New Roles Can Facilitate Change

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THERE is great need for creation of a new model of relationships within local school systems in order to facilitate educational improvement. Current models are not adequate. This is evidenced by the fact that at present teacher attitudes, behavior, and information have changed only meagerly, and certainly not to the extent that new information has been generated.

Reasons for this plight can be identified. Among these are two factors: (a) lack of adequate teacher evaluation and (b) the inadequate concept of supervision. Such factors can be dealt with by introducing a new structure of roles into the local system. Actually the effects of dealing with these two deficiencies could help to remedy the other, subtler causes.

A recent personal review of research literature revealed the following central factors as necessary for changing teacher behavior:

1. Provision of sufficient and relevant reward for change
2. Climate for change—warm and nonthreatening; with opportunity to work through feelings and beliefs, to communicate, and to experiment
3. Teacher participation in decision making
4. Adequate informational, technical, and affective support
5. Tension—in the forms of cognitive dissonance and/or group or organizational pressures
6. A change agent who possesses the relevant competencies, information, and human relations skills.[1]

With all its shortcomings, the supervisory model cannot deal with these factors adequately. It is my reasoned judgment that the supervisory model should be scrapped and should be replaced by the "Teacher Educator-Evaluator" model.

The Teacher Educator-Evaluator Model

Note the needs for adequate evaluation as a form of tension toward improvement of teacher behavior, and for the facilitator of behavior change. Add to this the perception of many psychologists that it is impossible for a single person to act as both evaluator and helping person, for the combination of roles negates the effectiveness of both. One then has the justification for establishment of the separate, but interdependent roles and positions of Teacher Educator and Evaluator.

The Teacher Educator

I suggest that on the staff of each school there should be at least one Teacher Educator, independent of the principal, and

[1] Walter A. Mickler, Jr. "Changing Teacher Behavior." Unpublished paper. Gainesville: University of Florida, 1970.

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responsible to a Teacher Education Division of the central system. The Teacher Educator could then act as an independent force to create a climate for change within the school. His role would be that of assistance only, not evaluation. By being within the school he would have constant contact with teachers, increasing the likelihood of greater influence on them.

The Teacher Educator should be well grounded in group dynamics, learning theory, personality dynamics, human development, curriculum design and development; instructional dimensions, organization, strategies, techniques, and resources; educational research (primarily for consumption), measurement and evaluation, and communications theory. The range of competencies desired necessitates an advanced degree. Yet, training is not enough. The success of the Teacher Educator would depend on analysis and training skills, and the abilities to translate theory into practice and to work with people in a nonthreatening manner, in addition to knowledge.

The tasks of the Teacher Educator would include the following:

1. Providing "mirrors of behavior" and information to teachers about their instructional behaviors and practices and their curricular organizations, discussing with them the effects of their actions on student learning, suggesting alternatives, and assisting teachers to change or acquire the behaviors desired

2. Assisting in skill and competency development

3. Providing technical and affective support for the consolidation of behavior change

4. Acting as a counselor of teachers, helping them to solve problems and deal with situations they deem important

5. Working with teachers in curriculum development

6. Providing professional inputs into faculty decision making

7. Dissemination of information to teachers on new developments which might relate to them and their practices, and establishment of a professional library within the school

8. Making teachers fully aware of the criteria under which they will be evaluated and helping them to attain acceptable levels of competence in relation to the criteria.

The Evaluator

The evaluation role would be a system level one, in which those working in the Performance Evaluation Division would be expected to develop and apply ways of measuring teacher performance in relation to criteria. The criteria should be established by a Joint Committee on Evaluation composed of teachers, Teacher Educators, administrators, evaluation staff members, and relevant educational experts. Criteria should be limited to only those relating to teacher competence as a learning facilitator and as a cooperating member of a goal-directed educational organization. I would hope that evaluations would include those by peers, students, and administrators, and analysis of recorded live classroom behavior.

Note, however, that it is unreasonable to expect teachers to accept performance evaluation without its being extended to apply to *all* system members. With the Joint Committee on Evaluation and the Evaluation Division, the structures are already created which could develop and apply criteria to the performance of these other personnel, based on adequate role definition. I perceive that such extension of evaluation to apply to all system personnel would be a desirable by-product of teacher performance evaluation.

Resulting Changes

Perhaps the greatest change in role resulting from implementation of the model would be for that of the principal. Most principals, as administrators, attempt erroneously to act as management level personnel and to exert a high degree of control over all aspects of the school. With responsibility for evaluation of teacher performance and for uplifting of curriculum and instruction placed with other posts, the role of the principal is reduced to its proper context—that of providing the organizational arrangements, conditions, materials, and support necessary for effective learning and teaching.

The position of curriculum assistant or coordinator would be eliminated, as that function would be fulfilled by the Teacher Educator.

At the system level, the model would almost necessitate a reorganization of the staff to include the following new divisions:

1. An Information Division, with public relations and professional information subdivisions. The function of the latter would be constant review, summarization, and dissemination of information from professional journals, research studies, and educational agencies.

2. A Teacher Education Division, with teacher educator and special resources subdivisions. The latter would include subject matter and special area specialists, and would be expected to procure outside professional inputs for in-service education when needed.

3. The Performance Evaluation Division, to act as specified.

Sequence of Implementation

A logical sequence for institution of the model would first place Teacher Educators in the schools. The next three simultaneous steps include informing teachers that criteria under which they will be evaluated will be formed during that school year and applied at a specified time; formation and convening of the Joint Committee on Evaluation; and establishment of the Evaluation Division. At the designated time, evaluation would proceed, with constant screening of the methods of measurement and evaluation, accompanied by constant review of the criteria themselves.

In this sequence, the Teacher Educator would have lead time to establish a helping relationship with teachers prior to evaluation, so that he would not be associated with it. As the criteria are developed, he would take on the task of explaining them to teachers, and helping the teachers to attain satisfactory levels of competence in relation to the criteria. In so doing, he would be acting as a buffer to moderate, to make tolerable, and to turn into functional channels the anxiety created by the tension input of performance evaluation.

There is a growing demand in our society for educational accountability, and rightly so. Teacher performance must and should be evaluated in terms of facilitation of learning. However, if teachers have not acquired the skills and competencies they need in order to be effective, due to failure of colleges of education to fulfill their obligation to teachers, the demand for accountability is not legitimate, unless the local system provides the teacher with the opportunity to acquire the skills, along with sufficient motivation and reward for doing so.

I believe the Teacher Educator-Evaluator model can provide full opportunity for such behavior acquisition, some motivation for doing so, and some reward in the form of knowledge of greater personal competence in helping young people to learn. (Other relevant rewards must be provided by the system.) In the model, the system builds in a permanent, close contact and a facilitating change agent; and with adequate teacher evaluation there is a constant motivating tension toward improvement.

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