A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL TOWARDS EVALUATION

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A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL TOWARDS EVALUATION

By

Gordon B. Broderick

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

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ABSTRACT

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is in the process of implementing massive reforms to the education system of this province. This drive for reform has been in light of our current social and economic conditions. Presently, our system of education is viewed as a major contributing factor to our inadequate performance in the global market. The government of this province believes that the only way to bridge the gap that currently exists on performance indicators provincially, nationally and internationally is to overcome the barriers that exist in educational development, and ensure that the best system of education is provided. It is the aim of the Newfoundland and Labrador Government to put an accountability system in place to take corrective action if performance is inadequate. It has been suggested within the educational community that the solution may lie in a continuous appraisal system for all educational personnel.

The aim of the study was to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards evaluation policies and procedures. The study was conducted in a rural area of Newfoundland and Labrador that resembles most urban centres in terms of student and teacher population. The qualitative paradigm was employed as the research methodology. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used to gather data from the educational personnel.

All teachers, regardless of their employment status in the education system in this

study, favored the establishment of an ongoing performance appraisal system for all educational personnel. This was found despite the prevailing belief that educational personnel do not want any form of performance appraisal. Teachers realize the importance and need to be held accountable for their teaching, and welcome any process that could further enhance their professional development, thus increasing their accountability. As a result, the teachers in this study see a dire need for an evaluation process beyond the traditional probationary and replacement time frames. Many problems were cited concerning the way evaluation policies and procedures are currently implemented in this province. The main issue conveyed involved the lack of stakeholder input into the formulation and implementation of existing policies. Consequently, this problem was viewed as the main barrier in the formulation of an evaluation policy.

Respondents communicated that evaluation should be a continuous process that emphasizes the formative, rather than the summative aspects of evaluation. Respondents continuously reiterated the fact that our society is constantly evolving and changing. As a result, there is an increased need for the continuous evaluation of programs, teaching styles and teachers, to ensure that the students of this province are receiving the best education possible, so as to be competitive in the ever expanding and changing global market.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Tremendous pressure is being exerted on organizations to change in today's society. A focus is especially directed toward publicly funded organizations. The education system in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has not escaped this drive for social reform. If anything, it has been put at the forefront of the government's agenda.

Educational stakeholders appear to agreethat some sort of change is necessary in education at this particular time. The kind of change desired, and the direction from which the pressure is coming to change is wide and varied. No one source can be specifically identified, but rather there seems to be an accumulation of external forces wanting something other than what they feel the current system provides.

Many reasons are given for this need to change including: declining enrolments, financial resources, a drastic change in the provinces traditional industries, the technological revolution, and most importantly, low student achievement levels. Today's students are entering a competitive global market where the economic and social landscapes are rapidly changing. As a result, the need for increased student achievement levels is at an all time high. Educational literature explicitly states that student

achievement is inextricably linked with teacher effectiveness. In *Adjusting the Course Part II* (1994) the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador states that "our goal for education is to transform this society from one of persistent under-achievement to one whose achievement levels rank with the best in the nation" (p. 1).

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes that there are many forces which contribute to the economic and social development of this province from geography and climate, to global economic conditions. Yet, the government also realizes that the most important force that can bridge the gap, and overcome barriers is educational development. In *Adjusting the Course Part II* (1994) the government states "unlike some other factors which shape our development, educational achievement is entirely within our own capacity to change" (p. 4). As a result, the Government believes that for a change in educational achievement to occur, fundamental changes must occur in the structure with an increased emphasis placed on the act of teaching.

It is the aim of government to initiate and carry out structural and curriculum changes to the educational system to make it, not only more efficient, but more productive in terms of educated and prepared students. This task of increasing educational achievement in students resides with the classroom teacher. Two points worthy of noting under Principles of Reform in *Adjusting the Course Part II (*1994*)* are:

- means must be found to ensure the highest quality teaching. Increasing attention must be given to teacher professional development, improving the

working conditions of teachers, and increasing the rewards for teacher performance.

- an accountability system must be established to permit monitoring of student and system performance. Accompanying the accountability system must be a means of taking corrective action if performance is inadequate.

Statement of the Problem

Society is increasing emphasis on documentation and accountability. Teachers are now, more than ever, being held accountable for their ability to teach and the achievement levels attained by their students. Pressure is stemming from the business community as they feel the education system is not giving the graduates the necessary skills to work in a competitive business environment. For this reason, the business community wants more input and influence into the education system and wants the system and its teachers to be accountable for the current inadequacies.

The government's agenda is being influenced by the concerns of the business community, and they too believe "that improved education is crucial to our social and economic well-being. Higher levels of educational achievement have become ever more important in the face of changing economic and social conditions" (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1994, p. 1). Fullan (1982) suggests that "many reasons other than educational merit influence decisions to change. A closer examination reveals

that innovations can be adopted for symbolic, political, or personal reasons to appease community pressure, to appear innovative, or to gain more resources" (p. 22).

The Professional Development Centre established by the NLTA and the Newfoundland Government to assist teachers in effectively implementing the changing curriculum closed due to fiscal restraints. The goal of the Professional Development Centre was to inservice teachers with the latest technology and teaching strategies to better prepare the students of this province for the next millennium. With emphasis on being accountable, teachers are now feeling tremendous pressure to perform, and have their students perform on various tests and performance indicators. Hickman (1988) states "as the demand and desire for documentation and "accountability" increase in the face of declining enrolments, staff cutbacks, and soaring education costs, so does the emphasis on evaluation" (p. 6).

"The literature indicates that the majority of researchers agree with the premise that teacher evaluation should be aimed at the improvement of instruction" (Hickman 1988, p. 7). In reality, this is not always the case, and as a result, teachers have concerns about the real purpose of evaluation. The fear is that evaluation is summative rather than formative. "The literature is filled with reports and scenarios highlighting the disdain with which teachers regard evaluation" (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 214).

Fiscal restraints on the education system of this province and the elimination of the Professional Development Centre has meant that educators are in need of a system to

ensure that they are providing the best instruction to the students of this province. It has been suggested that the solution may lie in the formulation and establishment of an evaluation system for all educational personnel in the province including replacement teachers, probationary teachers, and tenured teachers. This is not a radical idea as school boards implemented such a policy before the realignment of the districts. The success or failure of this approach depends on the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel. These are the attitudes and perceptions that provide the impetus for this study. The purpose of this thesis is to assess the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards the process of evaluation.

This study identifies the degree to which teachers from the intermediate and senior high levels perceive the purpose and process of evaluation and how, if at all, an evaluation process can improve the education system of this province. The intent is also to identify what educators perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of evaluation and how any barriers might be overcome in an evaluation process. The final purpose of the study is to identify what educational personnel view as critical ingredients in the formulation and establishment of an evaluation policy and how the process can be brought to fruition.

Conceptual Framework

The conception of an evaluation system for all educational personnel presents a difficult challenge when considered in light of the current teaching environment.

