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ABSTRACT

A list of the current approaches to teacher evaluation should include the following: (1) examination of student gain scores on standardized tests, (2) analysis of typical student improvement, (3) teaching performance testing, (4) teacher skill testing, (5) administrator or peer group observations and ratings, and (6) student observations and ratings. The first three approaches tend to emphasize the product dimension of teaching, whereas the latter three focus more on the process of teaching. Most of the research activities on teacher evaluation have concentrated on the molecular level of teaching--the processes and results that occur within a classroom setting--whereas administrative concerns seem to be more at the molar level--the overall workload and attendant results. One way of performing formative evaluation at the molar level while increasing teacher morale is to incorporate elements of management by objectives. This is what has been done in the Faculty Performance Objective Form designed for the faculty of education at Queen's University. This instrument (included in an appendix) can be used in overall and specific planning; as an additional form of motivation for individual faculty; and as a source of information for promotions, tenure, and firing. (Author/IRT)

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EVALUATING TEACHERS

J. Dale Burnett

Queen's University

Paper to be presented at the annual conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, University of Alberta, Edmonton, June, 1975.

EVALUATING TEACHERS

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The title strikes terror in the hearts of teachers and evaluators alike. Brownie points, professional recommendations, merit pay, accountability, promotions, job security, student power, complaints, reliability, attendance, departmental exams, extracurricular activities, cafeteria duty, tidyness, validity, organization, personal appearance, gain scores and so on. Who is to say what preferences lurks in the hearts of men! The Shadow may know - but that isn't much help to the rest of us mortals.

On with the topic! The present paper will summarize a number of current approaches to teacher evaluation, review the progress to date, and provide a suggestion for future consideration. Perhaps not as much fun as nostalgia, but certainly just as important.

CURRENT APPROACHES

In recent years there has been a tendency among evaluators to divide educational evaluation into two categories: process and product. Historically the emphasis has been on the process component - the school inspector or principal observing a teacher in the classroom and then providing a brief report on the teacher's strengths and weaknesses. However, lately, there has been an increasing interest focusing on what a student can do as a result of instruction - the product dimension.

A listing of current approaches to teacher evaluation should include the following:

1. Examination of student gain scores on standardized tests
2. Analysis of typical student improvement
3. Teaching Performance Testing
4. Teacher skill testing
5. Administrator or peer group observations and ratings
6. Student observations and ratings.

The first three approaches tend to emphasize the product dimension of teaching whereas the latter three focus more on the process of teaching. A brief description of the six approaches is appropriate since some of the labels have yet to receive wide acceptance.

1. Examination of student gain scores on standardized tests.

This approach received its impetus from the performance contracting movement in the United States. Essentially the procedure involves administering a commercially available test in the relevant subject area, for example - reading, in September and then again in June. The improvement in student scores is taken as a measure of teacher effectiveness. Glass (1974) provides a scathing review of such practice, citing such weaknesses as irrelevance of many items, nonrandom assignment of students to classes, unreliability of the improvement index and high administration costs.

2. Analysis of typical student improvement.

This is really a variant of the first approach. A pre-test is administered at the beginning of term to all the students in a district for a specific grade and subject matter. At the end of term a post-test is given to the same students and averages for both tests for each class are computed. A point (pre-test average, post-test

average) is plotted for each class and a regression line of best fit is determined to represent the "typical" relationship between the two tests over all of the classes in the district. Teachers whose classes fall above the line are said to do better than average and those who fall below the line do poorer than average. It is important to recognize that the nature of the statistical procedure ensures that approximately half of the teachers must perform below the average. Most of Glass' earlier criticisms would seem to apply equally well to this approach.

3. Teaching Performance Testing.

Very briefly, the idea underlying this approach is to have the teacher provide a short lesson on a novel topic and then to measure his/her effectiveness by noting how well the students do on an achievement test. A more detailed description (Popham, 1973), a report on the use of the procedure (Popham, 1971) and a critique of the procedure (Glass, 1974) all provide additional information on this approach.

