ABSTRACT
              The purpose of this study was to explore the
sociological forces which have been identified in teacher development
and to inquire into their role in teacher evaluation. To that end, a
series of teacher development intervention programs and teacher
interviews were conducted. This report describes the programs and
interviews and highlights the most pertinent sociological findings
held in common by the two areas of inquiry. Three major sociological
phenomena studied were professional isolation, professional modesty,
and the socialization of beginning teachers. The study uncovered
sociological factors which limit or promote teacher evaluation
activities. Because of professional isolation, teachers do not
develop the skills and attitudes necessary for peer review, a key
component of professional evaluation. Professional modesty prevents
teacher support for, and involvement in, increased peer evaluation.
Generalizations drawn from the interviews and programs provide the
bases for several recommendations for educators interested in
improved and increased teacher evaluation. (DWH)

The Common Sociology Between Teacher Evaluation
and Teacher Development

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October 13, 1983

Rocky Mountain Regional AERA
Jackson Hole, Wyoming

THE COMMON SOCIOLOGY BETWEEN TEACHER EVALUATION
AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Two currently prominent, somewhat independent issues concerning public school teachers are teacher evaluation and the professional development of teachers. The first topic is especially pertinent because of recent calls for reform in public schools. Current research in teacher evaluation focuses on technical problems, political forces, and sociological contexts which limit and structure evaluation. The second topic of teachers as professionals concerns the effective performance of teachers as they are shaped by the contexts and conditions of the classroom and school as workplaces. This research perspective emphasizes the growth of decision-making professionals who function in an organization which greatly afffects performance and attitudes through the sociological operations of expectations, rewards, relationships, and perceptions.

There is a great deal of commonality in sociological phenomena uncovered in the studies of teacher development and teacher evaluation. For example, the role and functions of evaluative feedback have much to do with understanding and providing for professional development, both when the experiences are positive and negative. Also, reasons as to why teacher evaluation is done (or, not done) in current practice are more understandable in light of social forces which interact with evaluation activities. The two topics have common specific sociological themes which have implications for research and practice.

The purpose of this study was to explore sociological forces which have been identified in teacher development, and to inquire into their role in teacher evaluation. To this end, a series of teacher development intervention programs and teacher interviews were conducted. The larger goal of the study was to better understand teacher evaluation, and to make recommendations about improved practice. This report will describe the programs, the interviews, and will highlight the most pertinent sociological findings held in common by the two areas of inquiry.

BACKGROUND

Researchers who have studied the work and life of teachers in public schools have identified a number of sociological phenomena which have great effects on the ways in which teachers grow and function as individual professionals. Some of the most prominent writers in this area include Lortie (1974), Wolf (1973), and Jackson (1974). Table I lists a number of the most important topics described by these researchers. Our studies have used these themes as a starting point for intervention programs, interviews, and interpretation of findings. Three major themes that began our studies were professional isolation, professional modesty, and socialization of beginning teachers.

Professional isolation of teachers has been well described by Lortie (1974). It results from the organization of public school education into classrooms or cells of instruction, and reward systems which have been built up around these units of school work. Reward systems have developed which preclude, or at least fail to encourage, teachers to move out of their immediate spheres of activity. Other social forces for isolation are the tradition of teaching as a personal, individual experience, and the lack of common technology found in other professions. A typical result of these forces is for teachers to sense that they should work alone, and to solely rely on the experiences of their own classrooms for feelings of accomplishment and meaning. Wolf (1974) extended the description of professional isolation to include the prevalence of distrust among teachers for persons who are not old associates. These feelings lead teachers to see evaluation as an activity which cannot include serious peer interaction, a threat rather than a source of reassurance, a task limited to individual classrooms rather than a general problem, having a vision of problems as demands for personal change and immediate solution rather than institutional improvement and long-term development, and a feeling of rugged individualism rather than a more clinical perspective.

Professional modesty wass a theme investigated in teacher interviews conducted by Wolf (1974). It especially is enforced by teachers in terms of innovations or quality of work. Essentially, it is bad practice to go public with exemplary practice or results. Recognition or demands for distinction are seen by teachers as too close to dreaded oneupsmanship. The result is that teachers are reluctant to share; the benefits of reassurance and reward are just not worth the accompanying threat to teachers who must rely upon each other for low levels of mutual support and absence of subversion. The apparent source of this sociological dynamic is that rewards, recognition, acknowledgement all are scarce in schools, and that teachers feel they should not compete for the little that is available. One reason for the lack of recognition is that there is not effective teacher evaluation which could document and make public the valuable work of teahers. However, professional modesty operates to minimize evaluation activity because teachers seek to avoid the very evaluation results which would serve to recognize teacher value. Teacher evaluation would result in much recognition of exemplary and meritoricus work; it is just this result that teachers wish to avoid.