Traditionally, and currently in this province, with the exception of a few school boards who have undertaken a laborious and collaborative process to include all educational personnel, evaluation procedures for the most part are only applied to replacement and probationary teachers. Once a teacher in this province receives tenure, his or her performance is usually not summatively evaluated. The only situation where a tenured teacher is summatively evaluated is when they are placed on review by the school administration and the school board. However, "any summative evaluation made on a tenured teacher must be preceded by a formative evaluation" (Provincial Collective Agreement, 1994, p. 12). These rights are protected in the collective agreement between the teachers of this province and the government.

The evaluation policies used in this province are subject to much debate for their overall effectiveness. Many evaluation policies in this province are only ritualistic; they exist as a document but are never formally implemented. Although many school boards have an evaluation policy, they seldom use the policy except for when administrative decision-making is required. In cases where teachers are placed on review, the evaluation policy is activated for documentation and accountability, with the sole purpose to be of a summative nature, that is to decide if a person is competent to remain in the teaching profession. "To date, all job action taken by school boards for teacher incompetence have resulted in the arbitrator defending the rights of the teacher" (Hickman, 1996). The end result in most cases seemed to depend not on whether the teacher was competent, but

rather on the ineffectiveness of the evaluation policy and the lack of due process in documentation strategies.

Considering the environment in which educational personnel work in this province, many educators have mixed attitudes and perceptions towards evaluation and the overall process. For many teachers who are now tenured, the process of evaluation existed for the sole purpose of deciding tenure. Professional development was not seen as the purpose or function of evaluation. Many reasons are given for this, ranging from administrators not having enough time to carry out evaluation procedures properly to not being trained or capable of effectively evaluating. The conceptual framework surrounding evaluation procedures and policies that existed in this province for decades, and the current drive for reform and restructuring, relates to the significance of this study.

Significance of the Study

The educational landscape of this province is rapidly changing. Cutbacks, declining enrollments, and budgetary restraints are the norm. Teachers are expected to do more with less and pressure is now on to have their students perform better provincially and nationally. Most teachers are deeply concerned and are striving to help students achieve. With the constant change of technology, the media available to assist in instructional strategies, and the wealth of knowledge on learning disabilities, teachers now more than ever, especially with the increasing emphasis on accountability and

documentation, want their teaching strategies examined so as to keep abreast with the latest pedagogy. The request is for professional development, not mere judgement. "The nature of teaching leaves teachers feeling quite uncertain about their teaching performance and its effects on students" (Lorte, 1975, cited in Natriello, 1990). Sergiovanni (1995) says "teachers should know how to do their jobs and to keep this knowledge current" (p. 219).

The recent reduction of 27 school boards to 10, translates into major changes in the way educational services will be administered in this province. As a result of the realignment of the school districts, existing policies, and especially evaluation policies will need to be re-examined. The cultural identity of the organizational structure has changed. Now all stakeholders, both old and new, need to develop a common vision and philosophy. Essentially, once the organizational structure has changed, the collaborative process must once again be developed. In fact, when most of the existing policies were developed, little consultation or consideration was given to the people it affected most, the educational personnel. This presents the ultimate opportunity to rectify the inadequacies that existed in the old system and build on its strengths. Fullan (1982) believed change was never easy because "all change involves loss, anger, and struggle" (p. 25).

Organizational policy development is sometimes seen as the measure of an organization's structure. Extremes exist from the total lack of formal policy adoption to the rule book approach to policy formulation. Somewhere between these two extremes is

an effective level of policy making in which the organization's leaders can lead, and individuals can maximize their potential willingly with the ultimate fulfillment from job satisfaction.

DePree notes that "understanding what we believe precedes policy and practice" (1989, p. 26). Furthermore, our value system and world view should be integrated into our work lives. From this premise, policy may be considered a codification of our beliefs as they apply in a particular setting. The foundation of our policies must come from the objectives of the organization. It is important to note that policy is not prescriptive, but rather states the tenets of the organization.

Hickman (1988) stated:

> Few administrators or teachers are content with the one shot, fragmented, and inconsistent practices often inherent in teacher evaluation. Many are pressing for change. They want evaluation policies which are not ritualistic and conducted merely as a matter of pro forma bureaucratic routine. Rather, the demand is for a process, not merely an exercise, a process resulting in the improvement of instruction. There is mounting evidence from administrators and teachers that well-developed evaluation policies, which are formative in both theory and practice, can result in more effective teaching. (p. 6).

This study is significant because it examines the attitudes and perceptions of educational

personnel towards evaluation and identifies what they perceive as the positive points of evaluation. It also offers solutions to overcoming the barriers to the establishment of an evaluation process. Many teachers realize the need for documentation and accountability. This study may not only show the need for evaluation, but how the process can be effectively developed and implemented from the perspective of educational personnel working in the field in this province.

Delimitations of the Study

This study is limited to the attitudes and perceptions of teachers in a particular school district, excluding administrators and school district office personnel. The study focused on replacement, probationary, and tenured teachers from the intermediate and senior high levels. All teachers from each individual category were contained within a single school for the purpose of conducting focus groups after the individual interviews were completed.

The research setting chosen was rural. The purpose for selection depended upon accessibility of the researcher and the similarities that exist between this setting and the educational system of the province. It is not the purpose or intention of the researcher to generalize the findings of this study to the province as a whole; that will be left to the discretion of the reader.

Limitations of the Study

The validity and reliability of this study may be limited due to a number of factors beyond the control of the researcher. These include (1) time restraints, (2) researcher bias, (3) researcher effects, and (4) the nature of the study. However, every possible measure was undertaken to reduce these factors to remain as neutral as possible given this type of study.

(1) Time restraints:

The primary method of collecting data for this study was interviewing and conducting focus groups of educational personnel from the intermediate and senior high levels. Because of the hectic schedules of the educators, most interviews occurred after the regular school day, and due to the number of interviews conducted by the researcher, a time limit of approximately 1 to 1 ½ hour duration was placed on each interview.

(2) Researcher bias:

Qualitative studies are open to the criticism of researcher bias. Every researcher has a tendency to view each and every event through their own value and judgement systems. To ensure validity and reliability, the researcher must remain neutral and report the data collected as accurately as humanly possible under the given circumstances without internalizing, tainting or adding any personal dimensions to the data. The researcher was aware of the potential to influence interviewees and thus took every precaution to report the study's findings accurately.

(3) Researcher effects:

As with researcher bias, the presence of a researcher can have an influence on the type of responses given by the interviewee during the interview. Every measure was taken by the researcher to ensure that no verbal or non-verbal cues were given to the interviewee. Because the researcher is a teacher, the interviewees, who are also teachers may have preconceived notions of what the researcher expects and wants to hear. Again, the researcher was aware of the potential to influence interviewees and thus took every precaution to ensure that the responses given were the true responses of the interviewee.