4. Teacher skill testing.

The teacher being evaluated is presented with a typical classroom problem and is asked to either say or write what her solution would be. The adequacy of the solution is used to infer the teacher's effectiveness. This approach is a common component of many teacher education programs but is unlikely to receive wide acceptance in the more practical environment of a school system.

5. Administrator or peer group observations and ratings.

As mentioned earlier, this approach has the longest history. Thus in spite of some statistical difficulties, notably reliability and to some extent validity, this approach must possess a satisfactory, although not a desirable, degree of utility. The main problem appears

to center on the issue of what to look for. Attempts to minimize this problem have focused on imposing a greater degree of structure on the observation procedure. Special forms, and even training, are often required before becoming an observer.

6. Student observations and ratings.

Although the procedure is very similar to the previous approach, the critical difference is in the nature of the observer. In this case it is the recipient, the consumer, of the actual instruction. While suffering from the same technical difficulties as other observation systems, this approach has gained in popularity in recent years. Perhaps the main difficulty with this approach occurs after the data has been collected and summarized, namely that of interpretation. For example, what importance should one attach to a relatively low rating on a student attitude scale?

REVIEW OF TEACHER EVALUATION

The topic of teacher evaluation is not a new one. Williams (1971) has provided a brief review stretching from about 500 BC in Greece to 1970 AD in North America. After 2500 years of attention, recent summaries indicate that little progress has been achieved: "Despite all of our efforts, we apparently have no generally accepted conceptual system, psychological or otherwise, by which either to formulate or to identify the skills of teaching (Smith, 1971, p.3)." "It is possible that the patterns of effective teaching for different ends are so idiosyncratic that they will never be isolated; it is possible that studying teaching in natural settings in unproductive because the settings are not functional for the desired outcomes... At the moment there has not been enough research to make any firm

statement about any of these concerns (Rosenshine and Furst, 1973, p.175)."

"Teacher educators err when they promote teaching skills that are approximately consistent with scientific conclusions as if these skills were certain, confirmed answers about how a teacher should proceed to effect desirable consequences in learners. Instead, such skills should be regarded as hypotheses to be tested (McNeil and Popham, 1973, p.241)." The results of our research efforts to date appear clear: inconclusive.

Where do we go from here? Should we continue to refine our instruments and methodologies or do our underlying concepts and rationals require re-examination? A recent article by Snow (1974) provides some guidance for new research designs that may help overcome some of the technical problems.

Sanders (1972) provides a fresh insight into our conceptual difficulties by suggesting that, "the fault perhaps lies not with the inadequacy of the proposed answers or solutions, but rather with the inadequacy of the proposed questions (p.12)." He goes on to suggest that teaching competence may not have a core of essential attributes; that it may be a disjunctive rather than a conjunctive concept. Certainly the perspective one has plays a major role in the type of research studies that are carried out.

Another, equally basic, question about teacher evaluation may be asked from a decision theory point of view. The question is WHY? Why evaluate teachers (or teacher-trainees)? What decisions are going to be made as a result of the evaluation? What types of information are essential for a particular type of decision? More leading questions might include

"Are we collecting data to justify political decisions?" or "Do we collect data so that we can say we collect data?" It is this perspective of "why" that underlies the remainder of this article.

Scriven (1974) clarifies the distinction between goals of evaluation (to answer certain types of question about certain entities) and the roles of evaluation (e.g. part of a teacher training activity; curriculum development; investigation into purchase of AV equipment). Scriven goes on to state his now well known definition of formative evaluation: Formative evaluation plays "a role in the on-going improvement of the curriculum (p.62)." He then focuses in on the heart of the problem, "By stressing the constructive part evaluation may play in non-threatening activities (roles) we slur over the fact that its goals always include the estimation of merit, worth, value, etc. which all too clearly contributes in another role to decisions about promotion and rejection of personnel and courses (p.63)."

