

achievement by keeping a record of the books he has read and the radio and television programs he hears and sees.

In order to interpret evaluation data wisely the various items of evidence col-

lected about the pupil should be correlated and integrated into a unified picture of the individual. The relationships among various aspects of pupil growth should be explicitly shown.

A Region Evaluates Its Elementary Schools

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Purposes and techniques of the Southern Association's Cooperative Study in Elementary Education are described by Sarah Lou Hammond, Florida State University, Tallahassee, chairman of the Evaluation Committee, and Harold D. Drummond, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, coordinator of the Study.

"WHY NOT TAKE A NEW LOOK at your school? You may have become so accustomed to the things around you that you cease to see them. Imagine you have never seen your school before and ask yourself, 'Is this a good school for children?'"¹ Last year approximately two hundred elementary school faculties in thirteen southern states were asking themselves questions—searching, penetrating questions designed to help them evaluate the total program of the elementary school. This year probably two or three thousand faculty groups will be so engaged. The Southern Association's Cooperative Study in Elementary Education is responsible for this regional interest in elementary school evaluation.

¹ Unpublished suggestions for revision of *Tentative Edition, Elementary Evaluative Criteria*, developed by Workshops at George Peabody College and A. & I. State College, Nashville, Tenn., Summer, 1950.

Structure of the Study

The structure of the Southern Association's Cooperative Study in Elementary Education is comparatively simple. The Commission on Curricular Problems and Research of the Southern Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges is the organization sponsoring the study. Six other southern agencies are cooperating.² In each of the eleven southern states served by the Southern Association a committee has been selected to work for the improvement of elementary education. Committees in Arkansas and Oklahoma are cooperating also, although secondary schools and colleges in these states hold membership in the North Central Association. In each case the committee

² See H. Arnold Perry, "The Southern Association's Cooperative Study in Elementary Education," *The High School Journal*, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, May 1949, p. 104.

for the improvement of elementary education has the cooperation and support of the state department of education, teacher education institutions, and established educational organizations. A chairman has accepted leadership responsibilities in each state.

Coordination for the thirteen-state study is achieved through a central committee composed of the state chairmen and the executive officers.³ Meetings of this committee are held annually at a work conference sponsored by the study. Executive committee meetings are also held at the time of the annual Southern Association meeting in December.

Consultants for the study, who are serving without remuneration, as are all other personnel with the exception of the coordinator, include: John E. Brewton, Director, Division of Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers; Henry J. Otto, Graduate Professor of Curriculum and Administration, University of Texas; and T. M. Stinnett, Associate Secretary, National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards, Washington, D. C.

Major Emphases

Each state committee is encouraged to define its problems and procedures of work. No two groups are attacking identical problems. The Central Coordinating Committee, however, has defined four major emphases for regional

effort: (1) gathering data on elementary education in the South and presenting it to the layman in concise, understandable terms, (2) developing techniques for evaluating the total program of the elementary school, (3) working to improve personnel in elementary schools, and (4) locating and making known promising practices which may serve as a basis for stimulating school improvement.

REGIONAL ACTION IN EVALUATION

Florida State University Workshop

To implement regional action in evaluation, a group of elementary teachers, principals and supervisors from eleven of the thirteen states met at Florida State University, Tallahassee, during the summer of 1949. This group was charged with the responsibility of developing an evaluative instrument for elementary schools.

The workshop was directed by W. T. Edwards, Florida State University, with Laura Zirbes, Ohio State University, and Louis Raths, New York University, serving as part-time consultants. There was no way of anticipating what the evaluative guide might become. The regional evaluative committee had simply directed this group to explore the field of evaluation, to provide for self-appraisal, and to suggest means for evaluating phases of the program usually considered intangible.

As the workshop progressed, participants agreed that evaluation involves at least three steps: (1) stating values or purposes which the school deems important, (2) securing evidences regarding the extent to which the values or purposes are realized in practice, and

³ Chairman, H. Arnold Perry, School of Education, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Vice-Chairman, Charles R. Spain, Dean of Instruction, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee; Secretary, J. B. White, Dean of the College of Education, University of Florida, Gainesville.

(3) planning ways in which the values or purposes might be better achieved or more fully realized and related. The development of an awareness of values, therefore, was seen to be the heart of learning.