(4) Nature of the study:

The data gathered in this study involved teachers' attitudes and perceptions regarding evaluation. It was assumed that the information given represented the true feelings of the respondents toward the process of evaluation. Given the complexity of the study and its reliance on interviews, collaboration occurred through the use of focus groups.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first Chapter contains an introduction to the problem, a statement of the problem, a conceptual framework, the significance of the study, delimitations, and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 presents a

review of the relevant literature on teacher evaluation and the attitudes surrounding the process. Chapter 3 provides a list of the specific research questions and describes the methodology to be used in the study. In Chapter 4, the data collected in the study are presented and analyzed. In Chapter 5 the data are interpreted, conclusions are drawn, and recommendations are put forth.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher acknowledges that there is a very comprehensive literature base dealing with the concept of evaluation. For the purpose of this thesis, the literature review is selective in that it focuses on clinical supervision and formative evaluation. These are the aspects of evaluation pertinent to the focus of the study. This chapter examines the literature surrounding the evaluation of educational personnel. Evaluation systems, their purposes, and their effectiveness, as well as barriers related to evaluating performance are discussed. The literature identified various attitudes relating to the evaluation of educational personnel. This literature review examines the concept of evaluation, establishing why there is a need for an evaluation system for educational personnel, and identifies various viewpoints related to evaluation systems. It provides the information base necessary to further understand the conceptual framework, significance, and focus of this study on the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards evaluation, and the establishment of an evaluation system.

Evaluation: Purposes and Effectiveness

Evaluation involves collecting and using information to judge the worth of

something. "Depending on how an evaluation process is designed, and how well it is implemented, it can guide professional and personal development, and influence motivation" (Darling-Hammond, 1990, p. 21). Sergiovanni (1995) says evaluation is

> Commonplace in our ordinary lives, evaluation is an inescapable aspect of most of what we do. Whether we are buying a pair of shoes, selecting a recipe for a dinner party, rearranging the furniture or enjoying a movie, baseball game, or an art show, evaluation is part of the process. In its ordinary sense, evaluation means to discern, understand, and appreciate, on the one hand, and to value, judge, and decide on the other. These very same natural and ordinary processes are at play in evaluating teaching. (p. 215).

"Each teacher as a unique human being, needs to discover the teaching styles and approaches that best suit his or her personality, knowledge and values. In this sense, good teaching is an exciting journey that never becomes stagnant or stultified" (Miller, 1987, p. 32). Proctor (cited in Calderhead & Gates, 1993, p. 93) emphasizes "the responsibility of the teacher to improve practice in the interest of pupils". Both Miller & Proctor are suggesting that an ongoing evaluation is an integral and necessary aspect that contributes to personal and professional growth.

"Just as public pressures for more rigorous evaluation of student performance are

rapidly increasing, so also are public pressures for institutional accountability and professional performance" (Seldin, 1984, p. 91). "Whether intentionally or not, a teacher evaluation system represents the incentive structure and mode of accountability implicitly adopted by an organization or profession" (Darling-Hammond, 1990, pp. 20-21). Gage (cited in Miller, 1972) identifies three reasons for evaluating teaching: "the traditional need for providing a broad base for administrative decisions on promotions, salaries, and tenure; the new concern for evaluation as a basis for professional improvement and development; and the need for data for further research on teaching and learning" (p. 11). Gage suggests that an appraisal system should provide guidance and feedback to the teachers, not only judgement. He believes these critical elements are missing in most appraisal systems. "In essence, appraisal should improve professional performance; that is its overall purpose" (Gage, 1959, p. 12). "The evaluation systems found in schools tend to serve a variety of purposes" (Galloway & Edwards, 1991, p. 110). Bates (cited in Galloway & Edwards, 1991) categorize these as pedagogical, individual development, organizational development, and accountability.

"There is no greater purpose for performance evaluation than to improve the performance. That is achieved by using the evaluation to assist the faltering, to encourage the tired, and to direct the indecisive" (Seldin, 1984, p. 128). Sergiovanni (1995) believes evaluation has three purposes:

1. *Quality Control*. The principal is responsible for monitoring teaching and learning in her or his school and does so by visiting classrooms, touring the school, talking with people, and visiting the students.
2. *Professional Development*. Helping teachers to grow and to develop in their understanding of teaching and classroom life, in improving basic skills, and in expanding their knowledge and use of teaching repertoires is the second purpose of supervision.
3. *Teacher Motivation*. Often overlooked, but important nonetheless, is a third purpose of evaluation - building and nurturing motivation and commitment to teaching, to the school's overall purposes, and to the school's defining educational platform.

"It is the very complexity of the teaching situation that makes every bit of empirical information the more precious" (Mckeachie, 1967, p. 211). However, the aim of evaluation systems are not only for professional development. Research literature on evaluation clearly states that its purpose is to help make administrative decisions. Musella (cited in Hickman, 1988) points out "the fact must be realized that there is another realistic purpose to be taken into account, and that is evaluation is to aid in the administrative decision making" (p. 7). Decision making is an integral aspect of

evaluation. The problem arises when administrative decision-making is the only purpose. "In the teacher evaluation context, summative evaluation is typically intended to assist and justify certain critical administrative decisions affecting teachers" (Hickman, 1988, p. 7). In reality, most, if not all evaluation systems contain both a formative and summative aspect. "Assuming that professional development and professional accountability are both desirable, a central policy question is whether both purposes can be served well within the same teacher evaluation system" (Mclaughlin & Pfeifer, 1988, p. 69). "Based on four years of research and development efforts in this area, we are less certain that one system simultaneously can ensure accountability and promote growth" (Stiggins & Duke, 1988, p. 131).

There seems to be "some general consensus that evaluations are important and necessary, and that they can be beneficial. The confusion arises around what these evaluations should look like, how they should be conducted, who should conduct them, and their purpose" (Rammer, 1991, p. 72). Stakeholders have divergent views of the primary purpose of teacher evaluations and what constitutes a successful evaluation system. "An examination of teacher evaluation practices has led some researchers to conclude that few effective teacher evaluation systems exist" (Good & Mulryan, 1990, p. 201). "Teacher evaluation is a disaster. The practices are shoddy, and the principles are unclear" (Scriven, 1981, p. 244). Good & Mulryan (1990) ask the question "why, despite

the long history of teacher assessment, is there such widespread disagreement about the purposes and procedures for teacher evaluation?" (p. 201). They believe there are at least six reasons for the problem:

> First, there is public ambivalence about the professional role of teachers. Second, there is no serious investment of research funds to understand the evaluation process. Third, school districts often have a variety of evaluation goals and procedures and tend to use the same procedures to pursue disparate goals. Fourth, too little is known about the relations between teacher actions, student classroom behaviors, and various learning opportunities and specific student outcomes. Fifth, because the knowledge of teaching is limited, school districts tend either to ignore research or to rely excessively on research results. Sixth, the evaluation process often becomes a ritual that principals and teachers engage in because it is expected - not because they value it. (Good &Mulryan, 1990, p. 201).