The third central social theme is that of the socialization of beginning teachers. A good number of writers including Lortie (1974), Salzillo et al. (1977), and Zeichner (1980) hae addressed this topic. First year teachers begin without a staged entry; they face the same problems and settings as the 20 year veteran. According to Lortie, a condition of this entry period is socialization in which support of the beginner is withheld until she or he proves themself to experienced teachers. Much of this time consists of trial by fire, and working out of professional

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problems in isolation. When first year teachers begin to act and
talk like their experienced colleagues (often in negative ways),
they then begin to receive support, assistance, and perhaps most
importantly, acceptance that is necessary to survive in the
profession. During this period of time, beginning teachers lack
authoritative reassurance from administrators or university
mentors. The results of new teacher socialization are further
isolation, lack of positive professional development, unsupportive
relationships, and rewards limited to personal and private
feelings from limited classroom experience. Another result is a
profession that will not participate in serious peer evaluation.

THE STUDY

PURPOSE   The purpose of the study was to uncover sociological
factors (perceptions, expectations, relationships, rewards) which
limit or promote teacher evaluation activities.

ACTIVITIES   The study relied on interviews of public school
personnel from six different settings: beginning teachers in two
distinct programs, teachers in two peer visitation programs,
experienced teachers who served as mentors in two programs,
participants in a teacher-initiated inservice "center," teachers
in a peer evaluation program, and a broad sample of public school
teachers and principals in the state of Utah. Investigators
designed and implemented one beginning teacher program, one
visitation program, and one mentor program. The programs and
interviews were conducted in school districts that differed
greatly in terms of teacher-administrator initiative for programs:
one district showed little teacher initiative, the other was
characterized by energetic teacher involvement.

ANALYSIS   Analysis largely consisted of conceptual-qualitative
description of common themes in the diverse programs. The search
was for identification of teacher sentiments, getting behind
teacher perceptions, vocabulary, and for teacher reaction to given
topics. The analysis must be considered preliminary to more
focused study techniques.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

    Beginning teachers in a variety of settings expressed a sense
of vulnerability to pressures from other school participants. The
largest contributors to a sense of inadequacy were student
discipline problems and the difficulties of planning. Combined
with these demands was a lack of meaningful feedback from
administrators and colleagues. Beginning teachers had strong
desires for informal and formal evaluation, which were not
available. They reported that support from experienced teachers
often came after initial isolation in which the first year
teachers had to work out many of their own problems.

    Beginning teachers in an inservice support group reported
that hearing each others problems was of some help in maintaining

perspective, but that specific feedback would be more useful. The
support group also was seen as a place to learn specific needed
performance techniques. The desireability of university
participation in inservice programs for beginning teachers was
expressed.

   Need for mentoring systems was agreed upon by every teacher
in the study. Availability of a mentor when needed by a beginning
teacher was universally seen as a crucial resource; beyond this
factor there was disagreement as to the role and function of
mentors. Experienced mentors saw their primary role to be that of
a friend, advisor, supporter, and available consultant. Beginning
teachers who had mentors look much more to the experienced teacher
for observation and concrete information on actual performance in
the classroom. Beginning teachers sought quality judgements from
mentors, which they rarely provided. Beginning teachers also
differed from their mentors in that they wanted to observe the
experienced teachers in action, mentors downplayed the value of
this activity. The beginning teachers emphasized using their
mentors for practical teaching methods, and linkage between theory
from preservice programs and applications in the field. The
actual experience along this line was a clear distinction between
public school "realities" and the lack of relevance of preservice
programs. Finally, over 30% of the beginning teachers who were
interviewed in terms of mentor programs spontaneously mentioned
alleviation of feelings of isolation as a main benefit of mentor
programs. Frustrations of mentors centered around lack of time
for their task, and absence of monetary or recognition rewards.
Beginning teacher frustrations mainly were the lack of specfic
feedback. Governance for mentor programs was seen by participants
to best be shared by teachers, administrators, and universities.