An instrument emphasizing this point of view was developed. Five master categories or aspects of elementary education which need to be considered in evaluating the total program are included—*viewpoint, function, program, facilities and planning*. These categories became the five sections of the evaluative guide. The sections were planned to point up the relationships which exist among these aspects of elementary education.

The workshop group recognized the need for some means by which school faculties and patrons could be encouraged to face present realities, realistically project steps for improvement, and then note progress. The method finally agreed upon provides means whereby school faculties and patrons may indicate qualitatively and quantitatively the extent to which progress is being realized. To guide faculties in analyzing the extent of value realization, conflict or omission, worksheets are provided. Faculties are urged to develop consensus.

To explain more fully the plan which was developed, two examples illustrative of the technique used throughout the instrument are quoted from the published bulletin:

(1) *Principle 1: Values have reference at the same time to individual-group good, welfare and growth.*

If the school is respecting this principle, the group doing the evaluating

will find that throughout the school the children are learning:

- To keep their commitments
- To share with the group
- To keep minds open for suggestions
- To make adjustments easily
- To be free but at the same time responsible⁴

(2) *Developing Physical Well-Being.*

1. Indicate the extent to which the school helps meet the physical needs of children through:

- Developing a healthful environment for school living
- Guiding pupils in an understanding of the nutritional values of various foods
- Developing an understanding of the physical body and how it works
- Providing opportunities which develop coordination and control of muscles
- Showing sympathetic interest in and understanding of children with physical or other handicaps
- Guiding pupils in the correction of physical defects⁵

The "extent rating" used in connection with these worksheets provides four columns for checking and is based on the following key:

Place a check in:

Column 0—if the practice does not exist in any extent, quality or degree.
Column 1—if the practice exists to a small extent but (a) is found in a restricted amount, or (b) appears in some classrooms but is not typical of the school as a whole, or (c) is of doubtful quality.

Column 2—if the practice exists to a considerable extent, that is, (a) it is found in average amount, or (b) it appears in enough classrooms to make it rather typical of the school as a whole, or (c) it is of fair quality.

Column 3—if the practice exists to

⁴ *Tentative Edition, Elementary Evaluative Criteria*, Vol. II, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

a great extent, that is, (a) it is found in a large amount, or (b) it appears in enough classrooms to make it practically universal throughout the school, or (c) it is of excellent quality.⁶

The Trial Period

At this stage of the study a change in personnel was required. Dr. J. B. White, who had been serving without remuneration as executive secretary, had been made Dean of the College of Education at the University of Florida. Harold D. Drummond, Associate Professor of Elementary Education, George Peabody College for Teachers, was selected to serve as Coordinator and to devote at least half-time to the study.

The first major task of the coordinator was to edit for publication the *Evaluative Criteria* which had been developed by the workshop group. Since the instrument was to be used on a trial basis in each of the southern states during the school year 1949-50, time pressures were unusually heavy. Consequently the tentative edition went to press with some duplication of material and editorial changes which were thought undesirable by some of the Florida workshop participants.

The first printing of the *Tentative Edition, Elementary Evaluative Criteria* was received about November 1, 1949. By that time most state committees had selected from ten to fifteen schools, representing varying conditions, to serve as tryout centers. Faculties in these schools volunteered to give liberally of their time so that suggestions for revision of the guide might be available in time for the annual

work-conference in June. Without exception, faculties who participated in these tryouts last year expressed enthusiasm for the experiences they had in developing agreement on values and in laying plans for the future. All faculties stated that insufficient time had been available for an effective critique of the evaluative guide.

The Daytona Beach Work-Conference

Since the Cooperative Study had only eighteen months of projected life, and since workshops were planned for the summer quarter at George Peabody College for Teachers and A. & I. State College, Nashville, Tennessee, one section of the 1950 Daytona Beach work-conference was planned for the purpose of considering suggestions for revising the guide. The fifty participants included pilot school faculty members, consultants for pilot schools, participants in the workshop the previous summer and participants in workshops to begin the following week, representatives of the Commission on Curricular Problems and Research and others interested but not previously experienced in using the evaluative instrument. For the first time Negro participants shared in the deliberations. Results of questionnaires sent to pilot schools throughout the South were available to the group.

