

Teacher Selection: A Response

The structured interview is better than informal procedures, but the instrument used must be the product of careful research.

GALE D. MULLER

As Pellicer says, researchers at Selection Research, Inc., have long been involved in the development of interviewing techniques. One of many interviews, the Teacher Perceiver is currently used for teacher selection and development in over 300 school districts throughout the United States and Canada. Our research indicates that this systematic, structured interview is clearly better than the informal "gut level" feelings often used in hiring procedures. However, we have seen little evidence that a list of questions developed by a committee without hours of competent research is significantly predictive. It is important that any systematic interviewing procedure demonstrate validity by discriminating between superior and less effective personnel. This can be accomplished only through competent, intensive, and repeated research. We have learned that there are three key aspects to any interviewing and selection technique:

1. *Standardization*, so that all applicants receive a fair, unbiased hearing;
2. *Reliability*, so that all applicants and interviews are reviewed in a fair, unbiased manner;
3. *Validity*, so that the procedures used do discriminate between highly recommended and less highly rated applicants.

Validity for the Teacher Perceiver Interview has been established through a variety of research studies. These studies have focused upon analyzing teachers who are superior on measurable criteria such as student ratings, supervisor ratings, administrator ratings, or expert observations. Research by Preuss (1972); Sim-

mons (1976); Coker, Lorentz, and Coker (1976); Jones (1977); and Muller (1976, 1977) are among recent studies that have indicated positive significant correlation of the Teacher Perceiver Interview with external rating criteria. The results of these studies are clear: when used in conjunction with other regular hiring techniques, the Teacher Perceiver can increase the probability of hiring more highly rated teachers.

The important task of selecting teachers for our children can no longer be left to unsophisticated methods. However, we must make sure that new systematic interviewing techniques are really an improvement. Otherwise, we will have simply replaced an informal procedure that has uncertain validity with a formal, structured procedure that also has uncertain validity. To protect against such a pitfall, we must conduct needed research. ■

References

- Coker, H.; Lorentz, J. L.; and Coker, J. G. "The Use of a Structured Interview to Identify Effective Teachers." *Journal of Teacher Education* 27 (Spring 1976).
- Jones, D. "Predicting Teaching Process with the Teacher Perceiver Interview." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1977.
- Muller, G. D. "Local Validation Reports." Set of local validation reports, Selection Research, Inc., 1976-77.
- Preuss, W. "Profile and Selection of Teacher Candidates at Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska." Report prepared by Selection Research, Inc., Lincoln, Nebraska, 1972.
- Simmons, J. E. "A Study to Test the Teacher Perceiver Interview as an Instrument That Would Select Vocational Agriculture Instructions That Develop Positive Rapport with Their Students." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1976.

Gale Muller is Vice President and General Manager of SRI Perceiver Academies in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Copyright © 1981 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.