"Evaluation is an essential activity of everyday life-something we must do in order to survive. In everyday living we have to evaluate constantly in order to select appropriate courses of action; in teaching, no less than in any other phase of life, evaluation goes on all the time" (Geis, cited in Griffiths, 1977, p. 8). It is a fact that all major professions undergo a process of evaluation. Sergiovanni (1995) reiterates Geis'

opinion by pointing out "it is by increasing and informing their sensitivities and intuitions that attorneys, architects, and physicians make better practice decisions and improve their performance. Professional practice in teaching, supervision, and the principalship improve similarly" (p. 215).

Barriers to Evaluating Performance

Giltin & Bullough (cited in Altbach, 1989, p. 183) said

> Teacher evaluation is widely understood as a means for improving teaching. Most schemes focus on developing a set of teacher behaviors thought to enhance student test scores. Implicitly, the view that teaching communicated by such schemes imparts the view that teaching is synonymous with instructing - to teach is to dish out content in palatable bits to young people. In this view, teaching is concerned primarily with the technical means by which to disseminate information. The way teachers understand their work, or whether they recognize the ethical political implications of their decision, matters little. What is important is behavioral change; teachers need to demonstrate proper technique. Within this framework, teacher evaluation is not likely to lead to basic reform of teaching practices; rather, it tends to confirm and reproduce current school

> roles and relations, those very roles, and relations that may be most in need of change. For those interested in school transformation, this is a troubling realization.

Gitlin & Bullough believe that if evaluation of educational personnel is to be the solution to the current educational problems, a different approach to evaluation is needed, one that places teachers at the centre of the evaluation process. "Teachers must be perceived as individuals capable of making reasonable decisions not only about the means of education, but also about its aims" (Gitlin & Bullough, cited in Altbach, 1989, p. 202).

Seldin (1984) indicates that despite the literature supporting evaluation systems, trying to establish an evaluation system is a monumental task. "Some teachers argue that teaching cannot be evaluated because no one knows how to define effective teaching" (Seldin, 1984, p. 133). "Evaluation is not definitely and directly linked to the improvement of teaching. The information which is returned to the instructor rarely gives an indication of specific areas of difficulty and almost never includes suggestions for improvement"(Sullivan, cited in Griffiths, 1977, p. 140). "Then, of course, there are persistent problems of internal politics, ideological conflicts, and personality clashes. These agendas, sometimes hidden, influence our judgements more often than we care to recognize" (Seldin, 1984, p. 93). "Most teacher evaluation schemes help reproduce a view of teaching as a technical enterprise little concerned with the broader aims of

education. They reinforce hierarchical structures and give comparatively little power to teachers within the workplace" (Gitlin & Bullough, cited in Altbach, 1989, p. 187). Hilderbrand (1991) suggested that any prepackaged teacher evaluation system that does not include the teacher in its formulation and development will not work, and is generally unacceptable.

Attitudes Towards Evaluation

Attitudes towards evaluation are varied among educational personnel. Research indicates that there are a variety of factors which determine if teachers will be receptive to an evaluation process, the predominant reason being if the teacher was actually involved in the process. "Teachers clearly have a stake in professional development. It is only logical that they should participate, therefore in planning evaluation systems to promote their own professional development" (Duke & Stiggins, 1990, p. 129). "A teacher evaluation system developed with a high level of teacher participation may lead to shared discussions of educational issues and greater communication among the members of a school staff about their teaching" (Natriello, 1990, p. 42). "As with the development of an appraisal procedure, evaluation instruments are more appropriately constructed by the committee process" (Travers & Rebore, 1987, p. 300).

"While evaluation may stimulate teachers to grow beyond minimum competence, it

also may have the opposite effect. Growth can be inhibited as a result of evaluation that is overly threatening, poorly conducted, or inadequately communicated" (Duke & Stiggins, 1990, p. 119). Natriello (1990) notes

> Teachers may interpret the evaluations they receive as a challenge to perform at a higher level. But the motivational effects of teacher evaluation cut both ways. While some teachers may be challenged by evaluations, others may experience extreme stress and anxiety which is never converted to improved performance. (pp. 39-40).

"Regardless of how persuasive the reasons are for evaluation, a sizable number of people will greet even a discussion of evaluation, much less a plan to evaluate them with expressions of distaste and opposition" (Geis, cited in Griffiths, 1977, p. 14). "They see it as a minor discomfort which they hope will disappear soon and stay away" (Kronk & Shipka, 1980, p. 8). Geis (1977) says "there are many sources of resistance to change, and evaluation is, after all, the first step toward possible change" (p. 14). Geis (1977, p. 14) lists nine reasons why teachers object to evaluation:

1. *My own experience with tests indicates that they are unfair.*
2. *The means of evaluating people are usually not technically sound.*
3. *The same data can be interpreted many different ways.*
4. *It unlocks Pandora's Box.*

5. *People generally dislike change.*

6. *We already have a good system of decision-making which should be preserved.*

7. *I just do not think human beings should (or can) be measured and evaluated.*

8. *What can we do even if we find out that something is wrong?*

9. *Why should I evaluate?*

Scriven (1967) acknowledges people's weariness towards evaluation and realizes that is not unwarranted. But he also explains that evaluation is a necessary process and states

> By stressing the constructive part evaluation may play in non-threatening activities. . . we slur over the fact that its goals always include the estimation of merit, worth, value, etc. which all too clearly contribute in another role to decisions about promotion and rejection of personnel and courses. But we cannot afford to tackle anxiety about evaluation by ignoring its importance and confusing its presentation; the loss in efficiency is too great. Business firms can't keep executives or factories when they are not doing good work and a society shouldn't have to retain textbooks, courses, teachers . . . that do a poor job when good performance is

> possible. The appropriate way to handle anxiety of this kind is by finding tasks for which a better prognosis is possible for the individuals whose positions or prestige are threatened. Failure to evaluate pupil's performance leads to gross inefficiencies of the age-graded classroom or the "un-graded" reports on pupils, and failure to evaluate teachers' performances leads to the correlative inefficiency of incompetent instruction and the substitution of personality for performance. (p . 42).

"Some academics persist in the argument that direct observation, even by qualified personnel using acceptable tools of measurement, is an invasion of privacy. They argue that the teacher is entitled to autonomy in the classroom" (Seldin, 1980, p. 7). However, Moses (1988) believes "reviews are not regarded as an unwarranted attack on professional autonomy, but as a part of professionalism" (p. 72). "Other opponents of evaluation argue that teaching is too complex and subjective to be evaluated" (Seldin, 1984, p. 7). However, "evaluation activities can provide teachers with both contact with other professionals in the school and with reassurance about their performance" (Natriello, 1990, p. 39).

