# INCREASING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH CONSUMER EVALUATION

by

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#### Abstract

This project involved the use of a questionnaire to measure differences between a teacher's self-evaluation and that of his/her students. In addition, the utility of the questionnaire for both formative and summative evaluation was explored.

Twenty classroom teachers in the intermediate grades in three Surrey schools were asked to have their students evaluate them on the questionnaire. Teachers concurrently responded to the same questions on a separate copy. All responses were anonymous.

The results of the returns of eighteen teachers and four hundred thirty-nine students were analyzed. Each teacher's responses were compared with the average response of his/her class.

The analysis showed that there were significant perceptual differences when teachers' evaluations were compared with those of their students. Some teachers showed remarkable concurrence while others demonstrated an obvious lack of ability in seeing themselves as their students did. The results demonstrated that teachers could use student opinions to reveal teaching practices that were less than effective.

The project suggests that the questionnaire, and others like it, could be utilized in various ways to assist teachers who wish to gain more insight into areas of instruction where improvement in possible.

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I wish to express sincere thanks to Dr. Leone Prock for advice and assistance.

Thanks are also extended to my family for their patience and encouragement, especially Elaine and Randy for their many hours spent typing.

Thousands of small changes made in classrooms across the nation may well add up to more real reform of education than sweeping policies made far from the scene of the teaching/learning action.

K. Patricia Cross

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#### Chapter 1

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

#### Changing Teacher's Classroom Behavior

Changing a teacher's classroom behavior to make it more effective is a prevalent theme in educational literature. The volumes of literature on the subject attest to its importance and perhaps the difficulties involved in achieving success. Though making teachers more effective is clearly desirable, the ways to achieve the changes are less clear.

There is often confusion about what behaviors need to be changed, and even when there is agreement in this area, the process becomes the focus of interest. The frustration inherent in the subject of change is expressed by Keith Beery (1974):

There is constant demand for change in schools. What is meant? What needs to be changed? It seems to us that many people are confused about what education is and are wasting a lot of other people's time and energy trying to change relatively unimportant things. (p. 27)

If changing teachers' classroom behavior results in teachers becoming more effective, then children's learning and satisfaction is enhanced and teachers feel successful. How can identifying, changing, and improving teachers' less effective classroom behaviors be accomplished?

The most prevalent processes for changing teacher's behaviors are best described as vertical collaborations. A person in a supervisory capacity, usually a principal

or vice-principal, judges the effectiveness of the teachers they supervise, and makes recommendations for improvement. There are other methods of achieving changes but most involve the supervisor-teacher relationship. Clinical supervision is the main vehicle used in attempting to implement changes in teachers' behavior. This and inservice training will be briefly described in order to set the perspective for the content of this project.

#### Clinical Supervision

Clinical supervision may be defined as the rationale and practice designed to improve the teacher's classroom performance. By helping teachers analyze their teaching and by providing feedback, support, and encouragement, supervisors hope to promote positive change. In practice, clinical supervision involves preconferencing between a supervisor and teacher regarding subject matter to be viewed, and methods of collecting data on teaching behavior for analysis. Observation, data collection and post conference analysis of data with discussion of changes round out the model. In practice, clinical supervision has not achieved the success hoped for. Smyth (1982) points this out in his analysis of clinical supervision:

What remains problematic at the moment is knowledge about effective ways of introducing teachers and principals to the rationale, philosophy, processes...in a way that enables adoption. In short, we are only beginning to become knowledgeable about the complexity of successful implementation. (p. 2)

A change in the emphasis on the goals of clinical supervision from evaluation to teacher growth and a collegial atmosphere changed the role of the supervisor from earlier models. It did not, however, automatically translate to successful implementation of change. Johnson (1983) notes:

The greatest change was that teachers had to learn to trust the supervisors. Often, the more experienced the teacher, the deeper was the distrust and the more difficult the change. (p. 6)

The obstacle blocking the success of clinical supervision may be the teacher's realization that those who supervise also evaluate. It is unrealistic to expect a teacher to accept that information gathered during classroom visitations for formative purposes will be totally ignored during a future writing of an evaluation. The helpful supervisor is viewed with suspicion if he/she wears the evaluator's hat at a later date. This becomes evident when teachers need advice concerning teaching problems. Most often, a colleague will be chosen as the advisor. Wilson (1986) encountered this problem when, in his research, he attempted to find consultants to help teachers improve their classroom practice:

It is difficult for faculty members to obtain useful ideas to deal with such teaching problems. They are usually reticent about asking a colleague or the department chairperson and they are reluctant to ask for help from those who will be involved in later decisions about their careers. (p. 96)

#### Supervisory Skills Training

A training program for enhancing clinical supervision skills is given to administrators in Surrey. supervisory skills training workshops have as their objective the improvement of the skills involved in helping teachers change undesirable behavior. At the first workshop, a great deal of time was spent on developing interpersonal skills designed to develop trust between teacher and supervisor. Though Cogan's Cycle of Supervision (1973) was the model followed, the majority of activities involved practising skills which would help supervisors develop trust between themselves and their teachers. Follow up activities utilizing these skills required volunteer teachers in the schools. Many administrators reported that teachers were generally reluctant to participate. Later, a refresher session was given in the same series. A change that was evident was that peer supervision was becoming more acceptable. Teachers, rather than administrators, were allowed to observe their peers and assist in the change process. In the Langley school district, the title of the workshops had been changed from Supervisory Skills to Peer Observation Skills. evolution from vertical to horizontal collaboration indicated that this approach might be more acceptable and thereby more realistic.

One main obstacle in helping teachers to achieve growth in their classroom teaching skills appears to be the inclusion of a person in a supervisory capacity who is also responsible

for the summative evaluation of that teacher's professional status. Added to the evaluative dimension of the problem is the question of the validity of a principal's judgement of teacher effectiveness. Many teachers are suspicious of these judgements because they are often made without reference to the myriad of variables that each classroom teacher faces given the unique situation he/she works in. In a recent study, Medley and Coker (1984) supported this concern:

Nearly all decisions about teachers' roles stem from judgements of their effectiveness - judgements usually made by principals...the small number of studies of the validity of principals' judgements (or of ratings based on them) that have been reported in the literature have yielded consistently negative findings. Each such study has concluded that there is no appreciable agreement between principals' judgements of teachers' effectiveness and student learning. (p. 138)

# Curriculum Inservice Training

Another widely utilized method of trying to produce changes in teacher behavior is through curriculum inservice training. In this model teachers, usually volunteers, are asked to implement a new curriculum idea or teaching strategy. A recent study by Drs. Wasserman and Ivany (1985) offers an insight into the effectiveness of this avenue of change.

In the study, 36 hours of pre-implementation training in primary science instruction was given. Teachers' participation was voluntary. The training was administered by "high functioning" teachers, many with years of experience. Materials used had been successful in other contexts. A

full year of in classroom support and help was provided to the client on a regular basis. Of the fourteen teachers who completed the project, seven showed no measureable change in teaching behavior after two years of inservice participation, six showed some improvement and three performed at mastery levels. The implications of the study were:

- -the re-training of teachers was a formidable task... especially where patterns were deeply entrenched.
- -it is a difficult task for teachers to change themselves. The difficulty is increased by the demands of full time teaching.
- -those few who are intrinsically motivated to grow and change will make the most substantive gains.
  The authors of the study state:

...if substantial inservice training efforts result in humble payoffs we may well look at our inservice training in a much broader light to understand the difficulties we face in promoting change. Specifically we might begin to look at the amount of dollars, energy and time we spend in school districts on Professional Days and two hour inservice workshops, and the potential they have for effecting teacher change in the light of the data above. (p. 22)

Perhaps the shortcoming in the effectiveness of inservice training is that its subject matter may be suggested by those in administrative positions who perceived a need for it. Other experts may also find resistance where teachers view the changes as unnecessary or as solutions looking for problems. Again, if the changes are "laid on" and not in response to teacher concerns, they may be difficult to

implement. As Marvin Wideen (1987) explains:

Staff development frequently conjures up the image of teachers needing repair, because they lack something. They sit, they listen, they learn what others apparently know about how they should improve. (p. 12)

The information is often too general to be of value. A recent British Columbia Teacher Federation article by John Hardy (1987) points out that:

The key to the whole thing is planning...where teachers come up with what they want. Ownership. Teachers teaching teachers. P.D. as a dynamic teacher sparked activity is alive and well. (p. 15-16)

Again, a change from vertical to horizontal collaboration may be a key to successful inservice training. Teachers, in meeting to discuss their needs, are more likely to suggest topics which have relevance to their situation.

#### An Alternative Approach

In spite of the general lack of success of clinical supervision and other methods to affect change, teachers do change and improve their instructional behavior. The recognition given the experienced over the inexperienced in teaching suggests that experience is a catalyst which facilitates growth. Change as the result of experience may be one important way in which growth occurs. Is it the reaction to the stimuli received in the classroom that leads to enduring changes in classroom behaviors?

