

Foreword

WHAT IS TAUGHT and how it is taught is largely determined by the evaluation program of the school and the reports to parents of pupil progress. If the testing program centers on facts and skills, then teachers will emphasize facts and skills, and pupils and parents will think they are the only important objectives of the school. If grades or marks are based solely on information and success and failure are determined by how much and how well a pupil can remember the facts he has been taught, then subject-matter achievement takes precedent over all other objectives regardless of what the school says its objectives are or what kind of program it has.

The articles in this issue of *EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP* show the relationship between objectives, evaluation, guidance, marking, and reporting. As Mr. Smallenburg points out, evaluation is not a program in itself. It is an integral part of the total school program. Curriculum and evaluation cannot be separated; neither can guidance and evaluation. If the objectives of the school are to be taken seriously by pupils,

Lavone Hanna, general supervisor of curriculum and educational research of the Long Beach Public Schools, was responsible for the organization and editing of this issue of EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP.



Courtesy Long Beach (Calif.) Schools

Evaluation must be comprehensive

teachers, or parents, ways and means for gathering evidence of pupil progress in those objectives must be found and used, reports to parents on that progress must be made, and a cumulative record of that progress must be kept if effective guidance and counseling are to take place.

Evaluating Pupil Progress

HARRY SMALLENBURG

WHAT IS EVALUATION in education? It can be defined as the process of determining the effectiveness of the educational program in meeting the needs of boys and girls in a particular class, school, and community. It involves collecting, summarizing, and interpreting evidence of the extent to which educational objectives are being attained.

Basic Processes

Certain processes are basic in all evaluation. These include first of all the *formulation of*

definite objectives or purposes. To be effective and functional, objectives need to be developed cooperatively by those who use them—teachers, administrators, pupils, and parents. An analysis of the objectives in terms of the behaviors involved then becomes the second basic step in evaluation. Defined behaviorally, both teachers and students know exactly what the objective is and can observe and evaluate the behaviors indicated. A pupil who is developing good work habits,¹ for example,

¹ Statement of Basic Objectives, Burbank Unified School District, Burbank, Calif., September 1943.

What evaluation is and its importance in a modern educational program are told by Harry Smallenburg, director of research and guidance, Los Angeles County, California.

follows directions specifically and intelligently; works independently; is resourceful; concentrates on the job at hand; develops such habits as neatness, accuracy, promptness; is responsible regarding his obligations; selects wisely and makes proper use of books, materials, and tools; participates consistently in group activities; knows when and how to seek help; observes critically; listens attentively and comprehends accurately what he hears.

A third basic process in evaluation is the *selection and provision of experiences and situations which will assist the pupil to achieve the types of behavior involved in the objective.* If the objective were "The pupil spells correctly the words he needs in his written work," many situations involving writing would need to be offered not only in English classes but in other classes as well.

The *selection or development of procedures for the collection of data* is the fourth basic process. For the more tangible objectives such as correct spelling, accuracy in mathematics, speed and comprehension in reading, the means of collecting evidence are readily available and easy to use. For less tangible objectives, such as work habits, the best

technique is probably teacher observation.

Finally, the data must be *summarized and interpreted* if it is to be useful in diagnosing pupil needs or appraising progress. Usually this is best accomplished by translating all the data collected into a descriptive picture of the child's behavior, his successes in one area as seen against his difficulties and failures in another.

Characteristics of Evaluation

Evaluation is not new. Successful teachers and administrators have always endeavored to judge how effectively they were achieving their goals. It involves the strengthening and furthering of activities already under way rather than initiating new activities. But *evaluation must be comprehensive* and concerned with all aspects of the growth of the child, not with his intellectual growth alone. Of equal importance will be the child's growth and development in social behavior, health, interests, attitudes, work habits, study skills, and use of leisure time. *It is also a continuous process* and not just an end-point of the year's work. Even more important than the final test is the diagnosis of pupil and class needs at the beginning of the year, with an appropriate selection of testing, observational, and recording activities during the year.

Teachers, administrators, pupils, and parents should all be involved at different levels of participation in the formulation and defini-



Evaluation must be continuous

Courtesy Webster Groves (Mo.) Schools



Courtesy West Georgia College, Carrollton

Evaluation can be cooperative

tion of objectives, and in the collection and interpretation of evidence. Thus *evaluation is a cooperative enterprise*. It is obvious that more growth will take place if students participate in setting up objectives so that they know clearly the goals toward which they are working, and also the purpose of each educational experience in relation to these goals. The reaction of parents to school objectives and procedures can be especially helpful in the evaluative process.

Evaluation emphasizes growth and is concerned primarily with appraising the progress which a pupil has made in terms of his needs and interests and not merely with measuring his status in the group or the status of the group, the school, or the program in relation to a national norm. Nor is evaluation a "program" in itself. Rather it is an integral phase of the educational program of the school and is *allied with all that goes on in the classroom and in the school*.

Evidence regarding the pupil's attainment of some objectives must be collected by description in addition to or in place of measurement. Growth in ability to cooperate, to exercise self-control, to respect rules and regulations, to be tolerant, can best be revealed by means of descriptive statements of significant behavior rather than by a score. Hence *evaluation is descriptive as well as quantitative*.