Sullivan (cited in Griffiths, 1977) believes that "formal evaluation of instruction can be an extremely threatening and anxiety-producing process" (p. 139). His reasons are:

1. *It is initiated by someone other than the instructor.*

2. *It occurs at regular, usually annual intervals.*
3. *It claims to relate to the total performance of the teacher, that is, general teaching competence.*
4. *Is often not the appropriate evaluation of factors unique and important to a particular instructor.*
5. *Teaching performance is judged in comparison with that of others and a comparative evaluation made.*
6. *The evaluation may be used for administrative judgement and decisions affecting promotion and tenure.*
7. *A permanent record is kept.*

"Most teachers have a positive attitude towards evaluation" (Moses, 1988, p. 74). The reasons for this positive attitude fall into two categories:

> (1) Reviews provide a means of identifying and telling people who are not performing adequately, and possibly a means of 'getting rid of deadwood'; they prevent slackness due to stall inertia, especially after tenure. Here respondents approve of reviews, but they see them as essentially disciplinary, even punitive. (2) Staff must be accountable for their professional actions just as other professionals. In this second category, respondents' attitude towards reviews is positive and they see the effects of

reviews as positive. (p. 68).

In Moses' case study, different attitudes surfaced towards evaluation, and people had different perceptions of evaluation. Here are some actual quotes from her study respondents: (Moses, 1988, pp 68-73)

> *"In the Public Service, where I worked, there is more pressure on people to perform. I don't consider arguments against reviews as valid. It is only a protection of incompetence."*

> *"People will be defensive. Innovations might be jeopardized. People might be scared of trying anything new if one doesn't know the outcome."*

> *"I am very much for evaluation of teaching provided it is offered as an available service, and people take the initiative and make use of it. I am very much against compulsion."*

> *"I am for evaluation of teaching, but I am not for the weeding out, because evaluation of teaching should make a difference to the quality of teaching. I can see why many people don't like the administration dictating."*

"I am very much for the evaluation of teaching, but evaluation of teaching has two sides. It can be abused by the people in power."

Moses (1988) believes that the majority of people are in favor of evaluation. She states "staff, particularly those who have worked outside the university system, have seen performance reviews enacted and believe that the quality of work can be improved without interference to the content of work" (p. 72).

Evaluation is viewed as the key to maintaining effective teaching. "No one will argue that absolute precision and objectivity on evaluation is foreseeable. But to eliminate faculty appraisal because today's techniques of getting at it are imperfect is not an answer" (Seldin, 1984, p. 7).

Conclusion

Research literature supports the establishment of an evaluation system for educational personnel regardless of the academic setting because of the impact it can have on improving a teacher's performance. Researchers like Gage, Seldin and Sergiovanni believe that evaluation practices serve an important function in ensuring that teachers receive the necessary professional development while remaining motivated to deliver a quality education to their students. Research literature supports the view that evaluation policies and procedures must contain more than a formative aspect. Evaluation policies

and procedures can be an effective tool in the decision-making process; therefore any evaluation policy should contain both a summative as well as a formative component.

The literature indicates that there is a degree of skepticism and confusion surrounding the concept of evaluation. "The confusion arises around what these evaluations should look like, how they should be conducted, who should conduct them, and their purpose" (Rammer, 1991, p. 72). Literature suggests that educational personnel are skeptical because of the politics, individual conflicts, and the hidden agendas of the individuals performing the evaluation process. As a result, there are differing viewpoints towards evaluation by educational personnel, but at the same time, they see evaluation as a necessary process. The literature dealing with evaluation's purposes and effectiveness, the barriers to evaluating performance, and the attitudes towards evaluation, provides the focus for this study of the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards evaluation. The educational landscape of this province is rapidly changing. Literature indicates that teachers want to be accountable and want to provide the best possible education to the children of this province. The literature review in this chapter provides the focus in determining the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards evaluation.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

The problem identified for study in Chapter 1 was redefined to a set of research questions that served as a guide for the research project. There was also a detailed description of the type of the research methodology used, and the primary method of data collection employed in this study. There was also specific reference to why such a research model is considered credible by experts in the field.

Research Questions

The aim of this study was to determine the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards evaluation, and the evaluation process. The research questions were derived and formulated as a result of a substantial review of the literature on evaluation including: Darling-Hammond, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1995; Miller, 1987; Proctor, cited in Calderhead & Gates, 1993; Seldin, 1980,1984; Gage, cited in Miller, 1972; Gage, 1959; Galloway & Edwards, 1991; Bates, cited in Galloway & Edwards, 1991; Mckeachie, 1967; Hickman, 1988, 1996; Musella, cited in Hickman, 1988; Mclaughlin & Pfeifer, 1988; Stiggins & Duke, 1988; Rammer, 1991; God & Mulryan, 1990; Scriven 1967, 1981; Geis 1977; Geis, cited in Griffiths, 1977; Altbach, 1989; Sullivan, 1977;

Hilderbrand, 1991; Natriello, 1990; Gitlin & Bullough, cited in Altbach, 1989; Travers & Rebore, 1987; and Moses, 1988. The following served as guiding questions in the quest to gain a deeper understanding of the attitudes and perceptions educational personnel hold towards evaluation:

1. Do educational personnel view evaluation as an integral aspect of teaching?
2. What, if any, are the current barriers inhibiting effective evaluation programs?
3. What are the crucial ingredients of an evaluation process?
4. Should evaluation processes contain more than a formative aspect?
5. What do educational personnel perceive to be the fundamental purpose of evaluation?
6. What do educational personnel view as their role in the formulation of evaluation policies?
7. How would an evaluation policy for all personnel impact on the current act of teaching?
8. How can/should an evaluation policy be brought to fruition for all personnel given the traditional and current evaluation practices?

Qualitative Research

Educational research in its infancy borrowed heavily from the natural sciences and

their methods of inquiry. The primary method of doing research involved a quantitative approach. "Quantitative methods are, in general, supported by the positivist or scientific paradigm, which leads us to regard the world as made up of observable, measurable facts" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, pp. 5-6). Its fundamental purpose is to be able to explain, predict, and generalize the results to other situations. It was once believed that to ensure reliability, validity, and generalizability, a researcher had to employ a quantitative methodology of inquiry.

However, due to the complexity of human relations, quantitative research could not accurately predict what would happen in all circumstances all the time. This is because not all quantitative data collection instruments accurately explain or get beneath the surface of the problem. Unfortunately, human feelings, attitudes and perceptions cannot be packaged in neat tables comprised of statistical data. Personal stories need to be told which can contribute to research. "The qualitative approach reminds the scientific sociologist and the rest of us that for all his or her neat abstractions, concrete human feelings may not neatly bend before them" (Plummer, 1983, p. 7). This has given rise to the qualitative paradigm and its ability to make significant contribution to the field of educational research.