SUGGESTION

It is easy to conceptualize a varriant of formative evaluation, that refers specifically to the role of on-going improvement of teacher effectiveness. Ideally, it would be desirable if this primary role were supplemented with another role - that of maintaining or improving general staff morale.

At this stage another useful distinction needs to be made - that of the level of teacher activity under consideration. A molecular level might refer to processes and results that occurs within a classroom setting whereas a molar level may refer to one's overall workload and the attendent results. It seems to be a fair statement that almost all research activities to date have concentrated on the former level -

a natural emphasis when one is trying to discover relationships between teaching and learning - whereas many administrative concerns seem to emphasize a more molar level of activity.

During the last decade industrial, commercial and government agencies have shown increasing interest in a managerial process referred to as Management By Objectives (MBO). This process appears to be an example of such a molar approach to evaluation. The essential components of MBO are, (1) the setting of objectives, (2) some form of review of progress toward objectives, (3) some appropriate action and (4) the setting of new objectives. MBO may play many roles: planning, appraisal, determination of rewards and increasing motivation. With respect to this latter role, Reddin (1971) says, "If properly introduced, MBO has a high motivational content, especially if objectives are mutually set with superiors, if the superior is seen more as a coach and less as a judge, and if those who consistently perform well are ultimately rewarded (p.17)."

Although it is not labeled as MBO, an example of this perspective in an educational setting is provided by Harcleroad (1971): "Accreditation by this association (Northwest Association) is based on the institution's total strength and in particular upon the success of the institution and each of its constituent parts in formulating and accomplishing its specific objectives. The clarity of institutional objectives and the effectiveness of organization and operation in the attainment of these objectives are of chief concern in final appraisal (p.7)."

Herman (1973) provides a complete example of such a plan for evaluating teachers, administrators, custodians, secretaries, and cafeteria

employees. Many of the ideas and examples in his book have been incorporated into the Faculty Performance Objectives Form (Appendix I) designed for the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. This latter form is based on the juxtaposition of two concepts: (1) a detailed description of one's anticipated workload for a twelve-month period and (2) explicit provision for mid-term and end-of-term evaluation of achievement as compared with anticipated achievement. The form has been specifically tailored to the program offered at Queen's University, but it may be easily modified by appropriate insertion and deletions to meet the requirement of other inatitutions.

Referring to Scriven's distinction between goals and roles of evaluation, the Faculty Performance Objective Form has as its goal a complete and accurate description of one's activities, and the necessary judgement of the value of these activities. The achievement of this goal would appear to be a marked improvement over more heuristic statements of one's individual performance.

With respect to evaluation roles for this instrument, three possibilities immediately come to mind: (1) useful for overall and specific planning, (2) additional form of motivation for individual faculty members and (3) source of information for promotions, tenure and firing.

The general thesis of this report has been to review current approaches to teacher evaluation, to identify the molecular level of most such investigations, to suggest that a more molar approach may be more appropriate within some faculties and to identify one such approach.

Since this form is relatively detailed and long (15 pages), a two-page Summary Sheet (Appendix II) has been designed to provide a profile of an individual's performance. As an example, a senior administrator and the faculty member could sit down together and, using the main form as a reference, rate the individual's contribution on each of the categories. A quick scan of the resulting profile should indicate areas of emphasis. It would also be a relatively easy manner to summarize the results of all of these individual profiles to obtain an institutional profile.