In the course of a single lesson, a teacher reacts to silence, noise, laughter, misbehavior, hands raised or

not raised, and a host of other signals. As a result, teachers adjust those elements in teaching that they feel will lead to success in achieving the goals of the lesson. These continuous adjustments made over a period of time, result in a teacher's perception of what is good practice The effective and help determine that teacher's style. practices are retained in the teacher's attempt to maintain the dynamic equilibrium desirable in a classroom. As the teacher becomes more experienced, his/her teaching takes on a unique quality, not unlike a teaching personality. Changes suggested in regard to this teaching behavior may therefore, be taken very personally. As Flanders (1963) suggested when he described an inservice project relating to teachers changing their classroom behavior:

Our purpose was to come as close as we could to creating a schoolwide atmosphere of professional inquiry in which the object of inquiry was the teacher's own behavior. Such an atmosphere is uncommon. (p. 26)

Questioning a teacher's classroom behavior is often not accepted in the same spirit as it is given.

Within the profession, as well as within our society, restraints against becoming involved with the emotional aspects of behavior are commonplace. Few individuals are prepared to handle emotionally toned compliments or criticism smoothly and skillfully. (p. 26)

Negative feedback is not easily accepted by teachers who have put so much of themselves into their classroom work.

If however, the negative feedback is the result of that teacher's own research, it might be acceptable and provide an impetus for change.

#### Using Consumers

If the teacher, interested in his own professional growth, can determine the method and help design the scheme for evaluating his teaching, much of the threat associated with clinical supervision may be avoided. By supplementing clinical evaluation with a teacher's own evaluation scheme, the goal of instructional improvement might be more readily attainable. Conclusions reached at a Canadian Teacher's Federation Workshop (1982) support this idea:

On a more positive note, where teacher evaluation is viewed as a means of improving instruction - rather that mere rating - self-appraisal instruments such as those developed by Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan Teacher Organizations can become an important part of the total evaluation process. Needless to say, these instruments have been designed to hold no threat to a teacher's security or self-esteem. Teacher self-appraisal can occur and result in some kind of changed teaching behavior only when the teacher perceives minimal external threat, and sees the process of observing and describing himself and his behavior as an opportunity rather than a threat. (p. 16)

A process that is non-threatening involves the use of the students in the classroom. By utilizing the opinions of those who receive the instruction, the consumer client, the teacher can identify areas perceived to be needing improvement. This project suggests that students in the intermediate grades can provide the evaluation necessary to convince the teacher to examine aspects of his or her teaching behavior. In demonstrating that the teacher's perception of self may not be completely accurate, the need for this kind of evaluation can be established.

In providing the teacher with data on his/her teaching behaviors from a source that he/she perceives as legitimate and non-threatening, change might be more acceptable. Through the inclusion of the administrator/evaluator in planning an evaluation using consumers, the problem of what needs to be changed is objectively determined. This might eliminate much of the problem incurred by the lack of trust mentioned earlier. With a co-operative attitude, agreement on the elements of how changes in a teacher's behaviors can be made will be more readily attained.

#### Increasing Teacher Effectiveness Through Consumer Evaluation

In this project and the questionnaire it utilizes, I hope to:

- 1. Show that teachers' perceptions about their teaching may differ from that of their students. If this is confirmed a case can be made to develop questionnaires that would point out the areas in which teachers can react, and perhaps change, to better meet the needs of pupils.
- Verify that students in the intermediate grades are capable of relevant instructional perception and can therefore assist in evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- 3. Present my questionnaire as an example of one that is easily administered, quickly interpreted, non-threatening, and one that reveals important information that a teacher can utilize to improve instruction in the classroom.

4. Suggest viable alternatives to current practises in promoting desirable change in teaching behavior.

#### Some assumptions made are:

- 1. Teachers wish to improve their instructional methods.
- 2. Supervisory personnel would welcome teachers taking the initiative in presenting evaluative materials, sharing results, and formulating improvement plans based on the results.
- 3. Students as consumers, are in general, sophisticated enough to assist in identifying weaknesses in the instruction they receive.
- 4. Teacher's perceptions of their teaching effectiveness may differ from those of their students.
- 5. Teachers feel less threatened by self and client evaluation than by supervisor evaluation.
- 6. Teachers can accept the results of student evaluation and will feel inclined to make changes they perceive will lead to improvement of instruction.

#### Limitations of the Project

The size of the survey involving 18 teachers and 439 students limits the number of pupil to teacher comparisons to 18. The survey was administered by the classroom teacher. Each classroom would have a different level of trust between pupils and teachers. In surveys such as this, it is impossible to determine whether the students are answering the questions as to how they perceive the teacher,

or whether they are answering as they feel the teacher might expect them to respond.

The statistical analysis is limited to a comparison of the average of class responses compared to that of the teacher. All participating teachers were volunteers who may have been more highly motivated than non-volunteers.

#### Definitions

- Effective-as in effective teaching, producing the desired

  learning outcomes through application of the most

  efficient and appropriate practice available.
- Evaluation-reflection upon practices, attitudes, etc. of a teacher for the purpose of promoting growth and/or teacher assessment.
- Formative-suggestions, observations made to assist teachers in concluding what is or is not effective teaching practice.
- Summative-data collected for purpose of writing a formal report on a teacher
- Enlightened-highly subjective term, as used here implies a willingness to accept change, reflect on past practices, democratizing wherever feasible.

#### Chapter 2

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

The descriptor used for a literature search was "teacher evaluation by students". For the purposes of this project, the review focused on those studies which:

- 1. involved self-assessment by teachers.
- used consumers as a source of information for teacher evaluations.
- 3. offered an approach to self-evaluation that combines aspects of consumer evaluation with supervisor evaluation.

#### Teachers and Self-Evaluation

Studies which focus on teacher evaluation in which teachers systematically collect data and apply it to their situation in order to increase their effectiveness are not readily found in the literature. This lack of information is confirmed by Bailey (1987):

Research studies relating to teacher self-assessment as the term is defined here are virtually non-existent. While this statement may alarm some readers, it is important to remember that teacher self-assessment is in its early stages of development. (p. 11)

It appears that there is limited motivation for teachers to take the time to become involved in self-assessment projects.

Busy schedules and lack of expertise may in part, be responsible.

Persons want to evaluate themselves in order to obtain an accurate picture of their own abilities... but there are only a few studies indicating that some teachers are self-directing in their learning and expend effort in judging their behavior. Not having received training on how to focus on relevant

aspects of their work, most teachers tend to criticize superficialities, personal mannerisms, appearance, voice and use of materials. (Wilson, R., 1986. p. 292)

Little, if any, motivation is present for a teacher to take time to devise self-evaluative schemes. Peck and Tucker (1973) surmised that the value of such activities may not be worth the effort. "Apparently, simply looking at one's own performance does not lead to much new insight as to what one is doing, or else it does not provide adequate motivation to alter that pattern." It appears that because there is no real benefit to be derived and no pressing reason for doing it, self-evaluation is at present, not in itself a priority among the professional tasks of a teacher.

# Consumers and Evaluators: Validity and Reliability

Consumer evaluation and the rationale for using it is clearly described by Payne and Manning (1984).

Pupil ratings are frequently used as criteria for judging teacher performance. Proponents of pupil ratings suggest that such data are invaluable for a number of reasons. First, pupils are the ultimate consumers. Second, pupils are in daily association with the teacher. Third, the use of pupil ratings eliminates the expense of training outside observers. Last, on practical grounds, it is easier, quicker and less expensive to use pupil ratings than those of trained observers. (p. 26)

Giving those who are taught an opportunity to comment on their teachers may have value beyond that of teacher evaluation. Meighan and Emerson (1977) observed that:

not only is this a reliable and effective way of monitoring teacher behavior effectiveness, but it has overwhelming important side effects. One of the side effects is in giving pupils the

satisfaction of being consulted on matters affecting them. The dialogue between teacher and students is an important avenue by which support or grievance can be addressed. (p. 30)

Support for the validity of using consumer evaluation is found in a number of studies including those of Wood (1984), Cortes and Grayson (1978), Masters (1978). research confirms that students' judgements about their teachers' behavior agrees with that of experienced classroom teachers and trained observers. In a study involving more than 1600 sixth graders, 53 teachers were evaluated and the results compared with those of adult observers. The conclusion was that "Class evaluation of teachers appear to be reliable, valid, useful measures of teacher behavior" (Fox, Ronald, et al, 1983). Kronowitz and Finney (1983) had elementary students judge their student teachers' performance in the areas of planning, instructional skills, behaviors, classroom organization and control. It is important that students be able to provide the explicit information necessary to give teachers feedback on which they can reflect and thereby modify practice. The results taken from the student evaluations in the Kronowitz and Finney study were compared to those of trained adult observers. It was found that the students could assess teachers' performances accurately; and more importantly, the students could also discriminate among teaching tasks. Albrecht (1970) found administrator and peer ratings were correlated with the ratings of pupil evaluations. All studies that were reviewed found that students in all grades, including elementary

grades down to fourth year, could provide consistent and reliable data.

