of opinion between the teacher and the administrator should be anticipated. It is to be expected that each individual will have specific areas of strength and weakness. Only through frank discussions of these matters can programs for growth result. Only by allowing the individual to work in the areas of his strength will a better educational program be forthcoming.

The effectiveness of evaluation will eventually be determined by the soundness of the personnel policies upon which it is based. If we are to take the Odell and Booze, Allan, Hamilton reports at face value, it would appear that there are serious shortcomings in the present personnel policies of the Department of Education. There is little evidence that a broad concern for all employees throughout the State went into their development. Rather it would appear that many have been developed to meet specific situations or individual cases. Effective and acceptable policies will result only if the good of all personnel in the district are considered and these individuals are permitted to participate in their development. With the right of participation, however, goes great responsibilities. Policies must be developed with the ultimate goal of improving the learning program for the student. Concern for personal comfort of security must be secondary.

An acceptable teacher evaluation program must be developed if we are to: (a) determine the effectiveness of the instructional program, (b) provide a basis for in-service programs, (c) provide a basis for administrative decisions, (d) facilitate accounting for responsibility, (e) motivate teachers to strive for a high level of performance, and (f) assist the teacher in achieving success (4).

There is every reason to believe that Hawaii is in an excellent position to provide national leadership in the establishment of an acceptable program of evaluation. The homogeneity of training of the majority of our teaching and administrative staffs should provide a common set of values to be used. The tremendous respect accorded education will be hard to find in any of the other states. Only an expression of confidence that it can be done and a willingness to proceed seem to be lacking.

ISSUE NO. 3: WHAT IS TO DETERMINE TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS?

Unless a definition of teaching effectiveness is developed, it is impossible to apply any plan of evaluation. Traditionally a narrow definition of what goes on in the classroom has been used. The teacher is called upon to play many roles, such as those involved in cooperative efforts with other staff members in the development of the educational program, participation in co-curricular activities, and involvement in community life and civic groups. A willingness to participate in these areas and the quality of effort resulting should constitute a basis for evaluation.

The major responsibility of the teacher, of course, is in her day-to-day work with students. Observation of classroom teaching provides some evidence for assessment of effectiveness, but it has been found that unless it is conducted on a planned and systematic basis, the results are of questionable value. The use of standardized tests to measure pupil growth and achievement as a device to evaluate teachers has been found to be fraught with discrepancies. The best evaluation of a teacher's effectiveness seems to be performed by the students themselves.

The acceptance of a broad definition of teaching eliminates one of the major objections voiced about evaluation. No longer is it possible or necessary for one person to make the total evaluation. Since many will be involved, protection from bias and prejudice is afforded. No longer need an evaluator be an expert in all areas.

There seems to be a decided lack of definition in Hawaii of what constitutes teaching and teaching effectiveness. Visits to schools reveal a variety of attitudes. It is not common for experienced teachers to be visited on a planned and systematic basis.

In many instances it appears that each classroom is a school unto itself. Infrequent use has been made of pupil evaluations of their teachers or of involving more than one evaluator.

ISSUE NO. 4: ARE RATING AND EVALUATION THE SAME?

Rating and evaluation are not synonymous although the terms are often confused. Rating can result only after an evaluation has been made. Evaluation is not dependent upon rating for its justification.

Evaluation is an assessment of whether an employee's performance aids or hinders the attainment of the stipulated goals of the institution. Rating is often a system for dispensing rewards or punishments according to the results of the evaluation.

Merit pay plans are examples of the use of ratings. The amount of emotionalism attached to such proposals has made it extremely difficult to assess their true worth. Their use has not been widely accepted. Several school districts which set up merit pay programs have since abandoned them.

It appears that a clear delineation has not been made between evaluation and rating here in Hawaii. This has undoubtedly retarded the development of a general program of evaluation. It also appears likely that any merit pay plan is doomed to failure until the basic salary of teachers is such that it fully compensates for the training involved and the efforts expended.

SUMMARY

Hawaii, like most of the states, has been extremely apathetic regarding teacher evaluation. Almost all efforts of the teacher organizations have been directed toward attaining higher salaries or greater teacher security. The need for both higher salaries and

Continued on page 14