Borg and Gall (1989) distinguish between the two methods of research by the amount of control the researcher has in the research situation. Lincoln and Guba (1985)

believe the main difference exists in the way a particular situation is perceived. Quantitative researchers contend that any situation can be viewed separately, and variables established in a causal relationship. Qualitative researchers on the other hand, believe situations, especially human interactions, cannot be viewed separately but must be seen from a holistic perspective. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe quantitative and qualitative approaches are incompatible. Yet, Patton; Reichardt; and Cook (cited in Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) point out that "the skilled researcher can successfully combine approaches" (p. 9). This difference in research methodology has caused a debate as to which method is superior.

However, in the past quarter century, qualitative research has gained significant respect and the debate between the two methodological philosophies has received less focus. Howe (1988) believes that arguing over which approach is better, and believing that one approach is better than the other, will cause the researcher to lose valuable information. Different paradigms enable one to understand, create, and expand upon different types of knowledge. Qualitative research has proven its significance and ability to contribute to research and is gaining credibility in most disciplines.

Schwandt (1989) states

> Our constructions of the world, our values, and our ideas about how to inquire into those constructions, are mutually self-reinforcing. We conduct

> inquiry via a particular paradigm because it embodies assumptions about the world that we believe and values that we hold, and because we hold those assumptions and values we conduct inquiry according to the percepts of that paradigm. (p. 399).

Glesne & Peshkin (1992) reiterate and substantiate both approaches by saying

> The argument becomes muddled because one party argues from the underlying philosophical nature of each paradigm, and the other focuses on the apparent compatibility of the research methods, enjoying the rewards of both numbers and words. Because the positivist and the interpretivist paradigms rest on different assumptions about the nature of the world, they require different instruments and procedures to find the type of data desired. This does not mean, however, that the positivist never uses interviews nor that the interpretist never uses a survey. They may, but such methods are supplementary, not dominant. (p. 9).

The methodology applied in this thesis was predominantly qualitative because of the nature of the study. The intent was to see what emerged out of the research, rather than to be prespecified. Data collection involved interviews and focus groups comprised of interviewees from the intermediate and senior high teachers. The interviewees were

from one school within a newly formed school district in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Interviews

Qualitative researchers use interviewing as a data collection method or technique more than any other method. Interviews are important because they allow a researcher to get a sense of other peoples perspectives that cannot be achieved by observation alone. Thoughts, feelings, and attitudes are unmeasurable unless they are communicated to the researcher by the person experiencing them. In essence, interviews are only a conversation, but with a purpose to reveal or confirm what research is trying to explain. Dexter (1970) says interviewing gets more data and better data. Spradley (1979) "emphasizes the differences between friendly conversations and interviews. Interviews, unlike most friendly conversations, have a script, an agenda, and a purpose set by the researcher" (pp. 56-57).

Brenner, Brown, and Canter (1985) believe interviews have an advantage over questionnaires because researchers guide the information. However, Seidman (1991) points out that interviewees can supply false or misleading data. "These distortions can be ameliorated by corroborating information obtained through interviews by other forms of data collection, including observation" (Lecompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 166). Seidman (1991) suggests that the validity of a study is enhanced if the interviewee is permitted to

make sense of the subject during the interview.

The interview process can be conducted in a number of different structures. The range can be from structured with a closed response, where the interviewee is directed totally by the interviewer, to unstructured where the interviewee can determine the agenda. This study was semi-structured with the opportunity for the interviewees to add to the line of questioning and contribute information that they felt was valuable to the study. The purpose of an interview is to find out what the interviewee is thinking and feeling towards a particular subject, not to develop or solicit preconceived notions. Seidman (1991) believes that the interview process gives researchers a greater understanding of people's behavior because the behavior is not isolated but rather occurring in a social context. Questionnaires, while reliable, are unable to describe to the extent that an interview can.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are used in qualitative research to explore issues that are complex. Given the complexity of issues pertaining to individuals, focus groups enable small groups of people to openly discuss an issue and explore the avenues derived by the participants. "These groups generally contain 6 to 12 people who are similar to each other in important

ways. A focus group is useful for exploring the opinions of a small subgroup of people" (Mullins, 1994, p. 75).

The Research Setting

This study was isolated to a specific geographical zone in the province. The teachers interviewed are employed in a newly restructured district which employs 355 teachers and has approximately 5021 students. The intermediate and senior high school houses students from grade seven to level III and the school serves 12 communities within a radius of 25 kilometers. Of the 42 teachers on staff, 29 are male, and 13 are female. The average age is 34, and the average years of experience is 11.64 as of 31 August 1996.

Data Collection

The teachers were selected primarily on the basis of proximity, convenience to the researcher, receptiveness to the researcher, and the study. Teachers were categorized according to their employment status, that being either a replacement, probationary, or tenured teacher. Their teaching division also determined their selection. The teachers were then randomly selected by choosing every third name. This selection process was used only for the tenured teachers. Due to the low numbers of replacement and probationary teachers, all identified teachers were asked to participate in the study.

Due to the nature of the study as previously described in Chapter 1, interviews and focus groups were the means of data collection. Fourteen interviews of approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours duration were conducted. Intermediate and senior high divisions were categorized. The intermediate division had six interviewees and the senior division had eight interviewees, with to the extent possible, equal representation of males and females. After the completion of the individual interviews, focus groups were conducted in each division.

The style of interview employed was semi-structured with an open response. The interview was only structured to the extent that a time and location for the interview to occur was determined with the interviewee naming the time and place. The interview situation was kept casual to provide a relaxing and comfortable environment. The literature, as discussed earlier under the section on interviews supports this type of interview because the information that the researcher may receive might not be discovered in a totally structured interview situation. The specific set of questions served only as a guide to the interview process. The researcher pursued any relevant ideas that were freely given by the interviewee. Every attempt was made in all interviews to cover the same questions. However, due to the semi-structured format, all questions for each interviewee were not asked or answered in the same order. Permission to use an audio recording system was requested, and all interviewees gave permission to record the interview.

Interview Schedules

The intention was to use the same interview schedule with each interviewee. However, due to the semi-structured format, the ordering of questions varied among interviews. The interview schedule was meant to serve only as a guide. The interviewer had the option to explore any ideas or pertinent information generated by the interviewee.

The interview schedule was organized under eight categories. The intent was to provide structure and consistency where possible. The categories were as follows:

1. Educational personnel's view towards evaluation as an integral aspect of teaching.

   The initial questions aimed to relax the interviewee and the researcher with a line of questioning that would set the stage for the others to follow. Emphasis was placed on how the interviewee felt about the subject, not what others felt. This personalized approach aimed at making the interviewee feel that their contributions were important. The intention was to gain insight about the interviewees attitude towards evaluation.

2. The purpose of evaluation and its positive attributes.

   Interviewees were asked what they believed to be the purpose of evaluation, and

what they believed to be the positive attributes of an evaluation process. The emphasis was on their perceptions of evaluation.

3. Identification of the barriers perceived to inhibit effective evaluation.

Emphasis was placed on what interviewees perceived to be the barriers that may inhibit evaluation, and any establishment of an evaluation process.