### Teachers' Perspective on Consumer Evaluation

From a teacher's perspective, the Canadian Teacher's Federation report on a 1982 workshop on teacher evaluation had the following comments:

In recent years, particularly at higher levels of education, student ratings have been receiving a fair amount of attention. Some supporters of student ratings argue that, because the students observe their teacher in action many hours each week, they are the best judges of the quality of their education.

...Most people agree that student ratings could be useful if done fairly and effectively. Teachers I have spoken with are generally interested in what students think of them, as long as the student input is kept confidential and not used as any form of witch hunt. Unfortunately, many of the instruments currently being used in students' rating of teachers are very broad. They are also subjective, in that they only reflect students' attitudes and opinions. The new result is that often the ratings get at specific minor problems rather than at actual teaching factors...Student feedback has distinct ADVANTAGES for teachers interested in improving instruction:

 Research has shown that feedback from students can be an effective means of helping teachers improve instructional skills.

2. Students who are given an opportunity to provide feedback sense that the teacher wants to improve instruction. Hence, students develop a more positive attitude since the instructor values their opinion.

3. Student feedback provides an opportunity for the teacher to obtain additional information about his or her instructional behavior.

Teachers need not be totally dependent on the evaluator's opinions. (p. 88)

The acceptance of student feedback in providing input for teacher evaluation is a powerful argument. Teachers have often felt that evaluation, whether it be formative

or summative is "laid on from above" with little apparent objectivity and without self input. The objectivity provided by a data collecting tool might help overcome the feeling of powerlessness experienced when the evaluation is of a hierarchical nature. The lack of instruments available for evaluating will be overcome only when all parties involved accept the usefulness and validity of the process. As the concept of teachers as classroom researchers becomes more widespread, the necessity for evaluative instruments will be realized. Teacher enthusiasm for this process and demonstration of a willingness to change behaviors based on sound classroom data will be necessary. The effectiveness of using students as one source of the data from which decisions can be made cannot be overlooked.

With so much agreement on the value of using students as teacher evaluators, why is the practice not widespread throughout the educational system? Some observations by McKelvey and Kyraicon (1985) shed some light on this question.

The evidence in favor of the use of pupil evaluation of teaching performance seems to fall into three categories: its validity, its usefulness, and its social implications. Evidence of validity comes from much of the research noted, often comprised of stability of other subjects and agreement with more acceptable evaluators (ie. teachers, teacher trainers, and/or researchers). (p. 28-31)

The social basis for the unacceptability of pupils as observers is part of the overall historical position of power which rests in the hierarchy of school administration. The control which administrators have over teachers is in

part, a result of their responsibility for evaluation and report writing. In recent years, particularly in the 1980's, there has been a strong tendency to include those affected by decisions in the process of those decisions. Monkhouse (1986) forsees this trend as one which is over due in educational decision making.

In the eighties the responsibility has shifted to where it should probably have been all along - in the hands of everyone who will be affected by the change. The emphasis now is on working co-operatively. (p. 9)

Should this trend continue, the students' evaluations might become an acceptable and even perhaps a routine part of formative and summative evaluation. This would help to partially alleviate teacher concerns about the lack of objectivity involved in the hierarchical supervisory forms of evaluation. Inclusion of a third party, one directly affected by most aspects of teacher's classroom behavior, adds a new dimension to data collected for evaluations.

# A Proposal For Increasing Teacher Effectiveness Using Consumers

In bringing together the students, teachers and supervisors as part of the process of formative and summative evaluation, many of the shortcomings associated with evaluation are overcome. The students benefit from inclusion in the process. They may feel important when asked to evaluate their teachers. The distance between teacher and student is somewhat narrowed when both are involved in an important, co-operative experience. Teachers feel a sense of control that makes the results of evaluation more acceptable. The supervisor has another

source of data that can be reflected upon in light of his/her own observations. In the literature reviewed, only one study (Wilson, R., 1986) resembled the ideas put forward here. Although it involved the post-secondary level, the process and the results were interesting. In this study, peer consultants were used. A parallel system in which an enlightened administrator provides this function is possible. What follows is a brief description of the study conducted by Wilson.

To give direct help to faculty members in improving their teaching, we chose a consultation process that gives them good ideas about how to improve those aspects of their teaching in which students have rated them low. (p. 207)

The consultants were peers who had no part in any scheme of summative evaluation. The evaluation included questions relating to the areas of: organization, clarity of presentation, analysis and synthesis of the lesson, teacherstudent interaction, and enthusiasm. Students and teachers responded to the same questionnaire. Ninety-six faculty members participated in the three year study.

Items rated low by students were discussed with consultants. Ideas for improvement were selected from a previously compiled "ideas book". This added some objectivity to the suggestions given by the consultants. The object of the study was to "determine whether giving ideas for improving particular aspects of instruction was associated with positive changes in students' ratings of a teacher's performance." The difference between the first year and

the following years' ratings were compared statistically to determine changes in the mean response on the two different occasions. The conclusions were:

- 1. The consultation process was associated with statistically important change in overall teaching effectiveness ratings for 52% of the faculty.
- 2. Half of the faculty showed positive changes on nine of ten items for which suggestions were given.
- 3. Items on which the greatest number of faculty showed statistically important changes were those for which the suggestions were most concrete, specific and behavioral. (ibid, p. 209)

A second group of teachers used the same rating survey but were excluded from the consultation process. They received no suggestions about making improvements and showed no significant change in the ratings students gave them in the following year.

#### Inclusion of Another Person

The importance of having another person involved in the process is reinforced by Peck and Tucker (1973), who found that available evidence all indicated that teachers use feedback to make changes in their teaching style only if another person participates in the feedback session. Having another person provide feedback has the twin advantage of offering different perspective on the data as well as being a source of ideas for possible improvement. Apparently, simply looking at one's own performance does not lead to significant new insights as to what one is doing, or else it does not provide the necessary motivation to incur change.

The involvement of another person adds a strong motivational factor. If that person were a supervisor looking to see the results of a teacher's goals for instructional improvement, in a non-threatening manner, the motivational factor may be a potent one. In many schools, a statement of goals and objectives is requested of teachers by administration early in the school year. Inclusion of an element involving teaching practices could be requested. Having the teacher identify his/her problem areas and planning ways to solve them, empowers the teacher and leaves the administrator in the role of facilitator of the process. Whether peers or administrators are utilized as consultants is the teacher's responsibility. In this way, the goal of instructional improvement is addressed and the responsibility for change is appropriately given those best equipped to carry it out, namely the classroom teacher. Other researchers, Fuller and Manning (1973), Tuckman, McCall and Hyman (1969), also found that the inclusion of a "peer or supervisor is more likely to produce significant changes in teaching behavior".

#### Summary

The literature suggests that:

- 1. Teacher self-evaluation is likely to be more effective given the inclusion of another person to provide motivation.
- Pupil ratings of teachers are valid and consistent with peer and supervisor ratings.
- 3. Teachers, in accepting the validity and usefulness of

pupil ratings, can make changes in their effectiveness based on these ratings.

A plan for improvement of instruction, whether for formative, summative or both types of evaluation is possible given the proper climate. This would require teacher input from the beginning of the process concerning the tool used for evaluation. It would need the presence at times of an enlightened supervisor or helpful peer. The other person would need to have a good understanding of effective teaching strategies and the ability to impart them in a supportive manner. The results could lead to improvement in instruction, student satisfaction with the process, and if agreeable, summative evaluation data.

#### Chapter 3

#### THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In an attempt to find what needs to be changed and to establish that students can be effective in helping to make those determinations, the questionnaire for this project was developed. The focus of the study was to point out discrepancies in teachers' perceptions of self and those of their students. If it could be shown that student input can identify areas of weakness for the classroom teacher/researcher, the value of the questionnaire is established.

The questions attempt to focus on some of the attributes of classroom teaching which may impact on the teacher's instructional effectiveness. The student's perception of the teacher's organization, knowledge, inventiveness, and sense of direction comprise part of the questionnaire.

Personal qualities such as approachability, caring, trust and satisfaction are also included. The tone of the questionnaire is intended to be positive and to reflect those qualities that are typically found in a competent, effective teacher.

Substantive precedents for using a questionnaire survey to achieve the stated objective exist in the literature.

The methodology and form are found in many of the studies that utilize student opinion for evaluation of teachers.