Participants expressed general approval of the *Elementary Evaluative Criteria* as developed during the summer of 1949. Experimental use of the material had shown its possibilities for stimulating faculty growth and elementary school improvement. Many questions were raised concerning use of the guide. The group agreed that much

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

misunderstanding and misuse could be prevented in the future by a handbook or some similar explanatory material for faculties using the guide.

Considerable discussion was centered on the advisability of using the quantitative-qualitative "extent rating" which was part of the guide in its tentative form. Some faculty members reported that concentrating attention on the "extent ratings" actually interfered with the process of evaluation. Other faculty members, however, felt that the procedure was a valuable means for stimulating discussion of important aspects of the school program.

The use of the term "visiting committee" in the guide was questioned by some participants, but some reported that helpful suggestions and interpretations of the term had been developed by state committees. The desirability of calling in consultant help whenever the faculty recognizes the need for guidance was stressed.

Changes Suggested

Specific suggestions were made to the 1950 workshop participants for changes in content, organization and physical make-up of the evaluative guide. The Nashville workshop participants were asked to give careful consideration to the recommendations made by key schools in the various states and to the purpose and intent of the 1949 workshop.

The groups which met in Nashville this past summer have made suggestions for extensive changes in the evaluative guide. Among the proposed changes is a new title—*Enriching Learning Experiences for Children: A Guide for Stimulating Elementary School Im-*

provement Through Self-Evaluation. The changes drafted by the workshops this summer have not been approved by the executive committee of the study, and several of them may not be accepted. There was general agreement, however, on the desirability of printing the revision in one volume. It is fairly certain this change will be made. Also, the revision almost certainly will contain suggestions for faculty groups who are beginning the process of evaluating the total program of the school.

After careful analysis of various evaluative devices, the groups suggested that the "extent ratings" be eliminated from the revised edition and that questions be substituted which will stimulate a faculty to collect evidence, interpret findings and plan next steps for improvement. The proposed procedure may perhaps best be explained by illustrations. In the proposed revision, after a rather extensive description of physical and emotional aspects of a good health program, faculties are challenged by the following:

- (1) Describe ways in which you think your school environment as it now exists satisfies your concept of what a good environment should be in order to make the best contribution to both physical and emotional health.
- (2) Are there ways in which the environment is inadequate for maximum development of health?
- (3) What conditions or situations have you discovered which seem to be detrimental to the development of good physical and emotional health?
- (4) What provisions are you making for the physically handicapped children?
- (5) What adjustments are made to

provide the best opportunities for those who are slow or who have limited ability?

Then faculties are asked to write out their plans for improvement:

- a. List the strengths and weaknesses of your health program.
- b. What are the problems which face you in providing a broader and more functional health program?
- c. What are your immediate plans for extending your strengths and eliminating your weaknesses?
- d. What are your long-term plans for improving the total health program in the school?
- e. Indicate from time to time evidences of progress in solving the problems discovered.

The workshop groups this summer also attempted to eliminate some of the duplication in the tentative edition. The section on functions of the elementary school has been completely rewritten. Two basic functions have been accepted from the literature on the elementary school: (1) to develop the individual as a socially sensitive participant in group living and (2) to improve the quality of living in the community. Also, the section on planning was revised considerably to emphasize process and participation by those concerned with the school program.

The Study Shows Results

Regardless of the changes which are made in the evaluative instrument, two basic ideas have been substantiated definitely in the regional evaluation movement in elementary education: (1) fac-

ulties *are* interested in improving their ways of work, and they develop expertness in thinking and planning together as they conscientiously use the evaluative guide; (2) regional effort on recognized problems maintains the strength of democracy—variability and distinctiveness within an over-all framework of values.

"In looking for the good elementary school, we shall probably be in search of something we shall never quite find—at least in a literal or absolute sense. Good is, after all, only a relative term, and schools—like individuals—will probably have many strong points and at least a few weak points. No matter how good a school may be today, it has a chance of being better—or worse—tomorrow. Many factors go into the making of a good school, some of which are beyond the power of school people to provide. Schools, like individual pupils, should be evaluated always in terms of their purposes and how well they are discharging obligations in terms of what they have to work with."⁷

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Copies of the *Tentative Edition, Elementary Evaluative Criteria*, are available from Harold D. Drummond, Division of Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tenn. Payment in advance is required. Single copies 75¢; five or more copies 60¢ each.

⁷ *Tentative Edition, Elementary Evaluative Criteria*, Vol. I, p. 2.

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