Evaluation is a long-term process. It in-

volves study over many years of the effectiveness of the educational program in meeting its goals, and a revision of objectives, curricular experiences, and approved techniques in accordance with the findings. And *it must be cumulative* since a major function of evaluation is to reveal a pupil's growth in the basic objectives.

Finally, if teachers are to accept evaluation and use its techniques, *it must also be economical*. Every justifiable shortcut should be taken to reduce and simplify the evaluative activities of the teacher. Wherever possible, scoring of tests should be performed by mechanical devices. Records for accumulating data should involve a minimum of clerical work. Test results for individual pupils should be presented by means of profiles, charts, and other devices which will simplify their interpretation. Periodically an analysis should be made of the materials and techniques involved in the basic processes of evaluation in order to secure greater simplicity, clarity, and economy.

Techniques of Evaluation

There are many techniques available to teachers for collecting data regarding pupil growth and development. The teacher should select and use those which will be most appropriate in terms of the needs of her class and in terms of her own time and energy. *Standardized tests of skills and knowledge* are an essential phase of any evaluation program. The tests which are given should fit in with basic objectives and be so integrated with the instructional program that remedial and corrective materials will be available for use with individual pupils and entire classes.

Tests, however, do not constitute the entire or even the major part of the evaluation process. The *anecdotal record* is one of the most valuable of several techniques useful in gathering and recording significant data not amenable to testing. The method involves the recording by the teacher of specific pupil behavior which is indicative of success or failure in achieving an objective. Such records should be impersonal, clear, brief, revealing, and indicative of general trends in the pupil's behavior.

Autobiographies and student questionnaires are valuable in diagnosing problems of personal and social adjustment as well as determining academic, vocational, and recreational

plans for the future. Likewise *interest and adjustment inventories*, and *rating scales*, although such instruments have readily recognizable limitations, can, when cautiously used, elicit information regarding pupils' school and vocational interests and personal-social adjustment which is of value to teacher and pupil. *Sociometric techniques* either of the type in which individuals choose others with whom they would or would not like to be associated or the reputation or "guess who" test, assist teachers in discovering the underlying psychological structure of their classroom and to become more conscious of the need for friendship and for personal and social adjustment on the part of pupils.

Samples of pupils' work, such as themes and reports, records of books read, summaries of leisure-time activities, samples of poems, drawings, and construction work, all

afford additional evidence of a pupil's growth in relation to basic educational objectives.

Services of Evaluation

As an integral, dynamic process in modern education, evaluation assists schools: (1) in making a periodic check on the effectiveness of the educational institution, and thus indicating the points at which improvements in the program are necessary; (2) in validating the hypotheses upon which the educational institution operates; (3) in providing information basic to effective guidance of individual students; (4) in providing a certain psychological security to the school staff, to the students, and to the parents; and (5) in developing a sound basis for public relations.²

² Smith, Eugene R., Tyler, Ralph W., and Evaluation Staff, *Appraising and Recording Student Progress*, New York, Harper and Brothers, pp. 4-11.

Reporting Pupil Progress

WILLIAM L. WRINKLE

UNDERLYING THE VARIOUS USES to which school marks are put is an assumption that marks are effective conveyors of meaning—that one can look at a mark assigned to Johnny and tell what is meant by it. But that is difficult to do, and certainly not easy for Johnny's mother and father. Unless the teacher explains what has been put together in arriving at the mark, the best the parents or anyone else can do is guess at what the mark means—and the chances of actually guessing what is really meant are very poor.

The continued use of marks as a means of reporting to students and their parents is based on a number of misconceptions. Among these are the beliefs that: (1) people succeed in out-of-school life about the same as they do in school; (2) the mark is a pay check; (3) the mark is a defensible introduction to competitive adult life; (4) anyone can achieve any mark he wishes if he is willing to make the effort; and (5) the mark can be used as a means without it eventually becoming thought of as an end in itself. A critical examination of these beliefs leads to only one conclusion—all of them are unsound.

Much of the early experimentation for the improvement of marking and reporting was concerned with superficial rather than fundamental issues. The symbols used in reporting an evaluation are not basic. But what is evaluated is basic. The improvement of reporting then is not a simple matter of manipulating symbols, changing from per cent to letter marks or five letters to two letters, but rather a difficult task involving the formulation of the objectives of the school program, the determination of the abilities and achievements of the student, the evaluation of his growth with reference to the objectives, and

The search for a satisfactory method of marking and reporting student growth and achievements has concerned teachers, administrators, students, and parents for years. The experimentation carried on in the Secondary School at Colorado State College of Education, Greeley, Colo., and the criteria used there in developing the report merit careful study. William L. Wrinkle is director of the Secondary School. A more detailed description of the experiments carried on by Dr. Wrinkle and his staff can be found in Wrinkle and Gilchrist, Secondary Education for American Democracy, Farrar and Rinehart, 1942, and Guidance in Public Secondary Schools, A. E. Traxler, editor, Educational Records Bureau, October 1939.

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