A review of guidelines for questionnaire surveys from Borg (1979) and Berdie (1986) assured the efficacy of this

approach and led to the following considerations:

- -layout and organization should promote ease of completion
- -instructions should be brief and concise
- -items should be interesting and clearly relevant
  to respondents
- -pretesting should be done in order to establish reliability and validity in order that:
  - 1. each item stimulates accurate, relevant data
  - 2. items convey the same meaning to all respondents.

Because each questionnaire is unique and must be tailored to fit the particular research, further considerations included:

- -a reading comprehension level suitable for intermediate students.
- -the amount of time needed to complete the questionnaire so that teachers would not find its administration an imposition.
- -items to be non-threatening in nature so that teachers and students would have a willingness to respond in an honest manner.
- -anonymity of all respondents.

Consideration was given to these criteria when the questions were developed.

#### Procedure

Upon receiving the survey package the teachers distributed the students' copies and retained the one marked "teacher"

for themselves. Directions for administering the questionnaire were included with each package (Appendix A). The teacher was asked to read the directions to students and respond to the items on his questionnaire while his class did their copy.

## Content of Questionnaire

In selecting the content for the questionnaire, reference was made to "Profiles of Teaching Competency" (1973) by

Wasserman and Eggert. This document identified behavioral or teaching profiles related to competent classroom performance. It was designed to "identify weaknesses and determine directions for possible growth". With this information as a source of ideas, 20 questions deemed suitable in vocabulary level and comprehension for intermediate grades were written. These were organized so as to employ a Likert 4-point scale. The column titles from left to right read: Almost always, Often, Sometimes, and Almost never. The questions were grouped as follows:

Questions 1-6: solicit student opinions as to the teacher's feeling about the job and his/her commitment to it. Key words such as "knows, has good ideas, is happy" are employed to this end.

Questions 7-15: assess the quality of pupil-teacher interactions. Helpfulness, caring, trust, and approachability are some

of the qualities that the questions probe. Also included are questions which allow the students to express the levels of freedom and democracy allowed by the teacher.

Questions 16-20:attempt to gain a comment on the teacher's ability to make education interesting for the class and the student's general enthusiasm for attending.

Questions 21-22:give the student an opportunity to
enlarge on any of the previous items
or to express feelings concerning positive
or negative elements of the class.

#### Pretesting

The questionnaire was initially used by three teachers and their students at the grade 6 and 7 level. The purposes were to identify areas for teacher improvement. The teachers involved helped make revisions, that in their opinion, were necessary to meet the objectives of this study.

# Administering the Questionnaire

The first consideration was to have an outside neutral figure administer the questionnaire. The advantages would be in the consistency of approach and in negating the possibility that the classroom teacher's presence would influence student responses. This method was rejected in

favor of the classroom teachers administering it. Several reasons were advanced by colleagues in reaching this decision:

- Most importantly, teachers tend to be suspicious and nervous about evaluation generally. Putting a stranger into the classroom was considered to be too unnerving for many teachers.
- 2. The risk of losing the goodwill of some teachers by suggesting that their presence might influence the results was considered.
- 3. The success of the initial piloting of the questionnaire was a factor to be considered.
- 4. The questionnaire, if used in future, would be given by teachers.
- 5. If baseline data were established for future consideration, consistency of the "test" procedure was necessary.

It was decided that the teacher should administer the questionnaire to his/her own classroom. It was possible that by using the classroom teacher the results might not be as revealing as with having an outside administrator. The possibility that students might be less than candid when evaluating their teacher in his/her presence was recognized. However, because the classroom teacher could do his/her evaluation paper concurrently and in the presence of the students, the teacher-administrator was considered to be advantageous. The teacher, occupied with completion of the paper, could be perceived as a participant and not as an overseer.

#### Instructions To Teachers

The rather difficult question of instructions for the teacher was debated on several separate occasions that involved input from different colleagues. The problem seemed to be one of semantics and perception. Was the teacher to answer as he felt he would rate himself, or was he to respond in the same manner that he felt his pupils would respond? Would there be a perceptual difference either way? The decision was to request that the teacher respond as to how he felt his students, on average, would respond. The choice was made solely for the sake of consistency.

Sex of the respondents, age, and grade were included should this information be significant when examining the results.

#### Enlisting volunteers

In April 1987, through a network of colleagues, information concerning the study was given to teachers describing the purposes and outlining the procedures involved. Twenty classroom teachers from grades 4 through 7 in three separate schools, volunteered to be a part of the study. All schools in the sample were suburban elementary schools from the Surrey School District. A contact person in each school distributed class sets of the questionnaires and collected them immediately after completion. Within two weeks, 18 of the 20 classroom teachers had returned the completed sets. Responses from teachers and students in

these 18 classrooms became the source of the data for the study.

#### Organization of Results

After the class sets were collected, numbers were assigned to each school and to each class within the school. The class numbers were used to identify the teacher. This number was entered on the teacher copy of the questionnaire (Appendix A). When the averages of the student's responses were computed, the responses of the teacher would be compared.

When the returns were received, each class set of questions were coded and kept with the teacher's coded copy. An example of the original and coded papers ready for computer analysis appears in Appendix A. The individual items were marked in the margins as follows:

- 1. almost never
- 2. sometimes
- often
- 4. almost always

These results were forwarded to the computing services at S.F.U. for computation.

The analysis of the data was to reveal the mean of each question by class in order to compare it with the teacher's self-evaluation.

## Statistical Treatment

The mean and standard deviation of the student's response

for each question 1 through 20 was given for each school and class. Also included was the frequency of responses for values 1 (almost never) through 4 (almost always). Teacher responses for each class were taken from the questionnaire and compared question by question with the mean of student responses. The differences between the two yielded the "perceptual differences" values.

The mean of all student responses by question was also reported and is referred to as "baseline data" (Appendix C).

#### Chapter 4

#### RESULTS

The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine if there was a measurable difference between a teacher's self-perception and that of his or her students in regard to various teaching behaviors. Using 20 questions and a Likert-type scale, student respondents gave their opinions. Teachers responded to the same set of questions, attempting to see themselves as their students saw them. Questions 21 and 22 requested of students a written response concerning most and least liked "things" about their classes. The results of questions 1 through 20 were coded so that computed results would compare the average student response with that of the teacher of the class . This information was completed for each of the 18 classes surveyed.

In order to satisfy the purpose of the questionnaire, the primary analysis focused on the congruence of the values of teacher and class averaged responses. A further analysis examined the direction of response from the teacher perspective to determine if the teachers rated themselves more or less favorably than their students did. Individual questions were checked to see which ones would invoke the largest number of differences in perception.

The subjective responses of students yielded categories which could be compared to see what differences might occur in student responses between three schools. Finally, an example of a practical application of the data was given to show how a teacher could use the information to detect areas of possible improvement.

## Moderate Perceptual Difference Values

In order to determine whether the perceptions of teachers and students were congruent, the average response value of each class was compared with the response value of the appropriate teacher. On the scale used, 4 categories, each with a value of 1 whole number, measured the responses of both teacher and students. To check for perceptual differences, the teacher's whole number response (1-4) was compared to the average response of each class to each The differences were subtracted. A minimum difference in value of .5 was arbitrarily selected to determine the number of differences by teacher and grade (Table 1). This information would reveal to what extent teachers differ in the accuracy of their self-perception. The main observation from these data is the number of differences at this level. Eight of the eighteen teachers showed a difference at .5 and above on 10 or more The contrast in perceptual accuracy between questions. teachers with the most and least differences is noteworthy. Almost half of the group, eight teachers, had differences

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF PERCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES BY TEACHERS

AT .5 VALUE AND ABOVE

Teacher	Grade	Number of Differences
1	6-7	7
2	6	7
3	4-5	. 8
4	7	5
5	₹5	13
6	4	8
7	6	7
8	5	10
9	5	6
10 -	6	11
11	6-7	. 11
12	7	11
13	7	10
14	5	9
15	5-6	5
16	7	12
17	4	8
18	<b>7</b>	12

at this level. On fifty percent of the items they perceived themselves quite differently than did their students. In contrast, two of the teachers had differences at that level on only 5 questions. Generally, at this level of difference there is not much congruence between the two groups. Some teachers' perceptions of self are closer to those of their students than others.

#### Substantial Perceptual Difference Values

A second comparison was made to discover the perceptual differences at the level of 1.0 or more. These numbers would indicate a very substantial perceptual gap in that a full category difference would exist between averaged student scores and those of individual teachers. This information is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF PERCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES BY TEACHERS

AT 1.0 VALUE OR MORE

Teacher	Grade	Number of Differences
1	6-7	2
2	6	0
3	4-5	0
4	7	1
5	5	3
6	4	2
7	6	1
8	5	. 3
9	5	0
10	6	2
11	6-7	. 5
12	7	3
13	7	. 3
14	5	6
15	5-6	2
16	7	1
17	4	. 2
18	7	2

From these observations, the level at which teachers rate

themselves compared to their class average is quite varied. Three teachers showed no differences while teachers number 11 and 14 had differences in perception in at least 25% of the categories. Again, the observation can be made that there is a significant difference between some teacher's self-perception and that of his/her students.