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APPENDIX I

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1) | Comment (Dec. 31) | Comment (May 30)

TEACHING (B.Ed. program)

B.Ed. courses offered for first time

No	Title	Hr/Wk	Wks	No Students

B.Ed. courses offered again but substantially revised

No	Title	Hr/Wk	Wks	No Students

B.Ed. courses offered again

No	Title	Hr/Wk	Wks	No Students

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comment (Dec. 31)	Comment (May 30)
Input into other B.Ed. courses		
No / Title / Topic		
B.Ed. student advisor for		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1) | Comment (Dec. 31) | Comment (May 30)

TEACHING (M.Ed. program)

M.Ed. courses offered for first time

No	Title	No of students

M.Ed. courses offered again but substantially revised

No	Title	No of students

M.Ed. courses offered again

No	Title	No of students

Input into other M.Ed. courses

No	Title	No of students

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comment (Dec. 31)	Comment (May 30)
Continuing Program Advisor for New Program Advisor for		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comment (Dec. 31)	Comment (May 30)
Project Supervisor for Name Title		
Second reader for Project for Name Title		
Thesis chairman for Name Title		
Thesis committee member for Name Title		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comment (Dec. 31)	Comment (May 30)

TEACHING (Continuing Education)

Workshops offered

Title	Hours	No of students

Workshop participant

Title	Hours	No of students

Public speaker for

Title	Purpose

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comment (Dec. 31)	Comment (May 30)
SCHOOL ACTIVITIES Student Teaching		
School Liaison for		
Meetings with teachers/administrators		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comment (Dec. 31)	Comment (May 30)
Meetings with Board/Ministry officials		
Activities involving students		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comment (Dec. 31)	Comment (May 30)
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT		
Discussions		
Submitted Proposals		
Activities		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comment (Dec. 31)	Comment (May 30)
RESEARCH Discussions		
Submitted Proposals		
Activities		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comments (Dec. 31)	Comments (May 30)
REPORTS/PUBLICATIONS		
Books		
Reports		
Articles		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comment (Dec. 31)	Comment (May 30)
Continuing Program Advisor for New Program Advisor for		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comment (Dec. 31)	Comment (May 30)
Project Supervisor for Name — Title		
Second reader for Project for Name — Title		
Thesis chairman for Name — Title		
Thesis committee member for Name — Title		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comments (Dec. 31)	Comments (May 30)
CONSULTING Meetings with Member of project for PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES Membership in Special Events/Tasks 		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comments (Dec. 31)	Comments (May 30)
COMMITTEE WORK Faculty University Other		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comments (Dec. 31)	Comments (May 30)
SELF-IMPROVEMENT Credit courses taken Non-credit courses taken Workshops attended Conferences/Conventions attended Additional activities		

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION (July 1)	Comments (Dec. 31)	Comments (May 30)
PERSONAL PRIORITIES 1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____		

APPENDIX II

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

SUMMARY SHEET

Name: _____ Date: _____

DESCRIPTION	0	1	2	3	+
TEACHING (M.Ed. program)					
1. M. Ed. courses first time					
2. M. Ed. courses revised					
3. M. Ed. courses repeated					
4. Input into other courses					
5. Continuing program advisor					
6. New program advisor					
7. Project supervisor					
8. Second project reader					
9. Thesis chairman					
10. Thesis committee					
TEACHING (B.Ed. program)					
1. B. Ed. courses first time					
2. B. Ed. courses revised					
3. B. Ed. courses repeated					
4. Input into other courses					
5. B. Ed. student advisor					
TEACHING (Continuing Education)					
1. Workshops offered					
2. Workshop participant					
3. Public Talks					
SCHOOL ACTIVITIES					
1. Student Teaching					
2. School Liaison					
3. Meetings with teachers/administrators					
4. Meetings with Board/Ministry officials					
5. Activities involving students					
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT					
1. Discussions					
2. Proposals					
3. Activities					

FACULTY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES FORM

DESCRIPTION	0	1	2	3	+
RESEARCH					
1. Discussions					
2. Proposals					
3. Activities					
REPORTS/PUBLICATIONS					
1. Books					
2. Reports					
3. Articles					
CONSULTING					
1. Meetings					
2. Member					
PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES					
1. Membership					
2. Special Events/Tasks					
COMMITTEE WORK					
1. Faculty					
2. University					
3. Other					
SELF-IMPROVEMENT					
1. Credit courses					
2. Non-credit courses					
3. Workshops					
4. Conferences/Conventions					
5. Additional activities					