4. Overcoming identified barriers.

Once identified barriers were established from the perspective of the interviewee, this line of questioning aimed at finding solutions to what the participant perceived to be the barriers. This required speculation on the part of the interviewees, as they were not only asked to comment from their perspective, but also from the perspective of other stakeholders in the educational structure.

5. Evaluation policies and their impact on current teaching practices.

The intention of this section was to see how the interviewees felt towards

evaluation and what they perceived to be the impact, whether positive, or negative, on current teaching practices. The intent was not only to identify consequences, but to suggest solutions to the consequences that may be viewed as negative.

6. Crucial ingredients of an evaluation model.

Interviewees were asked to assume that an evaluation process for all educational personnel was standard practice. Interviewees were then asked their attitudes towards such a model, and what they perceived to be the crucial ingredients in the development and functioning of an evaluation model.

7. Evaluation policies as standard practice.

Interviewees were asked to reflect on the act of teaching, and assuming that evaluation is standard practice, suggest the type of evaluation they would prefer (peer evaluation, self evaluation, etc.). Participants were asked to describe their overall attitudes and perceptions towards evaluation. The intent was to gain an understanding of how each interviewee, regardless of status (replacement,

probationary, or tenured), felt towards evaluation as an aspect of teaching and as a continuing process.

8. Other comments.

Administration of Interview Schedules

Permission was requested from the district superintendent to carry out the proposed study in the fall of 1996. Once approval was obtained from the superintendent, the principal of the school selected for study was contacted to obtain the statistical information and identify personnel who would be willing to participate. Once potential participants were identified, each was contacted separately to explain the purpose of the study. If they were willing to participate, a time and place for the interview was established and permission to tape the interview was requested. At the time of the interview, the interviewee was presented with a letter of consent, which with their signature, gave the researcher permission to interview.

Data Analysis

The methods of collecting data for this qualitative study were interviews and focus groups. The interviews were taped on audio cassette and transcribed for analysis and

reference. The data were categorized under the headings discussed in the interview schedule and research questions. Similarities and differences were identified and the researcher attempted to explain the themes that emerged from the data. These themes were further analyzed in relation to the literature review in Chapter 2. The data were presented, acknowledging the uniqueness of the research setting. Although the results may be generalizable to the educational personnel of this province, this assumption is the prerogative of the reader, and is not the intent of the researcher.

Summary

The design of the study is qualitative with the primary source of data collection being interviews and focus groups. The interviews were semi-structured with an open response that allowed the interviewees to add any information they felt was relevant to the study of the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards evaluation and evaluation processes. Interviews were conducted with teachers in the intermediate and senior high divisions. Six teachers were interviewed from the intermediate division and eight teachers interviewed from the senior division, with focus groups within each division. Each interview was for 1 to 1 ½ hours in duration, and the interview schedule addressed eight topics: educational personnel's view towards evaluation as an integral aspect of teaching; the purpose of evaluation and its positive attributes; identification of

the barriers perceived to inhibit effective evaluation; overcoming identified barriers; evaluation policies and their impact on current teaching practices; crucial ingredients of an evaluation model; and evaluation policies as standard practice.

The data analysis involved the grouping of data into categories to determine the themes that existed among the interviewees. Similarities and differences were sought in the data, and rationale suggested.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Semi-structured interviews formed the basis of obtaining data for this qualitative study of the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards evaluation. This chapter presents and analyzes the interview data collected from the fourteen interviewees. Table 4.1 provides the numbers and divisions of the interviewees.

Table 4.1

Classification and Division of Educational Personnel Interviewed

	Replacement	Probationary	Tenured
Intermediate	1	2	3
Senior High	2	3	3

Organization of Interview Data

Semi-structured interviews were held with fourteen educators from the intermediate and senior high divisions. All individuals were interested and knowledgeable about evaluation. Not all interviewees answered the questions in the exact order as they

appear on the interview schedule . This was because some interviewees were willing to reveal more information than others, and as a result answered some questions before they were formally asked.

Analysis of Interview Data

Interviews were conducted with fourteen educators from the intermediate and senior high divisions. The interviewees were either replacement, probationary, or tenured teachers. The interviews were approximately 1 to 11/2 hours in duration. Focus groups were held within each division after all interviews were conducted.

Research Question #1

Do educational personnel view evaluation as an integral aspect of teaching?

Interviewees were asked a series of 10 questions on how they view evaluation as an integral aspect of teaching. Interviewees were asked about their current views and overall philosophy of evaluation. Each specific question is outlined below in italics.

Were you ever evaluated in your teaching career and how would you describe your experience with evaluation, such as positive or negative? Why?

All the tenured teachers were evaluated at some point during their teaching career. Their experiences with evaluation ranged from being negative to positive, but the majority

of the teachers had a positive experience with evaluation. The reasons were varied, some of these included:

> "I found the experience positive in the sense that my evaluator was positive. However, I never put a lot of credence in what my evaluator said in the first place, because my evaluators were not teachers. They have been long removed from the classroom, and as such, could offer very little insight into teaching in the nineties."
>
> "Constructive criticism was given, although it is difficult for the evaluator to see if any improvement is being made since the process of evaluation occurs with long intervals of time in between."
>
> "The process was positive when the evaluator was professional enough to use the evaluation as a way to improvement."

There were also some negative experiences with evaluation. Some tenured teachers felt that the process of evaluation was hindered because of the way the evaluation processes were administered. One interviewee said "there are too many instances in evaluation processes in which non-significant items are criticized, which leads unfortunately to

negative perceptions of evaluation." Another teacher stated that "when the evaluator treated the process as a sole forum for criticism, then there are problems with evaluation."

All replacement teachers were also evaluated at some point in their teaching careers. Their experiences with evaluation were mostly positive with the exception of one teacher. The interviewee said "my first experience with evaluation would have to be described as a very negative experience. The evaluator seemed to center more attention on petty problems with my teaching style rather than my strengths. The criticism was definitely not constructive."

Most of the probationary teachers interviewed also had positive experiences with evaluations. One teacher said "if the evaluation process is effective then there will be a positive result. My ability to take constructive criticism definitely helped throughout the process." Another interviewee said

> I found evaluations to be both positive and negative. The anxiety I felt and the alterations it created to the class atmosphere, students' behavior, and my behavior were very negative and not conducive to productive learning. The constructive criticism was positive, when I actually received constructive criticism.

What are your current views towards evaluation? Do you view evaluation as an integral aspect of teaching?

Tenured teachers had mixed reactions as to whether evaluation was an integral

aspect of teaching. Some teachers said 'yes', one stated "teachers must be accountable to a standard. However, teachers need to be evaluated by dedicated and experienced peers, not school board personnel and administration officials who ran from the classroom." Others felt that evaluation can be positive and can be an integral aspect of teaching when it is implemented in a positive constructive manner. An interviewee said "in the hands of a conscientious, professionally-oriented person, the evaluation process can be used as a positive growth experience. However, most of the evaluators view/treat evaluation as a summative tool to place on one's permanent record."