## Direction of Perceptual Difference Values

When teachers' ratings differ from those of their students, in which direction do the differences occur? Are they rating themselves more favorably (higher) or less favorably (lower) than their students? The information in Table 3 answers these questions for the .5 value level and above. For those teachers whose responses are least congruent (numbers 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, and 18), all rated themselves higher then their students did. Only teacher number 11 was in contrast to this tendency, rating him/herself lower in 10 of 11 questions. It appears that generally when teachers err in their perceptions of self, they err in the direction which shows themselves more favorably. The implication of this tendency may be that teachers have a false sense of optimism about the effectiveness of their classroom behaviors. The result could be that ineffective classroom behaviors would remain unchanged unless these teachers receive student opinions on which they can reflect.

TABLE 3
DIRECTION OF TEACHER DISCREPANCIES

Teacher	Number of Discrepancies at .5 or Above	Number of Questions Rated Higher By Teacher	Number of Questions Rated Lower By Teacher		
1	7	5	2		
2	7	1	6		
3	8	4	4		
4	5	3	2		
5	13	9	4		
6	8	7	1		
7	7	4	3		
8	10	7	3		
9	6	5	1		
10	11	7	4		
11 .	11	1	10		
12	11	11	0		
13	10	1-	- <b>9</b>		
14	9	9	0		
15	5	3	2		
16	12	11	1		
17	8	7	1		
18	12	11	1		

## Question Analysis

In order to discover commonalities and discrepancies, each question on which difference values exceeded .5 was examined (see Table 4).

Question 2, "My teacher has lots of good ideas", produced the least number of occurrences at the .5 or greater value. It was also one on which teachers were rated lowest by their students (2.9). Both groups appear to recognize the difficulty

TABLE 4
QUESTIONS IN WHICH PERCEPTUAL DIFFERENCE VALUES
OCCURRED AT .5 OR ABOVE

Question #	Frequency of Occurrence	Student Mean (N=439)	Teacher Mean (N=18)
1	11	3.4	3.6
2	4	2.9	3.0
3	7	3.3	3.2
4	8	3.1	3.5
5	8	3.6	3.5
6	7	3.3	3.5
7	8	3.4	3.7
8	9	3.4	3.6
9	7	3.3	3.3
10	10	2.8	2.9
11	8	2.9	3.0
12	9	3.2	3.5
13	9	3.2	3.4
14	6	3.3	3.2
15	7	3.0	2.9
16	7	2.8	2.8
17	8	3.0	3.0
18	4	2.6	2.9
19	9	2.4	2.4
20	12	2.7	3.3

involved in consistently producing "good ideas".

Question 16, "My teacher uses things to make lessons interesting". a question similar in nature to number 2 again was rated low by students (2.8). Teachers' assessments on the same question received the same low rating, consistent with the responses to number 2.

Questions 18 and 19 also elicited ideas about seatwork and classroom surroundings. Predictably, these also received low ratings from both groups.

Question 20, "I look forward to coming to school each day and try not to be absent". was one in which teachers received a low rating (2.9) and was also one on which teachers' responses were on average much different (2.7 students, 3.3 teachers).

Questions 1 and 5 dealt with teachers' perceived knowledge of subject matter and their ability to express it clearly.

These were rated highest by students.

Questions 7, 8, and 9 were questions in which a caring attitude was explored. Again teachers were very favorably viewed by their students.

The frequency of occurrences did not appear to be significant. Although questions 1, 10, and 20 were found ten times or more to show a perceptual value exceeding .5, these questions were not similar in nature.

Generally those questions which explored tendencies towards a caring attitude received high marks by both groups. Those questions related to interesting lessons, seatwork and ideas were rated low by both groups.

#### Students' Written Responses

The responses to the subjective questions at the end of the questionnaire were examined to see if common threads were evident throughout the entire student group. In all

four categories emerged: peer related, subject related, teacher related, and physical environment.

#### Peer related

Those questions which evoked responses of like or dislike that contained elements where classmates were mentioned as a source were included in this category (Tables 5 and 6).

TABLE 5

ELEMENTS OF SCHOOLING EVOKING POSITIVE RESPONSES
OF STUDENTS (LIKES) (N=439)

Category	School 1 (%)	School 2 (%)	School 3 (%)
Peer related	34	40	26
Subject matter	32	23	30
Teacher related	24	30	31
Physical environment	6	1	5
All others	4	6	8

TABLE 6
ELEMENTS OF SCHOOLING EVOKING NEGATIVE RESPONSES
OF STUDENTS (DISLIKES) (N=439)

Category	School 1 (%)	School 2 (%)	School 3 (%)
Peer related	26	13	19
Subject matter	40	48	39
Teacher related	9	24	19
Physical environment	11	14	12
All others	14	1	11

In all three schools, peer elements were rated highly as a source of those school elements which were positive. In school 2, 40% of the "likes" were associated with peers.

## Subject Related

Responses relating to elements of classwork (ie. subject areas, homework, tests, etc.) were grouped under this category (Tables 5 and 6). This area was the source of most of the negative factors (40%, 48% 39%). There were, however, many students who rated subject matter highly (Table 5). Many responses were of the nature of liking one subject but disliking another. For example, Art was often a source of "like" while Social Studies brought a "dislike" response.

#### Teacher Related

Those areas in which a teacher or teacher influence was present were grouped in this category. The results in school 1 indicate that its teachers do not regularly evoke negative feelings (Table 6). This is in contrast to school number 2 where 24% of negative responses were teacher related. In two of the schools the interactions with teachers were overwhelmingly positive: 24% vs 9% (school 1), 30% vs 19% (school 3).

The differences detected in the study might be useful to schools in which climate improvement was a goal. Responses taken over a period of 2-4 years might indicate progress towards helping to develop a positive feeling in students about their school. This study indicated that the differences can be measured.

#### Physical Environment

Surroundings, desk sizes, numbers of windows and displays

were typical of the responses grouped in this category.

These elements were mentioned more often as negative elements than they were as positive. As a source of elements students like about their classrooms, the physical environment appears not to be one of them.

Those responses which were not clearly a part of the previous four categories were left to make up the remaining percentage of the subjective responses.

Teachers would find reading the responses to questions 21 and 22, from which these tables were derived, very useful. The information given would cause them to reflect on what specifically appeals to and does not appeal to students. The insights gained here could be a source of information that might lead to changes in some areas. An example of this occurred in the responses of one class where a full third of the class mentioned the problem of noise level. The teacher might want to consider this as a negative factor that could be corrected. Other comments related to boring seatwork assignments which, as a frequently written concern, could give rise to a change in that area. If, while reading the comments, one particular concern is recurrent, a teacher could identify an area requiring change.

#### Individual Teacher Results

The information received from this survey for teacher

16 provides an example how the results might be utilized.

Table 7 shows the teacher's responses to each question (column 1).

TABLE 7
TEACHER #16: INFORMATION FOR DECISION MAKING

		<del> </del>	
Question	Teacher #16 Responses	Class #16 Responses N=27	Value Difference and Direction (Teacher 16 minus class 16)
1	4.0	3.4	-0.6
2	4.0	2.8	-1.2
3	3.0	3.5	+0.5
4	3.0	3.0	0.0
5	, 4.0	3.4	-0.6
6	4.0	3.5	-0.5
7	4.0	3.7	-0.3
8	4.0	3.4	-0.6
9	4.0	3.4	-0.6
10	4.0	2.6	-1.4
11	4.0	3.3	-0.7
12	4.0	3.2	-0.8
13	3.0	3.6	+0.6
14	3.0	3.2	+0.2
15	3.0	3.0	0.0
16	4.0	3.0	-1.0
17	4.0	3.0	-1.0
18	3.0	2.8	-0.2
19	3.0	2.1	-0.9
20	3.0	3.0	0.0

Column 2 shows the class' averaged responses. The third column gives the difference values when teacher 16's responses are subtracted from the average of his class. Also shown is the direction of each difference, positive if the student responses were higher in value than the teacher's, negative if they were lower in value.

Column 3 would help the teacher to determine areas

on which there is a large perceptual value difference.

In this case questions 2, 10, 16 and 17 all have differences in excess of 1.0. These questions deal with: having "lots of good ideas" (#2), approachability, "I can talk to my teacher about problems" (#10), interesting lessons (#16), and utilizing tests to help find problem areas for re-teaching (#17). These observations might provide the focus for change.

