

Changing Concepts of Teacher Leadership

THE early theories of teaching styles operative within the instructional setting, were based on a few classical studies describing the social climate of the classroom. The most frequently quoted research of Anderson (2) and Lippitt-White (18) tended to view teacher leadership in terms of polar roles—dominative and integrative, authoritarian or democratic teaching styles. The term “climate” was used to communicate a generalized attitude, evolved through teacher-pupil interaction, which described a fairly stable set of expectations and/or relationships which permeated all classroom behavior.

Dissatisfaction with Early Theories

Anderson's pioneer study of spontaneous teacher-pupil behavior was the first systematic research concerning teacher leadership patterns and the social climate of the classroom. In this investigation, based on behavior samplings of preschool and elementary age children with different teachers over a period of several years, social contacts were observed and classified as dominative or integrative. The findings of this early study were significant in identifying the

teacher's role in setting patterns of behavior in the classroom which yield a generalized social atmosphere of domination or integration. Specifically, domination incites domination; integration stimulates further integration! Although pupil behavior did not persist from one teacher to another, teacher behavior tended to persist with different groups from year to year. Thus, the stability of teacher leadership patterns in the classroom was established.

Lippitt-White confirmed and extended the general conclusions of Anderson. Initially Lippitt and Lewin (17) attempted to develop instruments for describing the “social atmosphere” of children's clubs and for quantitatively recording the effects of varied social atmospheres upon group life and individual behavior. For this pilot study, much time was spent in refining the data collection procedures with a small sampling of ten children. Later, Lippitt-White extended the sampling to include four clubs of five ten-year-old boys with three varied social atmospheres—“authoritarian,” “democratic,” and “laissez-faire.” Although the

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terminology was different, the results reiterated Anderson's earlier findings. Lippitt found that morale was highest in the democratic groups and that there were fewer expressions of discontentment in the democratic clubs compared with reactions under laissez-faire and authoritarian leadership.

Dissatisfaction with these early theories of leadership was expressed frequently during the decade between 1950 and 1960. Anderson (3), in summarizing the empirical findings of 49 experimental studies of authoritarian and democratic leadership, emphasized the inadequacy of the authoritarian-democratic construct as a conceptualization of leadership behavior. Both sociologists and psychologists were unwilling to accept these early theoretical models of teacher behavior; concern was focused on developing more definitive methods for assessing teacher-pupil interaction. At Chicago, Harvard, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and the University of California at Los Angeles, among other universities, intensive efforts were concentrated on evolving objective measures for quantifying the qualitative aspects of teacher-pupil verbal behavior, and assessing the effects of teacher verbal performance upon pupil attitudes and achievements.

Developing Instruments

At Chicago in the late 'forties, Withall (21) began exploring interaction analysis, utilizing teacher verbal behavior as an index of the prevailing social climate within the classroom. Withall developed an instrument, using only seven categories to classify teacher verbal statements, and was able to achieve an index of teacher behavior similar to Anderson's integrative-dominative (I-D) ratio. Withall found that it was possible to: assess

the social climate of the classroom through a categorization of teacher statements; identify different patterns of verbal behavior used by several teachers; and achieve observer reliability in categorizing statements. This research was preliminary to further intensive efforts by Flanders (9), Perkins (20), and Mitzel and Rabinowitz (19) to analyze leader behavior and group social climate utilizing Withall's technique.

Flanders, using Withall's scale, correlated teacher behavior with achievement and student responses in terms of perceived feelings and physiological reactions to teaching patterns. Flanders found that in a laboratory situation, teacher behavior characterized as directive or demanding tended to elicit student behaviors of hostility, withdrawal, apathy, aggressiveness and even emotional disintegration; whereas teacher behavior seen as acceptant, problem oriented and student supportive, tended to elicit student behaviors of decreased interpersonal anxiety, integration and even emotional readjustment.

