

September 1949.) Mimeographed.  
(28) Smith, E. R. and Tyler, Ralph W., *Appraising and Recording Student Progress*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942.

(29) Stanford (University) Consultation Service, *Diagnostic Instruments*:

a. *What Do You Think of Your Teacher?* Form 1. 10/49-300. 5 p. (mimeographed).

b. *What Do You Think of This Pupil?* Form 2. 11/49-300. 3 p. (mimeographed).

c. *Purposes and Activity Rating Blank*. Form 3. 11/49-300. 3 p. (mimeographed).

The *Buros Yearbook* (26) is included here because it reviews most of the achievement-type tests contributed during the "census" of evaluation materials herein reported. The Stanford materials (29) did not seem to fit into any of the categories, hence find their place here. The item from the San Francisco Public School Research Bureau (27) is representative of a number of publications associating evaluation with measurement involving the use of assorted batteries of tests.

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## How Evaluate Teachers?

ROMA GANS

Several avenues to improvement of teaching services are indicated by Professor Roma Gans, Teachers College, Columbia University.

RENEWED EMPHASIS on the evaluation of teachers can be noticed today. A number of reasons for this might be cited. First, there is the attempt to rate teachers in order to determine salary increases. Several such efforts are structured on a statewide basis. New York State has even gone so far as to write a merit-rating-salary plan into law. However, this movement is being met with such resistance from teachers, supervisors and administrators, who find present-day rating plans of doubtful reliability, that this trend is more likely to be curtailed than extended.

Another reason for this increased emphasis might be that many professions besides that of teaching seem to be placing stress upon evaluation of

personnel. Several schools of medicine have experimented in the selection of candidates. One large school for social workers is conducting a pilot study in which students' personality and performance are carefully studied at several strategic points in their educational program, then observed in the field at work for an extended period of time following graduation.

Of more influence than either of these ventures is the widely publicized work of the Staff of Selective Services in World War II and which is reported in *The Assessment of Men*.<sup>1</sup> These and other attempts to evaluate personnel in relation to particular work to be done

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<sup>1</sup> OSS, *The Assessment of Men*, Rinehart Company, New York, 1948.

are partially responsible for stirring educators to probe in a serious manner the evaluation of teachers.

### Teacher: Key to Change

However, two other sources seem to be bringing the need for study of teacher personality, teacher growth, and teacher performance more to the front and also more in focus with a teacher's function. The first is the now well-established trend in teachers' participation in studying the curriculum and making changes. Curriculum improvement and teacher growth have now come to be recognized as tightly interwoven. "The teacher is a key to change in the schools' program," is today's truism.

The other source, closely related to this, comes from the fields of mental hygiene and psychiatry in which the relation of the teacher to children and youth is regarded as very influential in their personality development. Plant, in describing the emotional needs of young children and how these operate in child-teacher relationships, encourages educators in "selecting teachers who are sensitive to the emotional as well as the intellectual needs of people."<sup>2</sup> Many similar statements can be found in writings since the middle nineteen-thirties.

### Possible Next Steps

But recognition of the problem and the importance attached to it, although goading, does not point with sufficient clarity toward possible next steps. The problem involves the tremendous breadth of sociological and cultural

anthropology and also the depth of the profoundest insights into personality.

To reveal some of the facets, teachers come from a variety of family backgrounds and cultural influences, and they teach in a variety of communities with similar or widely differing cultural patterns. How does a teacher from a large, mixed urban area react to the environment of a village resembling a small island of people? And how does a teacher from a small, strict community react to a congested city neighborhood with high mobility in school population? Are some teacher personalities so fluid that they remain quite the same in their attitudes toward parents, children and other teachers no matter where they teach, while others are thrown off center by even slight variations between home background and teaching community?

Another highly pertinent question is how do such common practices as teacher rating, supervisory visits, pressures on pupil achievement, importance attached to class norms on standardized tests, tenure, rigid time schedules and crowded, interrupted daily programs affect teacher personality? How do they affect teacher-pupil relationships—helpfully or adversely?

Recent books and pamphlets are helping to highlight the very complex, interwoven and emotionally involved responsibilities which a teacher faces.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Helpful reading is included in: Cole, L. E. and Bruce, W. F. *Educational Psychology*, chap. 16, World Book, 1950.

Biber, B. and Snyder, A. *How Do We Know A Good Teacher*, Bank Street Publication, New York.

Brown, F. J. *Educational Sociology*, chap. 12, Prentice-Hall, 1947.

Kallen, H. M. *The Education of Free Men*, chap. 3, Farrar-Straus, 1949.

<sup>2</sup> Plant, James S. *The Envelope*, p. 21. The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1950.

These descriptions serve an important function because a thorough understanding of the problem is essential if inquiries and pilot studies are to have functional reliability.

Such understanding also needs further implementation from the fields of clinical psychology, mental hygiene and psychiatry, the special fields from which we draw help in understanding human personality. Of equal importance with contributions from the two sources already mentioned is that of the professional educator who understands the nature of good education and who can help to implement such concepts in practice.

These three fronts, *the broad sociological and cultural-anthropological, the psychological and psychiatric, and the educational*, must be recognized for the bearing each has upon teachers and their professional fitness.

### **Observer Must Understand Self**

All of this may sound rather involved. One may be inclined to ask, "How about the National Teacher Examination? Isn't that a simpler way out?" Or, "How about relying upon educational leaders who have claimed to operate very successfully in the appraisal of teacher personality and teacher success by following hunches?"

