

Report II

Supervisors Look at Themselves

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During the 1970 summer session in the Graduate Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, supervisors had an opportunity to observe their own behaviour and that of their peers in a microteaching setting. Thirty participants from universities, teachers' colleges, community colleges, government agencies, provincial Departments of Education, and school districts in Ontario and Quebec attended a six-week clinic where the focus was on performance tasks designed to improve their ability to analyze, evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe alternatives for teachers.

The rationale for such a course was based on past experience. In evaluating the extremely complex process of teaching, the tendency has been to deal with superficialities — long checklists with little substance have too often been utilized by supervisory personnel, too little time has been given to the study of teaching in a laboratory situation or in its natural setting, the classroom, disproportionate energy has been devoted to moralizing and speculating on what teaching should be, and relatively little on what it is. Now, we are gradually taking the path of the more mature sciences. If the variables at one level of phenomena do not exhibit lawfulness, *break them down*. This kind of thinking led Gage¹ to coin the term "micro-criteria" when he first wrote about micro-effectiveness in 1962. He suggested that educators look into small, specifically defined aspects of the teacher's role. A micro-analytical approach was prescribed where teaching would be viewed (a) on a small scale, (b) in manageable segments, and (c) with specific definitive treatment.

The Ottawa programs stressed the importance of behavioural objectives in all aspects of teacher education. The cognitive, affective and psychomotor realms, as set forth by Bloom,² Krathwohl³ and

Simpson,⁴ were reviewed through the use of audiotapes, filmstrips and programmed materials.⁵ The basic laboratory elements (activity, realism, and specificity), cited by Davis,⁶ were central to all planning. Elementary and secondary-school pupils hired for the summer provided descriptive feedback of the supervisors' behaviour in the microteaching situation. Meanwhile, the teaching behaviour was always under the close scrutiny of other supervisors who, in turn, were applying some of the assessment procedures studied as part of the course. Confrontations, as explained by Fischler,⁷ occurred between (a) supervisors and themselves, (b) supervisors and peers, (c) supervisors and pupils, (d) supervisors and videotape. This exposure helped members of the group to develop more precise terminology in dealing with teaching and enabled them to communicate more accurately with each other and with the pupils they taught.

Although microteaching provided the major vehicle for analyzing teaching, a number of other systems for observing and measuring teacher behaviour were mastered and applied in these mini-sessions. Included were:

- a. The Withall Scale for measuring the classroom social-emotional climate⁸;
- b. The Technical Skills evaluation scales developed by General Learning Corporation⁹;
- c. The Aubertine-Johnson Teacher Performance Appraisal Scale;
- d. The VanderWerf-Glennon Modern Classroom Guide for measuring essential characteristics of a desirable learning situation;
- e. Team and Peer Supervision as prescribed by the State University College, Oswego, New York;
- f. Self-evaluation forms published in conjunction with Minicourse One, "Effective Questioning in a Classroom Discussion," Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development (available through Macmillan);
- g. Behavior Analysis Instrument for Teachers (BAIT) for describing teacher behaviours during classroom teaching, planning, evaluation and diagnosis;
- h. Flanders Interaction Analysis concerned with recording verbal behaviour between teacher and pupil¹¹;
- i. Cruickshank's simulation involvement, *Teaching Problems Laboratory*. Engagement in individual and group problem solving

- focusing on student behaviour, motivation, individualization of instruction¹²;
- j. Nonverbal communication, forms of n.c. which have significance in classroom interaction¹³;
 - k. Simulation Films, "Critical Moments in Teaching," realistic and provocative classroom problems which evoke thought-stimulating, concept-developing opportunities¹⁴;
 - l. Profile of Interaction in the Classroom (PIC), a method for recording and analyzing teacher-pupil interaction — a short-cut method of Flanders Interaction Analysis¹⁵.

One of the highlights of the summer was the application of these diverse analytical instruments to observing two micro-demonstration lessons (elementary and secondary), either live or on videotape. Master teachers from Peterborough Teachers College and Ottawa Teachers College served as models. The followup consisted of supervisor-teacher conferences and the assessment by members of the group of the videotape performances.

During the clinic, all supervisors developed "blueprints" for the implementation of new techniques for their respective institutions. One such endeavour, a group-of-seven task, was realised by an ambitious group from Ottawa Teachers College. Their plan focused on pre-service application although most of the proposals were geared to in-service use. Consensus was that, in the making of a teacher, it is highly probable that in-service training is definitely more important than pre-service training. In the former, one learns *about* teaching; in the latter, one learns *to teach*. Also accepted was the fact that teachers learn at different rates, in different ways, and through different experiences. There is no way of escaping the need to individualize teacher in-service education.

Judging from feedback, group reaction to this experimental clinic was most favorable. No one reacted adversely to the utilization of videotaping equipment although participants were expected to handle all taping. "For the first time in my graduate program, I have been treated as a professional," stated a superintendent-participant. Although not meant to constitute a new teacher education program, this attempt to analyze teaching into limited, well-defined components that can be taught, practised, evaluated, predicted, controlled, and understood, illustrates the potency of laboratory involvement as an integral part of the profession.

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