   While visitation programs were slow to build in terms of
numbers, they received unanimous praise from participants.
Initial solicitation for demonstration teachers (who had a
specific exemplary classroom feature) carried out among 1600
elementary school teachers in one district resulted in only 20
nominations, among these were 18 given by principals.
Participants in both visitation programs in both districts were
unanimous in their description of visits as valuable professional
contributions. The demonstration teachers saw the experience of
teaching within their own classroom to be an important chance to
receive feedback on their practices and ideas. The observers saw
the visitation as a chance to get out of their "private world," to
open up the teaching profession, and to talk with colleagues about
the technical work of teachers (an opportunity not provided by the
day-to-day contact of public schools). The observing teachers
reported a boost of their morale, an expansion of ideas, and
specific improvements in their instruction. All of the
demonstration teachers felt that their selection was an effective
method of acknowledgement of good teaching, 85% of the observing
teachers agreed. Both groups saw visitation programs to be an
outstanding inservice approach because of the credible
information, positive feelings coming from the interchange (mainly

described as increased confidence for each), and breaking down of isolation.

Teacher center participants saw a main benefit of their activity to be a sense of initiative and variety among their colleagues. Clarification of specific problems was seen as a strength, although some frustration was expressed because of lack of specific solutions. Teacher organizers felt confirmed about their own ideas as a result of their initiative, but saw that their programs were limited by lack of available teacher time.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Sociological themes suggested by teacher development researchers were readily apparent in interviews with teachers conducted in this study. In particular the topics of teacher isolation, professional modesty, and inadequate beginning teacher socialization were evident. While the various intervention strategies (beginning teacher support group, mentor program, visitation program) addressed the underlying sociological problems, they also provided a clearer picture of existing conditions in the profession. Specific measures of individual interventions were not included, so that conclusions cannot be made about their effectiveness. However, the positive response of participants suggests merit in development of such programs.

Connections between the sociological themes and impediments to increased teacher evaluation activity also were apparent. Professional isolation suggests that teachers will not develop the skills and attitudes necessary for peer review, a key component of sophisticated professional evaluation. The lack of perceived rewards for work outside of the classroom suggests little incentive for teachers to get involved in evaluation of their peers. Nonexistence of a common technical culture suggests that teachers perceive little in common upon which to base feedback or judgment procedures. The typical idea that teaching is a uniquely personal endeavor contributes to the attitude that evaluation must be overly subjective, and not helpful to one who has less than perfect understanding of each individual teaching situation. Thus, it is easy by looking at this sociological perspective to see why teachers see so little hope for effective evaluation practice. Another extension is that there is little value in teachers taking initative for developments in teacher evaluation.

Professional modesty presents another set of sentiments which act against teacher support for, and involvement in, increased teacher evaluation. Any practice which serves to highlight the work of individual teachers runs the risk of creating oneupsmanship, which in turn leads to withholding of colleague support. Since much, perhaps most, of teacher evaluation findings would be positive and outstanding, it is important to see how these findings would upset the delicate collegial interactions within a school site.

Teacher socialization effectively installs professional
isolation and modesty in beginning teachers. It also changes the
strong desire for feedback, reassurance, and judgment in first
year teachers to an extreme reluctance to participate. While much
of teachers' negative attitudes toward evaluation is
understandable and attributable to bad experience, the pressure of
seasoned teachers on the sentiments of beginning teachers for
evaluation is readily apparent.

Generalization from the interviews and programs which
constituted this study enables a number of recommendations for
educators interested in improved and increased teacher evaluation:

   --If effective sociological intervention is not a
part of improved teacher evaluation programs, it is
unlikely that even the most technically impressive
assessment-judgment systems stands a chance to survive
in the field.

   --Beginning teachers who receive meaninful
feedback, support from peers, and support from
experienced teachers may constitute a first group of
teachers for improved evaluation.

   --A number of interventions can address problems
of isolation, professional modesty, and "rugged
individual" beginning teacher socialization.

   --Teacher mentors should be trained to make
connections between preservice programs and the
practical realities of everyday classroom operation.

   --Visitation programs are more acceptable to
teachers if they highlight exemplary "practices"
rather than a more global judgment of exemplary
"teachers."

   --Teacher initiative can be used to improve
sociological conditions and teacher evaluation
programs, however it must be supported by other
educational agencies such as district and building
administrators, universities, and state-level
agencies.

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