

Role of Evaluation in Improving Teaching

Evaluation must help us to achieve an education with a greater inspirational quality, and a new dimension of power.

THE HISTORY of efforts at evaluation in education is characterized by many fragmented attempts in which research programs were often punctuated by conflicts over educational philosophy, psychological arguments, and sharp differences of opinion over the evaluation techniques themselves. Those of us who, like myself, have lived and worked through the entire measurement movement are rather painfully aware of the serious errors, the false starts and stops and the confusion surrounding the problem. Not all has been lost, however, in the confusion. We see many things more clearly so that in the years ahead both more rapid and more solid progress can be expected.

First of all we see more clearly the total role of education in society. We no longer accept the naive Jeffersonian idea that one who knows what is right will do what is right. We know that knowledge is not necessarily power, at least not power for good. Thus, we are aware that equipping people with knowledge and skill is only one of the functions of education. Two educational goals are looming up as of greatest importance, viz.,

helping each individual to make the most of himself and enabling society to make greatest progress. Both of these goals are developed by the individual's total life in home, school and community. Both are matters of learned human behavior, of human relatedness. If evaluation is to be accomplished here it will have to be in large extent a matter of observed, recorded, evaluated individual and group behavior.

A second area where we have improved perspective is in that of the role of the teacher. We are beginning to see differences between instruction and teaching. One can instruct another person in, let us say, the use of an adding machine. After such instruction the one instructed has what is for him a new skill. But do not expect that he has been changed as a person, that he is necessarily a better citizen, that his general behavior has been altered. Thus, we see that we can measure the effectiveness of instruction in terms of what those instructed know and can do. These measurements are relatively simple. We have been involved with such measurements for decades.

When, however, we turn from instruction to teaching we encounter different problems. True teaching must result not only in knowledge and skill, but in al-

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tered behavior. Thus, we must measure the results of teaching in terms, not so much of what pupils know, but of what pupils are and are becoming and in terms of how they behave and how their behavior is changing.

Teaching Is Creative

Once we are clear about the differences between instruction and teaching, once we are clear about the nature of our educational goals we can address ourselves to the role of the teacher. Teaching as a profession seems to differ markedly from other professions. The engineer for example appears to succeed in terms of what he *knows* and *does*. But the teacher seems to succeed primarily in terms of what he *is*. It will, of course, be argued that what he *knows* and *does* plays a part in what he *is*, but one can *know* and *do* without *being*. Also, it appears that what one *is* as a teacher plays the largest role in what one achieves in helping pupils to *become*.

We are beginning to give more attention to the creative side of teaching. In the construction of a building, for example, the resulting structure depends on what is done and how it is done. But it seems to make no difference *who* does it. Turning to teaching we seem to find an opposite situation, since success in teaching depends more on *who* does it than upon the what or the how. Here we encounter the creative, artistic quality of teaching which probably corresponds closely to painting, musical composition and creative writing.

The distinguished artist Abraham Rattner says, "An artist creates reality out of his brain, his heart, his soul."

"Out of his dreams comes the awareness of a reality which is deeper than that which our eyes and our capacities to weigh and measure can grasp."

"He transforms the world he experiences into a new world."

"The new reality is a new birth of vision."

Speaking of the qualities needed by the painter, Rattner says, "I would recommend to those who desire to be initiated into the Temple to consider that art belongs to the spirit and partakes of the nature of religion. That creation in art is as unexplainable as creation in nature. That art's open door to self-enrichment is self-giving love. With much hard work, sacrifice of one's time, largeness of mind and great warmth of heart, the inner sensibilities will manifest themselves into an appreciation that will surpass all understanding. A painting, if it is achieved at all, is made with the help of God. It is as inexplicable as a flower, the song of a bird, electricity, atomic power, or love. . . ." ¹

In the above quotation substitute the words "creative teaching" for "art and painting" wherever they occur, and you will have an excellent statement of what it takes to become a creative teacher.

The problems of evaluation in teaching are thus complicated by the fact that in considerable measure we deal with the inexplicable. We have to realize that a teacher may seemingly know all he should know, do what he should do, do it in accepted fashion and yet fail to teach creatively, succeeding only to instruct and perhaps even that ineffectively. Without faith, respect, humility and love, creative teaching falters and creative learning does not occur.

The reader may object that I am making evaluation in teaching an impossibly difficult task. I do not think so. I believe as we increasingly recognize the teacher's creative role we will find ways to

¹ Abraham Rattner. *Twenty-four Plates* Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1956.

evaluate creative teaching. Perhaps we will not employ paper and pencil tests. We will, I think, do more observation of teacher and pupil behavior. We will have greater concern with emotional aspects. We will give more attention to motivation, to individualization. Much of our evaluation must be found in our community life. How do the citizens who have had our education behave?

We would make a tragic error were we today to fail to see the problem of evaluation in the light of Little Rock and the Sputnik. These two dramatic developments give a new dimension to the educational problem. To us in America, freedom is precious. We must somehow save and develop it. But we can't save it and continue to flaunt it as in Little Rock. And we can't save it without developing our intellectual resources. If the Russians have surpassed us in science it is not because we lack brains or inventive genius, but because we have for years moved in anti-intellectual directions and failed signally to put forth an educational effort of sufficient power and scope.

Sputnik is a warning. But it may lead us astray. It may lead us to crash programs in science, in satellites, for the gifted. Evaluation is thus important in

relation to educational policy—without it our policies may be so ill chosen as to be our national undoing.

Only a great creative education with a human orientation can solve the problems of which Little Rock has become a symbol. Only a great creative education for all our people can give us pre-eminence in science, in art, in human relations. It is thus in relation to a great creative education that we must see the problem of evaluation. To view it in narrow terms may give us education which is mere instruction. From such instruction we may get people who know, but who cannot or do not act for the welfare of their fellow men. We may forge an education which separates individual men from the masses of people from which they come.

Human survival depends on an education in human values, one which gives all of us awareness of membership in the human race. New scientific triumphs make new drafts on man's insights, man's wisdom and man's love for his fellow men. Evaluation must help us to achieve an education with a greater inspirational quality, and a new dimension of power. Herein lies the greatest task of evaluation in the years ahead.

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