Teachers need to bring to this consideration other variables which will impact on results. Class size, curriculum, split classes, are but some of them. It may be a particularly difficult class or a poor choice of time of day or week for testing. Only when the teacher, determined to improve or change, interprets the results in light of all other variables, will he/she make desirable decisions for change.

The results of the data and subsequent analysis show that a teacher looking to improve might find student feedback a good source of information as to where the improvements are needed.

#### Chapter 5

#### DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This project has been concerned with changing teachers' classroom behaviors to make them more effective. Through a questionnaire, elements of teaching were rated by students. Teachers rated themselves on the same items and a comparison by class showed that there were areas of perceptual differences which can become the basis for improved instruction. These findings are congruent with the few studies that were found in the literature. Students' evaluations can be of assistance to those wishing to change behaviors which are ineffective.

The literature reviewed also suggests that current practices are not very effective in promoting positive changes. The research shows that the processes for change are largely controlled by individuals who are not directly involved in daily classroom activities. There are strong suggestions that this factor of remoteness may be a major obstacle to achieving desirable change. Those identifying and implementing change need to be more closely involved in the process of change. The concept of teachers as classroom researchers may be more productive in promoting instructional change than have either inservice or supervisory models. There are also implications in this for evaluation. The results of teacher initiated research might be utilized as part of the data used in their evaluation.

#### Facilitating Evaluation

Evaluation, both formative and summative, is an integral part of our education system. When evaluation has as its purpose the improvement of teaching, then the focus needs to be on identifying the behaviors that are ineffective. The classroom teacher, and the classroom as research laboratory may be the most effective means of getting that information. With administrators as facilitators of the process, the organization's goals, both for classroom effectiveness and summative reporting, can be integrated with teacher research and its outcomes.

The experiences of Hedges, Harris, Spier, and Causey (1958) in the Moorhouse Parish, Louisianna, support and give direction for this idea.

One of the latest additions to the professional growth program is that of research by the individual teacher. It is evident that many benefits can be derived from experimental teaching...experimentation enables the teacher to look critically at what she is doing and at the same time receive constructive help from her co-workers...of the many benefits...one of the foremost is the fact that the teachers...are able to test firsthand the many modern teaching themes. (p. 351-352)

Dr. Marcia Knoll (1987) in her recent book on supervision of instruction, supports the idea of teacher involvement.

The supervision summary should be prepared in consultation with the teacher. If possible, the teacher should be the one to identify future areas to be targeted. This involvement helps motivate teacher efforts...Invite the teacher to participate ...In addition the involvement of the teacher will help to establish a trust relationship and the belief that the supervisor does care about the teacher's concerns. (p. 9-11)

The idea of another person to help in motivating and the necessity of working towards a trust relationship are recurring concepts in the literature.

The essence of the thrust of this project and conditions which would facilitate a model utilizing teacher initiated research are succinctly suggested by Ned Flanders (1963).

In his book concerned with inservice he presents the following criteria for success:

There is no single pattern of teaching that should be adopted by all teachers. Each teacher must discover for himself his own unique, over-all balance between indirect and direct influence; he must also discover his own rules concerning which patterns of behavior are most appropriate to various learning situations. (pp. 13-14)

The versatility that a teacher brings to his teaching is vital. Each class brings its own unique challenges.

A teacher must feel free to experiment, to take risks to meet the ever changing classroom environment and to maintain a dynamic equilibrium within its confines. Administrators need to be aware of and support these efforts.

Fear of professional or administrative evaluation must be eliminated in order that teachers will feel free to diagnose their own behavior and explore different patterns of teaching. They must also feel free to ask for help when appropriate. Their objective is greater self control of their own behavior. (ibid)

The hierarchical nature of much of the evaluation that currently exists prevents the teacher from taking risks.

Traditionally, the quiet classroom with all students engaged in seatwork following a lesson being taught, has been the ideal situation to observe.

Participation must be voluntary, insights must be discovered, coercion has no place in the program. Members of the training team must not only help teachers identify useful social skills for working with students, but they must be available to help in the classroom when a teacher first attempts to modify his pattern of influence. Such visits to the classroom must be at the invitation of the teacher. (ibid)

It is in this situation that peers can perform a valuable function. As an observer, data collector, and "idea person", the role of the colleague can be most effective and, as Peck and Tucker (1973) found, it can be a strong motivational factor. Flanders supports the idea of teacher as decision maker.

Members of the training team must avoid making evaluative judgements even when solicited so that the teacher is left to decide for himself what patterns of teaching are good or bad, effective or ineffective. The major function of training is to provide a teacher with more information about his own behavior than would otherwise be available. Training activities should be under the control of the teachers or their representatives; full support of the administration will be necessary including the provision of time, resources, and incentives; hopefully non-participating teachers could maintain at least a neutral reaction or even encourage their colleagues who are participating in the training. (ibid)

Administrators as evaluators or facilitators of evaluation need to give their support to initiatives by teachers. The atmosphere must be non-threatening if changes can be allowed to occur. Indeed, administrators might wish to make self-improvement plans by teachers a part of an annual or summative evaluation. Encouraging this approach with the same enthusiasm as is applied to inservice might provide better payoff for improved classroom instruction.

In the final analysis, a teacher must want to change before it can occur. (ibid)

The implications of Flander's research on inservice training included an observation on how teachers could gain insights into classroom behaviors.

Principles of teacher influence should be discovered by teachers on the basis of their own experimentation. The effectiveness of the training experience depends on successfully creating opportunities for independent self-directed inquiry in which ones own behavior and the reactions of pupils are the object of inquiry. (ibid. p. 136)

The traditional role of the administrator will need to be modified if meaningful change is to occur. As a facilitator, ideas person, and interested mentor, the administrator in these roles may be able to see more positive changes taking place in the classrooms. While giving support and feedback, the administrator provides expertise fulfilling his role as educational leader and monitoring the learning situation in the classroom.

In a recent <u>Time</u> magazine article John Moore, Chairman of the Department of Education at Trinity University in San Diego stated that "reform has been a sort of top down initiative. Teachers were never brought into it. As a result many reforms were misguided". (May 8, 1988, p. 59)

## An Alternative Approach

The project's questionnaire used as is or modified to suit the needs of the individual teacher, could be used as a tool in the process of teacher self-improvement and/or an element in the evaluation process. One plan for this

model is as follows: Early in the year in which a teacher is to be evaluated he/she could bring a questionnaire of the type used here to the supervisor and discuss the appropriateness of the questions students will be asked. Agreement on individual questions needing modifications could be worked out so that both parties were satisfied. The teacher has now been given an opportunity to provide input into the evaluation process. The results of the student survey could then be examined later in the year and form the basis for an improvement plan, an evaluation, or both depending on a prior agreement between supervisor and teacher. The teacher's involvement in choosing a survey, the students involvement in providing input and the supervisor's willingness to trust the process as a part of the evaluation would all be positive elements to consider.

A second idea for utilizing the questionnaire involves the teacher seeking self-improvement but not wishing to involve others. The questionnaire would be administered by the teacher. The results of each question are then averaged by the teacher and those on which he/she scores lowest could be considered for modification of teaching practices or as guides for further inservice or training.

This suggested method is attractive because it can be an ongoing process utilized each year by the teacher, refined where necessary and leading to the teacher becoming a researcher of his/her effectiveness in teaching. In her presentation to the annual meeting of the New England Association

of Schools and Colleges in 1986, Patricia Cross echoed the above:

I have proposed elsewhere the development of a new set of skills and tools that I call "classroom research". The purpose of classroom research is to help teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching. Interpreted broadly, classroom research is the formal study by a teacher of a teaching/learning situation in his or her classroom. "Classroom research" may be too pretentious a term for collecting feedback on student learning. But using the classroom as a laboratory to study the impact of teaching on learning is the heart of the matter. study might be as simple as a set of questions worked into a class period for the purpose of determining student learning, or it might be as complex as designing a test of critical thinking in the subject matter...Classroom research is formative because it aims to provide information that is helpful in improving performance in a particular It is geared to self-improvement classroom. since it is designed, conducted, and used by teachers themselves. And classroom research bridges the gap between research and practice because researchers and practitioners are one: the researcher asks the questions that the practitioner thinks are important; the practitioner is eager to use the results of the research. Last, but not least, classroom research is intended to be additive. Thousands of small changes made in classrooms across the nation may well add up to more real reform of education than sweeping policies made far from the scene of the teaching/learning action... The contributions of classroom research to knowledge about teaching and to self-improvement are related. Since teachers are encouraged to collect information that they consider relevant to the learning of their students in their classrooms, the assumption is that they can and will use it for self-improvement. The criticism is often made that educational research has contributed little to our knowledge about how to improve classroom teaching...Most educational research is a search for generalizations across an almost infinite variety of teachers, students, and subjects. In this search for general laws of

learning, researchers deliberately hold constant or rule out the specific conditions in any particular classroom. But what the classroom teacher really wants to know is: What is happening in my classroom, given my students and my subject matter? Classroom research is, by definition, situation-specific, and the findings of classroom research are, therefore, relevant to a given teacher and can be used directly to improve practice... Teachers must be actively involved in the process of teaching. They cannot be following someone else's dicta, no matter how authoritative, and hope to grow and to be continually challenged by their work. Teachers must have feedback on student learning. (p. 498-500)

Many teachers wishing to improve their performances have enlisted their students' help in assessment. Whether they were motivated by desire to improve their instruction or a wish to become students of teaching, their efforts are commendable.