Perkins investigated the effects of differences in group climate on group learning in six in-service teacher groups participating in an established program of child study, using Withall's categories for assessing the leader's statements. Perkins assumed the same learner-centered or teacher-centered frame of reference, originated by Withall, in analyzing adult behavior in group situations. He found that more learning occurred in terms of child development concepts and more positive attitudes were expressed in the group-centered groups, than in the leader-centered groups. Perkins concluded that climate was a major determinant of the quantity and quality of group learning.

Although the utility of Withall's tech-

nique was apparent by the frequency of its use during the early 'fifties, its ultimate value as a measurement instrument depended upon its reliability. In 1953, Mitzel and Rabinowitz attempted to assess the reliability of Withall's scale, utilizing four teachers in a small elementary school in Manhattan's underprivileged area. Although the findings suggested marked fluctuations in teacher verbal behavior from one occasion to another, it was possible to identify consistent differences in teacher behavior using this technique.

Concomitant with Withall's advances at Chicago, Bales (4) was exploring small group interaction at Harvard and developing an instrument for interaction analysis which would facilitate scientifically describing group process. In actuality, Bales evolved a system of categories based on a conceptual framework that there are steps or stages in group problem solving and that the sequence of steps may be seen as an empirical norm. Similarly, the distribution of activities among individuals in a group possesses empirical uniformity. Operationally, the 12 categories used in Bales' Interaction Process Analysis provided a framework for observers to use in evaluating the structure and dynamics of small group interaction. This system provided a method for analyzing the sequential steps in the problem solving process and a record of the dynamic face-to-face interaction which occurs as communication proceeds.

Recently several significant studies were conducted which modified Bales' categories to facilitate the analysis of classroom interaction. Both Withall (22) and Flanders (8, 12) have developed categories for analysis of classroom interaction which are derivatives of Bales' system.

Withall has been exploring patterns of communication used by instructors at the University of Wisconsin in teaching a child development course. He conceptualizes three different instructional models—problem-oriented approach, case study approach, learner-centered—which may be analyzed by using a 14-category observational scale. In this recent instrument, Withall has modified Bales' instrument and expanded his own earlier scale to achieve classifications which are sensitive to the behaviors occurring in the specific setting of the classroom.

Teacher Influence and Pupil Attitudes and Achievement

One of the most ambitious and prodigious attempts to study the teaching-learning process was conducted by Flanders and his associates (8, 10, 12, 14, 15) at the University of Minnesota and University of Michigan between 1954 and 1962. The central focus of Flanders' research concerned the development of a system of interaction analysis which might be useful in quantifying the qualitative aspects of spontaneous verbal communication in the classroom. However, a study of the means-end relationship of the teaching-learning process entails more than merely an assessment of teacher behavior; for correlates of teaching effectiveness are important measures of learning outcomes. Flanders has used student achievement and attitude scores as correlates of teacher influence patterns employed in the classroom.

Flanders' early research (10), conducted between 1954 and 1957 in Minnesota and New Zealand, was designed largely to discover if patterns of teacher verbal influence could be associated with pupil attitude scores. The design and sam-

pling for the Minnesota and New Zealand studies were similar. A sampling of a parent population of classes was selected for a particular grade level and subject matter area and a student attitude inventory was administered to all classes. The Minnesota sampling included 34 English-Social Studies classes in the eighth and ninth grades selected randomly from all such classes in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

In New Zealand, a stratified sample of 33 Standard Four Classes was randomly selected from classes in the Wellington area. The Standard Four level includes children varying in ages from 10 to 12 years. Following the administration of the attitude inventory, the three to five classes scoring the highest and lowest total class averages were selected for six to eight hours of observation using interaction analysis. The composite observation data for both high and low samplings were compared to study differences in influence patterns. The findings of both of these earlier studies were mutually supportive, irrespective of the grade level or cultural differences existing between New Zealand and Minnesota schools—some 8,000 miles apart. Flanders concluded that the teachers of classes that scored high on the pupil attitude inventories used more indirect influence, while teachers of classes that scored low used less indirect influence.