No one will deny that a teacher, to be a helpful guide to children, must possess a degree of mental competence which will function in the myriad of interpersonal situations which make up good teaching. However, no written test is a valid and reliable measure of performance in situations which make up teaching. The use of the test, even to screen out the grossly unfit, may

be questioned because some sensitive but desirable applicants may have emotional blocks toward tests of this nature. Hunches, too, are of questionable value, although careful observation of teachers in situations with children are very helpful if the observer is well informed on behavioral manifestations and also understands himself.

This last point is a difficult one, so a brief comment may be desirable. In order to understand the teacher who is being observed at work, the supervisor must also understand why he approves or questions certain practices, and why his own feelings in the observation process are what they are. The evaluation must therefore be accepted as an evaluation of the observer as well as of the teacher.

### **Curriculum Planning Gives Perspective**

Real progress is already being made toward solution of this highly involved problem. In our sound curriculum planning projects especially have significant steps been taken. The term, "sound," is used here intentionally. Those projects which include study of the emotional needs of children and the teacher-pupil relationship are considered sound because they plumb the causes of behavior. They will eventually, if wisely guided, develop on the part of teachers, administrators, parents and others a more adequate insight into what makes children behave like children. These projects, furthermore, again if wisely guided, will increase the understanding which adults, teachers, administrators, parents and other community members need to have of themselves and how they affect children and each other.

Progress in such programs, however, can be assured only if the whole situation, including the backgrounds of the adults and the general conduct of school affairs, is studied. These factors are all important. They are a part of the situation, the environment, and often have decisive effect upon the conduct of children and teachers.

The nature and extent of change in practices found to be desirable may extend beyond the walls of the classroom, even beyond the school itself. And changes must include, in addition to relationships between children and teacher, those between children and other personnel, and teachers and other personnel. Curriculum change, to be valid, must enter all areas; and as one valiant principal reported in committee this summer, "must include all offices and officials."

### **Use of Specialists Encouraged**

Use of specialists from the fields of mental hygiene, clinical psychology, child guidance and psychiatry in the pursuit of such basic curriculum studies is growing. The ultimate effect of the interchange of ideas and mutual help to emanate from such cooperative ventures is gratifying to anticipate. Some outcomes will surely be a better understanding of children, a wider and more adequate knowledge of education and a greater respect for the difficulties inherent in teaching.

Teacher evaluation as an integral part of curriculum study is adding another unique contribution, namely the study of teacher performance in relation to the educational purposes of the school. This eliminates one of the factors which often block attempts

at evaluation, namely the difficulty of studying a teacher apart from the purposes of a particular education program.

There are other facets of the evaluation problem on which progress is neither so widespread nor so obvious as that evident in the curriculum study program. One may ask such a question as: Is it possible to screen candidates who wish to enter the profession with a comfortable degree of assurance that no highly desirable person is screened out, and that no grossly undesirable person is admitted? Both prongs of this question are of utmost importance, though at present a reliable answer, one that will be borne out by the subsequent teaching of the particular candidate, has not yet been found. It is still too soon for panaceas to have sprouted, but one does hear an occasional champion state that "the Rorschach Technique will ultimately give us the answers to all such questions." Careful research to date, however, does not concur with this hope.

Closely related to the problem of selecting those who are to become teachers is the selecting of the right personality for the various educational responsibilities. Is a teacher a good teacher for any age group? Some teacher education programs seem to imply an affirmative answer to this question. Will a teacher who is afraid of the volatile six- and seven-year-olds be a good teacher of two- or three-year-olds? Will the unhappy teacher whom romance passed by be warmer and more understanding with young children of pre-dating age than with teenagers? Can some generalizations be obtained through careful personality

studies if combined with in-school observations?

There may be some assumptions about answers to these questions, but careful pilot studies need to be completed before one may act upon them with confidence. Such studies should prove of great value in the selection, pre-service programs and proper placement of teachers as well as of principals and other school personnel.

### Specialists Must Cooperate

Study of these questions requires the cooperation of several disciplines. Certainly the psychiatrist, social case worker and clinical psychologist are essential to a research team. However, the reliability of such cooperative effort will require just as essentially the participation of educators who, in the team, are the specialists who must contribute an understanding of the functional demands upon a personality in a particular teaching situation.

Some readers, with a high regard for the clinical approach to personality studies, may demur on this point. If, however, one accepts the "situation" theory of the late Harry Stack Sullivan as described by Mullahy, namely that "the interpersonal situations in which one is involved, in the long run furnish the acid test as to what sort of person one is,"<sup>4</sup> then the function of the educator must be understood in the study of teacher personality.

### Three Avenues Open for Action

The work ahead based upon the problem as here presented may fall into three categories. The first is to

check and wherever possible undo evaluating practices that may be destructive of wholesome personality growth of teachers and injurious to the profession and the schools. Narrow teacher-rating scales, teacher examinations, and classroom observations that disquiet or intimidate teachers no longer befit an informed profession. These devices may have been established with very worthy underlying purposes. The considered criticism of them over the past three decades, however, should now begin to show some effect. Furthermore, other teacher evaluation projects may be vitiated by the negative attitudes which are engendered by them.

Secondly, continuation and further extension of curriculum studies in individual schools and on a system-wide basis should be encouraged. Any leads and clues as to what circumstances contribute toward a better understanding of teachers and of what experiences help them to function more adequately should be carefully noted and followed up. These studies should also make effective use of specialists from other fields.

Lastly, with regard to personnel needs within the profession demanding decisions of long-lasting and far-reaching consequences, pilot research studies, planned cooperatively with leaders from other disciplines, should be made. One must realize, however, that these studies if they are to offer real help may take a number of years and will also require adequate financial support.

These three phases of the question will all contribute to the ultimate, much-needed answer to *How Evaluate Teachers?*

<sup>4</sup> Mullahy, Patrick, *Oedipus Myth and Complex*, p. 313. Hermitage Press, 1949.

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