In my discussions with colleagues and friends concerning self-evaluation as a means of improving teaching, I received information about a third party who had done something similar to what is proposed here. As the individual was a retired Burnaby Automotive instructor with an excellent reputation for his teaching skills, I decided to interview him. My purposes were to find out why he used the questionnaire method, the type of questionnaire used, and whether he attributed his success to this type of self-assessment.

I was also interested in how his administrators, colleagues, and students viewed his evaluation efforts. The following is the text of the interview conducted in August, 1987 with Rudy Bodner. He is considered, by his teaching colleagues, to be a master teacher of automotive, having set up the

existing programs in Burnaby South and Alpha Schools in the 1970's. His expertise has also been requested by other school districts. The results of his questionnaire, he submits, were very important in determining his instructional method early in his career, and the success and satisfaction he felt in his job. A copy of Mr. Bodner's questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

#### The Interview With Rudy Bodner

- Q: What prompted you to administer a self-assessment questionnaire?
- A: I had heard about the general idea of having students assess aspects of teaching and decided to try it.
- Q: Who made up the questions?
- A: I did.
- Q: Did you administer it?
- A: Yes. I gave it at the end of the year to each of my five automotive classes.
- Q: Was it administered so that students would remain anonymous?
- A: Yes, but many put their names on it, as many as half of the class in most cases.
- Q: What was the student's reaction to your request for evaluation?
- A: They thought it was great. They felt important and pleased that I would ask them for an evaluation.
- Q: Did your colleagues know about it?
- A: Yes, but they thought I was foolish to do it. They were concerned about the reaction of the pupils. They had never used anything like it.
- Q: Did anyone in administration know about it?
- A: Yes. The principal approved of the idea and the questionnaire, but only my department head was interested enough to ask about the results.
- Q: Were the results as you expected or were there some surprises?
- A: I was surprised by the response to number 4. The students didn't find my presentations interesting.

  As a result I began bringing in more visual aids and parts of automobiles which were being discussed. This worked well and overcame the low rating the following year.
- Q: Would you recommend this as a method of instructional improvement?
- A: Yes, very strongly.

There are probably many more instances of teachers who have achieved better instructional results through classroom research. Whether the research has been incidental or part of a plan, the success of many teachers must in some way be the result of introspection into their teaching practices. If administrators could see the potential of this approach, it might lead to improvements that current training options cannot achieve. Economically, with administrators assistance, it could save the many dollars that Wasserman and Eggert allude in their research. As this approach is situation specific it is a more economical use of teacher time. Administrators and peers, as data collectors, need never leave their school setting to assist teachers in developing improvement plans. Administrators, closer to the scene of the teaching/learning action, can further develop the leadership expertise required in helping teachers to change ineffective classroom behaviors.

#### Conclusions

From the literature researched and the observations made it seems reasonable to conclude:

- that current practices used in changing teachers' ineffective classroom behaviors are in themselves generally ineffective.
- 2. that teachers can change those behaviors if they have information which they believe is relevant to their classroom situation.

- 3. that student feedback on teaching practices is reliable at the intermediate level, at least.
- 4. that administration could choose to be a supportive part of schemes involving teachers' classroom research.
- 5. that evaluation may be facilitated as part of the teacherresearcher model.

Further research on this subject might center around longitudinal studies in which teachers plan changes in their behavior based on classroom research. Their effectiveness could be measured over three different years to determine if student ratings change due to modifications of teaching behavior. Many other variables will input on this type of study, but if teachers are perceived as more effective by their students as a result of such activities, the reward will be worth the effort.

The approach suggested here will require work in the development of appropriate questionnaires which can be modified by individual teachers and administrators to tailor them to their specific circumstances. If this were achieved, then surely the "thousands of small changes made in classrooms ...may well add up to more real reform of education than sweeping policies made far from the scene of the teaching/learning action". (Cross, Patricia K. 1986. p. 500)

## APPENDIX A

Questionnaire
Including instructions for administering
Examples of questionnaire
Example of completed and coded student questionnaire

## Dear Colleague,

This project is being done to determine if there is a measurable difference between teacher's self-evaluation and that of his/her students. I plan to compare the results of a questionnaire on which teachers evaluate themselves, and students evaluate their teachers. All responses are anonymous. I will be comparing the results of 20 classrooms but not individual classes.

The following information is included to meet the requirements of the Ethics Committee at S.F.U.

- Complaints re this study can be made to Dr.Ron Marx, Faculty of Education, S.F.U.
- Participation is voluntary for both teachers and students.
   Either may withdraw at any time and choose not to answer questions.

Please follow the directions below so that consistency is established.

Thank you,

Ken Sutton 6657 194 Street, Surrey, B.C. V3S 5M1

\*

Directions for administering:

#### Inform students:

"This questionnaire asks you to evaluate me on some teaching items. I will evaluate myself on the teacher copy. When you're finished put your papers in this envelope and a student will deliver yours and mine to the office. The research is being done to determine how closely a teacher self-evaluation compares with that of his/her students. I will not be looking at your answers so feel free to write exactly what you think for each question. Your participation is voluntary.

Look at the example on the first page. What do you think is the best answer? There is no right answer. Your opinion is what is asked for. Now turn to the next page. Fill in the information at the top and then answer the questions on the next 2 pages. Don't put your name on the paper. All the information on the paper is anonymous. When you have finished, put your paper in this envelope. Any questions? Start."

Teachers: Please respond to each item in the same manner as you think your students, on average, will respond. Have a student return the envelope with yours and their responses to your office. Please have them put into the courier bag. Thank you again for your assistance. I will send you my results on request (sometime next Fall).

Sex	Boy ( ) Girl ( )TEACHER			<del>-6</del> -
Bir	thdate: Year born (19) Month (	)	•	
Gra	de: 5( ) 6( ) 7( )			7-10
Gi a	de: 5( ) 0( ) /( )			TI
***	***************	*******	*****	*******
Ins	tructions: Place a check ( ) in the c closest to the situation in Do <u>not</u> include your name on	your class:	room.	to be
		always	. •	
		<b>8</b>	8	never
		a c	÷ #	m tr
•		Almost Often	Sometimes	Almost
1.	My teacher knows what he wants from his students and makes it clear to us.	mana/authire equations and		21
2.	My teacher has lots of good ideas.			
3.	My teacher finishes projects he starts		*	22 23
4.	My teacher is a happy person.		-	
5.	My teacher knows a lot about what he teaches.			24 25
6.	My teacher likes teaching.			
7.	My teacher is honest with students.			26
8.	My teacher cares about each of	•		27
	his students.			28
9.	My teacher helps students with their problems.		*	29
0.	I can talk to my teacher about problems.	-	•	30
1.	The rules of this classroom are fair and agreed on by the students.			31

An Evaluation Survey

,	Teacher	ılvays			never
	reactiet	all		0 0 0	E O
		Almost	often	Sometime	Almost
12.	Students who don't do as well as others are still well thought of by the teacher.	<del></del> .	•		32
13.	Students are free to express their opinion in the classroom if they aren't the same as the teacher's opinion.	t .	•		33
14.	Our teacher listens to what we say.			-	34
15.	Our teacher trusts us to do things on our own.				35
16.	My teacher uses things to make lessons interesting.	<del></del>			36
17.	My teacher tests us to find ways to help us learn.	<del></del>			37
18.	Our classroom is an interesting place.	<del></del>	•	•	38
19.	The seatwork I do is interesting to me.	<del></del>		: <u></u>	39
20.	I look forward to coming to school each day and I try not to be absent.	· .			40
21.	The thing I like best about this class	is:			
	* *				
		•			
22.	The thing I like least about this class	s is:			

## An Evaluation Survey

Sample item: Place a check ( $\checkmark$ ) in the column you believe most closely describes the statement.

always		ses	
Almost	Often	Sometimes	Never

 In the Surrey/White Rock area it rains in February.

