

What are some of the key elements that will help an evaluation system address the often conflicting needs of organizational accountability and individual growth? This article considers the critical attributes of effective evaluation systems. It draws on studies by Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin and Bernstein (1984), as well as on McGreal's (1983) work and an analysis of the evaluation systems of all of Colorado's 177 school districts (Conley 1986). This latter analysis contrasts theories and plans with actual practices among districts in the state.

What emerged from these studies was a series of eight critical attributes of effective evaluation systems. These eight can serve as a convenient framework for evaluating growth and improvement as well as for accountability and personnel decisions. They are as follows:

1. *All participants accept the validity of the system.* Validity refers to an actual relationship between what is observed and the results of the investigation (Best 1977). The evaluator and evaluatee must believe that the methods and procedures employed will accurately reflect the evaluatee's performance. Concepts such as "fair" or "impartial" to describe an evaluation do not fully capture the idea of shared participation.

Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin and Bernstein (1984) note that the purposes of the system must match the values, goals, and culture of the organization and community. In addition, the overwhelming majority of participants in the process must feel that the system collects, analyzes, and feeds back information in a manner that accurately reflects their view of reality.

To increase validity administrators can enlarge the participation of all groups involved in developing the system. Often a mystique surrounds the evaluation process, as if it were so technical that only experts could understand it. In practice, nothing could be further from the truth. Effective systems hinge on the imprecise and imperfect interaction between two people, the evaluator and the evaluatee. Mutual trust and confidence enable this process to work effectively.

2. *All participants thoroughly understand the mechanics of the system.*

Evaluatee Performance	Focus of Evaluation Process
Master	Validation/Growth
Competent	Growth/Improvement
----- Minimum District Performance Standards -----	
Marginal	Improvement/Remediation
----- Minimum Professional Standards -----	
Incompetent	Remediation/Documentation

Fig. 1. Levels of Evaluation

Mechanics of the system include frequency of evaluation, forms, timelines, purpose of conferences, relation of process to personnel decisions, appeal and rebuttal procedures, and methods of data collection, such as script taping and checklists.

A system becomes less effective when an evaluator using script taping, for example, never explains the tech-

nique to the teacher being observed. Having an evaluator writing furiously throughout a lesson without anyone in the room knowing why this is occurring alters teacher and student behavior.

Teachers often complain that they do not know how the system operates. Often districts distribute a manual to all teachers, including new hires, that contains a cursory explanation of the

Joint Committee to Develop Standards for Evaluation of Education Personnel

Since January 1985, ASCD and 13 other professional societies have been engaged in a project to develop standards to improve personnel evaluation in schools, universities, and other educational institutions. The ASCD representative to the 18-member joint committee is Philip L. Hosford.

The first draft of the standards, completed in fall 1985, has been reviewed by national and international review panels and by a blue-ribbon validation panel. Using the evaluations of the first draft, the committee developed a second draft, scheduled for hearings and field tests early in 1987, with publication expected in 1988.

The standards require that personnel evaluations be useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate. These general requirements are elaborated in 23 detailed standards. For example, the *Valuational Interpretation Standard* reads as follows:

The evaluation data about an educator should be interpreted in terms of clearly specified responsibilities, performance objectives, and qualifications so that judgments and decisions concerning such matters as selection, certification, counseling for improvement, promotion, and termination will be justified in terms of sound standards as well as high quality data.

Each specific requirement is followed by an explanation of its concepts, a rationale, guidelines to facilitate implementation, common errors to be avoided, and one or more illustrative cases.

A key purpose of the standards is to help convert the many intensive and sometimes frenzied efforts to expand and strengthen evaluations of teachers and other educators into a constructive force for improving education. The book provides practical advice for applying the standards to a wide range of institutions, roles, and personnel actions.

For information about the project, write to: Daniel L. Stufflebeam, Chair, Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, Evaluation Center, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008-3899. Telephone: (616) 383-8166.

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