In 1958 Flanders (12) expanded his investigation with a grant from the U.S. Office of Education. Attempts were now made to further explore flexibility of influence patterns as revealed in the teaching of different subject matter and during different phases of a lesson. In addition to attitude inventories, achievement was now explored as a correlate of teacher verbal behavior. During a two

week observation period, 16 seventh grade social studies teachers and 15 eighth grade mathematics teachers were observed for six two-hour periods and six one-hour periods respectively. Generally, different phases of the learning activities were recorded: routines, evaluation, new material, general discussion, and supervision of seatwork—with the addition of teacher-pupil planning in the social studies sessions.

The findings suggest practical implications for classroom teaching since students in the direct classrooms learned more and possessed more constructive and independent attitudes. Indirect teachers also revealed more flexibility in their influence patterns with varying activities. Although Flanders anticipated individual differences in pupil responses to teacher influence patterns and in different subject fields, the findings revealed that achievement and attitudes scores were significantly higher in both social studies and mathematics classes under an indirect influence pattern and that no differences in achievement were found when dependent prone students were compared with the more independent prone students. All types of students learned more working with the more flexible teachers.

Further Studies of Pupil Attitudes

An adjunctive study to Flanders' larger project was conducted by Amidon (1) with a sampling of 140 eighth grade pupils drawn from the larger population used by Flanders. Amidon sought to determine the effects of direct vs. indirect teacher behavior and of clear vs. unclear student perception of the learning goal on the achievement of eighth grade geometry students. The findings suggest that dependent-prone students

learn more under an indirect teacher and that direct influence may lower achievement and thus thwart learning for this type of student.

While Flanders was exploring teacher-pupil interaction at the University of Minnesota, Gage (16) was developing instruments for measuring teacher and pupil attitudes at the University of Illinois in 1955. Gage attempted to measure teachers' understanding of pupils and pupils' descriptions of teacher behavior. Three tests, designed to measure teacher understanding of pupil achievement, sensitivity to pupil problems and awareness of class sociometric structure, were administered to 103 fourth, fifth and sixth grade teachers. These tests were correlated with pupils' descriptions of teacher behavior. Gage found that teachers' accuracy in predicting inter-pupil preferences and pupils' judgment that their teacher understood the sociometric structure were significantly correlated.

At Harvard, Cogan (6) studied 987 eighth grade students in five junior high schools in two New England communities. Cogan used scales to assess student perceptions of the teacher and student reports of the frequency with which they did required school work and extra, non-required school work. Pupil perceptions of the teacher were classified in terms of preclusive, conjunctive or inclusive behaviors of teachers. The findings suggest that pupils report doing more assigned and extra school work when teacher behavior is perceived as inclusive.

Other imaginative approaches to understanding the teaching-learning process are being explored by deCharms and Bridgeman (7) at Washington University. These researchers view the contingency of behavior which exists between

the teacher and pupil as important to motivation and other such variables as security and liking for the teacher.

Implications or Applications of a Research Tool

Within recent years increased attention has been focused on scientifically describing teacher behavior as it manifests itself in the social climate of the classroom. Definitive methods for objectifying the subtle aspects of teacher-pupil interaction have been and are being explored. The significance of this research suggests multiple implications for the teacher, administrator, and curriculum specialist.

As tools are developed for measuring teacher-pupil behavior in the classroom, teachers will be able to improve the quality of their teaching through self-evaluation. On the instructional level, the teacher then becomes concerned with both diagnosis and remediation of behaviors which prevent effective communication.

Administrators and curriculum specialists will find these additional tools helpful as aids in appraising in-service education needs. More intensive research, in which pupil products are correlated with teaching patterns, may reveal the strengths and weaknesses of different teaching patterns, when used with varying methodology in teaching a wide range of subject fields.

The utilization of these tools, in school practice, may provide an effective aid for curriculum analysis and revision.

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Both in theory and in practice, whether evaluation has been formalized or not, the results are no longer in doubt. When simple bunches of students are converted into groups, and when the inherent group processes are understood and utilized by the instructor for purposes of teaching-learning, classroom work is improved. Students find the work less difficult and more fun. Learning is more nearly complete and review seems less necessary. Students pick up skills

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