•	•			-	- <del></del> -	
	An Evaluation Survey	1	2	3	4	J
Sex	Boy ( ) Girl ( )				<del></del>	
Birt	chdate: Year born (19) Month ( .)				6	
Grad	le: 5( ) 6( ) 7( )				7-10	
***	**********	****	****	*****	11 *****	***
Inst	ructions: Place a check ( ) in the coclosest to the situation in Do not include your name on	your	classi	coom.	to be	
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2.	My teacher has lots of good ideas.	·	<del></del>		2	2
3.	My teacher finishes projects he/she starts.		angeren og gregorieten og gregorieten og gregorieten og gregorieten og gregorieten og gregorieten og gregoriet		2	
4.	My teacher is a happy person.		· <del></del>	<del></del>		4
5.	My teacher knows a lot about what he teaches.				2	5
6.	My teacher likes teaching.		<del></del>		2	6
7.	My teacher is honest with students.		<del></del>	<del></del>	2	_
8.	My teacher cares about each of his/her students.				<del></del> 2	
9.	My teacher helps students with their problems.			***************************************	2	9
10.	I can talk to my teacher about problems.				3	0
11.	The rules of this classroom are fair and agreed on by the students.				3	1

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12.	Students who don't do as well as others are still well thought of by the teacher.		***************************************		32
13.	Students are free to express their opinion in the classroom if they are the same as the teacher's opinion.	n't	<del></del>		33
14.	Our teacher listens to what we say.				<del></del> 34
15.	Our teacher trusts us to do things				
	on our own.				35
16.	My teacher uses things to make lessons interesting.			<u> </u>	36
17.	Ny teacher tests us to find ways to help us learn.				37
18.	Our classroom is an interesting place.	-			38
19.	The seatwork I do is interesting to me.	<del></del>		~~~	39
20.	I look forward to coming to school each day and I try not to be absent.				40
21.	The thing I like best about this class	ss is:			
		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			
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22.	The thing I like least about this cla	ass is	:		
		<del></del>			·
		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			

# $\frac{\cancel{3}}{1} \quad \frac{\cancel{3}}{2} \quad \frac{\cancel{4}}{3} \quad \frac{\cancel{4}}{5}$ An Evaluation Survey

Sex: Boy ( ) Gir1 ( /)  $\frac{7}{6}$ Birthdate: Year born (1946) Month (6)  $\frac{7}{7-10}$ Grade: 5( /) 6( ) 7( )

		always			never
		Almost	Often	Sometime	Almost
1.	My teacher knows what the wants from his students and makes it clear to us	<			<sub>21</sub> U
2.	My teacher has lots of good ideas.	<u>v</u>			22 V
3.	My teacher finishes projects he/she starts.	<u>v</u>			23 Y
4.	My teacher is a happy person.				24 2
5.	My teacher knows a lot about what she teaches.	<u>~</u>		****	25 1/
6.	My teacher likes teaching.	<u> </u>			26
7.	My teacher is honest with students.	1			27
8.	My teacher cares about each of his/her students.				<del>28</del> 3
9.	My teacher helps students with their problems.			•	<del>29</del>
10.	I can talk to my teacher about problems.	<b>√</b>			<del>30</del> 4′
11.	The rules of this classroom are fair and agreed on by the students.		~	***	<del>31</del> ?

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12.	Students who don't do as well as others are still well thought of by the teacher.	<u> </u>			32 <i>U</i>
13.	Students are free to express their opinion in the classroom if they are the same as the teacher's opinion.	n't		<u>~</u>	33 ?
14.	Our teacher listens to what we say.			1	<del>34</del> · )
15.	Our teacher trusts us to do things on our own.	<del></del>	<del></del>	<u> </u>	<del>35</del> /
16.	My teacher uses things to make lessons interesting.	4			<del>36</del> 4
17.	My teacher tests us to find ways to help us learn.	₩	·	<del></del>	—— <sub>37</sub> √
18.	Our classroom is an interesting place.	1	<del></del>		——38 √
19.	The seatwork I do is interesting to me.	·	<u> </u>		<del>3</del> 9 }
20.	I look forward to coming to school each day and I try not to be absent.			<del></del>	
21.	The thing I like best about this cla	ss is:	<del></del> _	<del>,</del>	
22.	The thing I like least about this cl	ass is	:	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
				<del>17 (7 )</del>	

## APPENDIX B

Sample of student questionnaire referred to in interview with Rudy Bodner

Sample of Student Evaluation Questionnaire Used by Rudy Bodner

#### ----STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHER----

Please do not write your name on the form so you may feel free to be honest. Read each item carefuly and underline your rating for each statement.

After underlining your rating, space is provided to make written comments should you so desire.

- Interested in subject taught:
  - (5) Always interested
  - (3) Mildly interested
  - (1) Disinterested in subject

Comments:

- 2. Knowledge of subjects taught:
  - (5) Well informed
  - (3) Average
  - (1) Inadequately informed

Comments:

- 3. Preparation of subject material:
  - (5) Always prepared
  - (3) Occasionally prepared
  - (1) Seldom prepared

Comments:

- 4. Presentation of material:
  - (5) Interesting
  - (3) Average
  - (1) Dull

Comments:

- 5. Attitude toward different views:
  - (5) Welcomes differences in viewpoints
  - (3) Occasionally, but usually tolerant
  - (1) Intolerant, does not allow contradiction

Comments:

- 6. Attitude towards students:
  - (5) Always courteous and considerate
  - (3) Usually considerate, but finds it difficult at times
  - (1) Inconsiderate and rude

Comments:

- 7. Admit you do not know the answer to a question:
  - (5) Yes
  - (3) Occasionally
  - (1) No

Comments:

- 8. Personal Appearance:
  - (5) Appropriate
  - (3) Usually appropriate
  - (1) Seldom appropriate

Comments:

- 9. Personal Peculiarities:
  - (5) Free from annoying mannerisms
  - (3) Moderately free from annoying mannerisms
  - (1) Constantly exhibits irritating mannerisms

Comments:

- 10. Speaks clearly and distinctly:
  - (5) Good
  - (3) Fair
  - (1) Poor

Comments:

- 11. Makes the classroom as physically comfortable , neat and attractive as possible:
  (5) Always
  (3) Occasionally

  - (1) Never

Comments:

- 12. General Estimate of Teacher:
  - (5) Superior
  - (3) Average
  - (1) Inferior

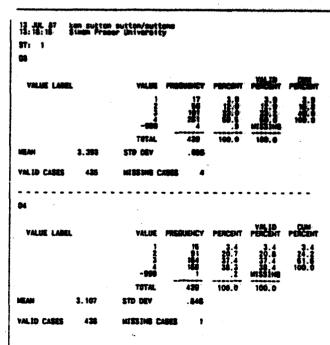
Comments:

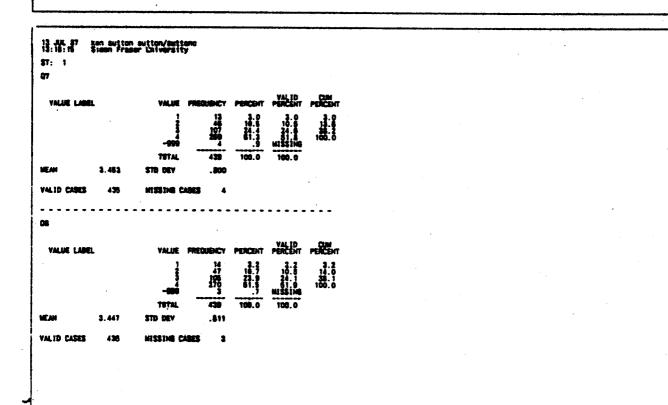
Your opinions and comments if necessary of the teaching instruction, shop time application and any suggestions and ideas on how they may be improved to correct any implied faults.

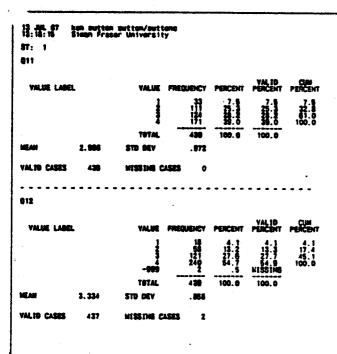
## APPENDIX C

Baseline data for the teachers by question N=439

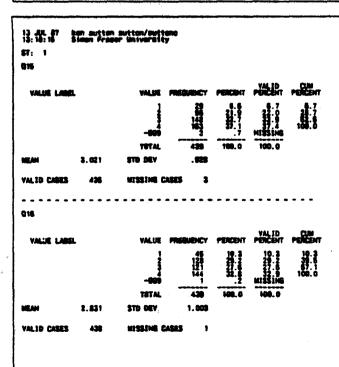
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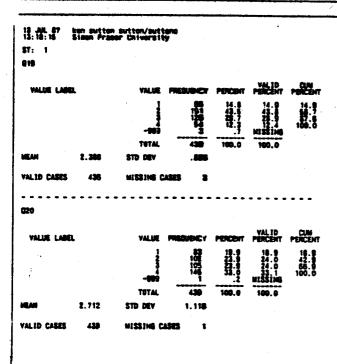




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