

This article is an analysis current education evaluation procedure of program and personnel evaluation. It describes what I consider is a better system.

A program without an effective evaluation procedure is like a ship without navigation equipment. It is the evaluation program that provides the necessary guidance needed to assist in achieving the desired goal. Not only does a good evaluation system help achieve the desired goals, but without an effective evaluation system one will never know whether the goal has been achieved. A good program will have three essential elements.

These are:

1. an objective
2. a procedure for accomplishing the objective.
3. an evaluation program.

The purposes of an evaluation system are:

- 1 To enable the administrators to know if program is achieving its objectives.
2. To enable the administrators know what corrective actions may be taken to improve the program.
3. To help the administrator know what actions should be taken on personnel's employment, promotion, merit increases and in-service education?
4. How to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the program.

Any sound education program will have goals it hopes to achieve. Generally these goals will be broad generalizations which can give directions for the program. They are like the North Star was to the ancient mariners. It could never be reached, but helped guide the sailors. Using goals as a guiding principle, critical and optional objectives can be developed.

Critical objectives are measureable and ones that everyone should learn. Critical skills usually go from simple to complex. In most cases it is necessary to know the preceding simple skill or skill before one is able to do the more advance skill. The

critical skills should be the basis for evaluating a program and its personnel. Optional objectives are those that are important but not critical.

Generally optional objectives are not required to advance to higher skill levels and they can be tailored to particular needs. Normally a person can learn and work with any optional skill that is at the level or below critical skill level. Table I will illustrate critical and optional objectives.

Optional objectives may also include skills and content desired but difficult to measure. Again it should be emphasized that unless the achievement of the objective can be measured this type of objective should not be the basis of evaluating performance or achievement. In most cases optional objectives fit into this category. They are important, but if not measurable personnel should not be held accountable for their achievement. Please note that the critical skills continuum is open ended as a student should be able to go as far as his/her ability will allow.

The evaluation of any program must begin with the objectives of the program. Only by looking at the objectives or product can performance and the operating system be accurately measured. The purpose of any program should be to achieve desired objectives. If the objectives or products are not identified then there is no way to develop an effective program.

Many programs are developed, but not tailored to achieve specific objectives. Unless the program is designed to achieve specific objectives it will operate like a ship without navigation instruments and rudder, which makes it difficult or impossible to accurately evaluate. If the objectives the program isn't known and the achievement of them be determined then the effectiveness of the program will be unknown and is not subject to realistic change. Realistic change in a program will only occur when the persons responsible for the change have the necessary knowledge of the objectives and of the program was designed to achieve and why it was successful or not. This is why a good evaluation system is so important. Without feedback from the evaluation one never knows whether the program has achieved the desired objective or how to make the corrections necessary to improve the program. Another reason for an effective evaluation program is that enables the administrator to know how effective is their personnel. An effective program is dependent upon having good personnel. Without good teachers no education program can provide the quality education that our children need.

One of the most important and the most difficult actions an administrator will take is the firing of an employee. No one wants to fire another person, but for the welfare of the organization and the people it serves this action is necessary sometimes. In most schools the employee is on probation status for the first three years. This is a critical time for the administrator to evaluate and help the employee. During this period the employee is employed on an annual contract which may be or may not be renewed. After three years, in most cases, the employee goes on continuous contract which is automatically renewed each year unless there are sufficient reasons for dismissal. These reasons are spelled out in the state laws, district policy and contracts.

Under the present education system it is difficult to identify objectively the good and bad teachers. Generally the good and bad teachers are known but it is extremely difficult to substantiate one's judgment with objective evidence. This is one reason that administrators are reluctant to fire a teacher even during the probationary period. Once a teacher is on continuing contract it becomes extremely difficult and expensive, but not impossible to fire a teacher. The success of the endeavor is dependent upon a good evaluation system which can provide accurate data on the person's performance. In addition the district must have and follow a due process procedure. Thus a good evaluation system protects the teacher and administrator while enabling the school to have an effective staff.

Evaluation correctly done is critical to the success of any program; evaluation incorrectly done is extremely detrimental to any program. A good evaluation program requires that there be an outcome or product that is identifiable and measurable and that this outcome or product is known by all persons involved in achieving it. Once these factors are known, then an instrument can be developed to determine the progress and/or achievement of the product.

The evaluation will not only tell the progress of the individual, but will provide data that will enable one to determine the effectiveness of the various components of the system.

An effective evaluation system for education must include students, teachers, and administrative personnel. The base for all evaluation must be student progress, for that is the primary reason for the school or system. The following procedure is recommended.

1. The school must state in measurable terms those objectives it expects students

to learn and for which the school accepts responsibility for the student's achievement. It is important that all objectives-academic, behavioral, or any others for which the school desires and is willing to accept responsibility are stated.

2. The objectives should be on a continuum, from simple to complex. They should be categorized according to subject and behavior. Objectives should be identified as to whether they are essential, desirable, or optional.

3. The objectives should be communicated to students and parents, and made available to anyone wanting them.

4. Every teacher and administrator must have a copy of the complete list of objectives.

5. A flexible instrument to measure each objective must be developed. This instrument will be used to determine what the students' skills are at the beginning of the program. This will provide a base line for instructions and for measuring achievement.

6. Evaluation will focus on individual achievement since it is the achievement of the individual that is important. After all, if individuals achieve, the group must achieve.

7. When a teacher assigns a student an objective, the teacher must evaluate the student's achievement of the objective at the completion of the particular instructional strategy. This provides the teacher with the necessary data to determine if the student achieved the objective and how successful was the instructional strategy. The teacher is now able to determine whether the student is ready to move on to another objective or whether the teacher needs to try another instructional strategy. It also makes sure that the students do not skip needed skills and are working at their functioning level.

8. Random checks using statistical samples should be made periodically. The testing should be short and focused on skills or knowledge that records indicate the student has mastered. The three-problem technique is very effective in this type of evaluation. The student is given three problems related to the objective to be learned. If the student answers all three of the problems correct, it can be assumed that the objective has been learned. If the student answers two problems correctly then it is most likely that the student knows the objective, but

has made a computational or clerical error. However, it is recommended that the student review the lesson and be retested. If the student misses all three problems it can be assumed that the objective has not been achieved. Therefore, the instructor must decide if the objective is appropriate for the learner or if it needs to be changed. If the objective is retained then a new instructional strategy must be selected.

It is important to remember that an evaluation system is only good to the extent that it provides accurate feedback on the achievement of the goal or objective that is being measured. The evaluation system should tell whether the objective has been achieved or the progress or lack of progress of the system being used to achieve the objective. Most organizations have policies and behavior the personnel are to follow. If this is important then the evaluation of the personnel should focus on these elements. Too often individuals who are effective in achieving the organization's objectives may have a behavior problem and are judged incompetent. If the evaluation was on the desired behavior or objective then steps could be taken to change it and have an effective staff member.

Years ago when I was a principal I happen to be visiting another school district. While waiting on my friend watched a supervisor interview a prospective teacher. The individual resume and behavior was outstanding. I had never met anyone with better qualifications. I was surprised when the supervisor, whom I knew, said to the young lady "thank you for coming in but we can't use you now". When the young lady left I asked the supervisor why she didn't employ the young lady. She said, "did you see her hairdo"? Her judgment or evaluation was based on a physical characteristic rather than her ability and potential for doing the job. By the way I employed her, as her hair style didn't bother me, and she was an outstanding teacher.