Supervisors will improve teaching if they supplement their classroom observations with analysis of the learning materials teachers use.
concern is not with the quality of those initial selections but with their day-to-day use as teachers identify work activities for students. For example, artifact collection includes review and discussion of whether answering questions 1-15 on page 68 of the text or workbook is an appropriate seatwork activity.

Collecting and Analyzing Artifacts

Because artifact collection is not an established practice in most schools, we recommend that the teacher assume responsibility for collecting artifacts. Usually the collection period should be for an entire teaching unit or for an approximate three-week time block in a single class. Artifacts would include such things as copies of all dittoed or mimeographed teacher-developed materials; notes listing seatwork or homework assignments taken from commercially published works; copies of all quizzes or exams given during the collection period; and lists of materials stored in interest centers, laboratories, or computers that were used by students during the teacher's allocated instructional time as a part of seatwork or practice activities. Also, random samples of students' efforts on these artifacts should be collected so that both the artifact itself and performance can be analyzed and discussed.

When the artifacts have been collected, the teacher and supervisor should meet to review, analyze, and discuss the materials. Up to this point, logic and common sense seem to prevail. It is fairly easy to get teachers to collect artifacts and to convince them of the potential usefulness of a joint review and discussion. The more difficult part is knowing how to review the materials objectively and helpfully.

The framework shown in Figure 1 is adapted from a similar one developed by Suter and Waddell for use with health professionals.

These guidelines are organized under three key aspects related to quality: content, design, and presentation. They are necessarily general in order to include criteria for the broad spectrum of artifacts employed by teachers. They can be applied both to commercially produced items and to teacher-developed items. Because the guidelines are intended to be a comprehensive basis for analyzing artifacts, not every criterion can or should be applied to every type of artifact.

Moreover, in most cases, it would be too tedious to examine each individual artifact. It seems best to categorize the different types of artifacts and to deal just with random samples.

The concept of artifact collection and analysis should be introduced into all situations where classroom instructional improvement is a desired outcome. We have found one of its most positive benefits to be the high level of technical-professional talk between supervisors and teachers. Most people who have been involved in this type of activity report it as one of their most rewarding supervisory experiences. If they have appropriate perspective, we are confident that others will share this feeling.