One tenured teacher specifically said 'no'. This teacher stated "I feel that self-evaluation and evaluation from students is more important than evaluation by administration. Students and colleagues are ground in a regular basis, and therefore, have a better idea of a teacher's ability."

Replacement teachers felt that evaluation was an integral aspect of teaching when completed in a positive way, but should exist for all teachers, not only for the non-tenured teacher. One interviewee suggested that "there has to be some sort of check in place that enables school boards and administrators to weed out undesirables. It also aids teachers in their development as an effective teacher."

Probationary teachers felt that evaluation was definitely an integral aspect of teaching. One teacher stated:

> I feel that evaluation should be a constant part of teaching. This is especially the case of a beginning teacher as he/she tries to become the best possible teacher. I also feel that evaluation can, and should be an integral part of teaching of the experienced teacher. In my brief period of teaching, I have witnessed many experienced teachers making a minimal effort to fulfill their duties.

Other probationary teachers believe that self-evaluation is more of an integral part of the evaluation process. One interviewee said "I think self-evaluation and reflection is very important to teaching. Being evaluated in formal manners with reporting and job dependency is not productive because of the politics associated with evaluation."

Do you feel effective teaching can occur without some sort of evaluation?

Tenured teachers were divided in their views that effective teaching can occur without some sort of evaluation. One teacher suggested "just like students, teachers need to have a set of standards that must be met, evaluated, and enforced." Another interviewee said "some evaluation is necessary, but evaluation should come from the student, peers, and self-evaluation." Others felt that effective teaching can occur without some sort of evaluation. One teacher said "yes, effective teaching can occur, however, an objective observer (administration, coordinator, colleague) who can be instructive/constructive, could help many neophytes avoid beginner problems. The aim

should be on early intervention."

Replacement teachers felt that there have to be some sort of evaluation procedures in place to ensure that the students are being taught the prescribed curriculum. One teacher believes that "some long term evaluation schemes would keep everyone accountable." However, another teacher stated that "evaluation would not be necessary if all teachers were conscientious and diligent in fulfilling the expectations of their job."

Probationary teachers were split as to whether effective teaching can occur without evaluation. One teacher said "certainly, some teachers are 'natural' teachers and evaluations are more of a formality". Another stated:

> Effective teaching can occur without evaluation, but teaching skills and methods may improve through self-evaluation and other forms of evaluation. To become more effective, I feel evaluation is a necessity. If there is a positive attitude towards evaluation, and your peers feel the same way, then the students benefit tremendously.

However, the other interviewees strongly believed that effective teaching cannot occur without evaluation. One teacher said "it cannot occur without self-evaluation and non-politically motivated peer consultation." Another interviewee made the statement:

> Our society is constantly changing, therefore I feel that it is important that we as teachers be monitored to be sure that we are providing the best

quality education possible. Through evaluation I feel that we as teachers will always be aware that we should be striving to meet today's expectations and standards.

How would you define evaluation, or what is your philosophy of evaluation?

Tenured teachers had a variety of views regarding their individual philosophy of evaluation. Some of these include:

"The procedure of having a 'qualified' individual do an accurate assessment of a teacher performing a particular duty."

"Evaluation - a guide to future improvements."

"Evaluation is the measuring of whether or not an acceptable standard has been met or achieved. It must be frequent and ongoing."

"Evaluation is the process of giving feedback to the teacher to improve upon teaching and facilitate learning."

Replacement teachers held similar views regarding the philosophy of evaluation. Some of these are:

"Evaluation is a process carried out to determine whether or not an

individual is performing at an acceptable level."

"Evaluation is the procedures put in place to aid teachers in their professional development and to help administrators in making wise personnel decisions."

Probationary teachers held a philosophy of evaluation similar to tenured and replacement teachers. Among them are:

"Evaluation is analyzing what is done and accomplished to see what can be accomplished differently and perhaps better."

"Evaluation is a process which should assist and identify areas of improvement. It judges the personal and professional development of a teacher."

"Evaluation is the process of measuring certain objectives or standards. It should be used both formatively and summatively. In the case of teaching, formative should be stressed."

"Evaluation is a process that ensures that you are meeting the expectations

placed upon you as a teacher."

Do you think evaluation should be for all educational personnel? Are there any exceptions for educational personnel, and if so, why should they be excluded?

All tenured teachers held a strong conviction that all educational personnel should be evaluated without exception. One interviewee stated "everyone must be accountable and everyone should have to reach a certain standard. There is no 'God' in education, just those who think they are." Another teacher stated "there is room for improvement in any profession, in any capacity."

All replacement teachers felt that evaluation should be for all educational personnel. As one interviewee phrased it "what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Nobody should be beyond having their job effectiveness evaluated."

Probationary teachers firmly believe that evaluation procedures should be for all educational personnel without exception regardless of their position within the educational profession. One teacher stated:

> Often it is only the beginning teacher who gets focused on during evaluation. This should not be the case, as often, it is the more experienced teacher that requires monitoring. During my minimal experiences as a teacher, I have witnessed teachers with 20+ years of teaching experience demonstrate a weakening desire to put more effort in their duties. This not only applies to teachers, but also to administration, as they often need to be

> reminded of today's teaching needs and methodology.

Do you feel that there is a need for evaluation in teaching? If so, Why?

All tenured teachers felt there is a need to have evaluation in teaching. The reasons ranged from the need to be held accountable to helping prevent people from becoming stagnant. One interviewee elaborated and further stated:

> It is difficult, if not impossible for most of us to see a personal weakness. With constructive criticism, these weaknesses can be brought to the attention of the teacher and solutions given that will help the teacher rectify their individual problems in the classroom.

Replacement teachers firmly believe that there is a need to have evaluation in teaching. All interviewees expressed the concern that employers need some sort of mechanism in place to ensure they have made wise decisions in hiring. The idea was also communicated that it helps teachers develop as professionals. One interviewee also said that "teacher evaluation ensures that students are receiving the best possible education. After all, that is our job as teachers."

Probationary teachers feel there is a need for evaluation in teaching so as to increase accountability and improve the quality of instruction. One interviewee said:

> Teaching is an occupation where you can always improve skills, methods, etc. Teaching consists of many tools which need sharpening, especially

> through self-evaluation. Also, proving to others that we are effective teachers is important because of the increased desire for accountability. Evaluation produces, or can produce, a higher standard in our capabilities and effectiveness as a teacher.

What are your personal attitudes towards evaluation?

Tenured teachers expressed the concern that evaluation as it is currently practised in this province is not what it was originally designed for. One interviewee stated that "as it exists, too many evaluators have the wrong agenda and inadequate skills to do good, proper, constructive, and humanitarian evaluations." However, they unanimously agreed that evaluation can be a good practice if conducted properly. One teacher said "personally, I welcome it, even though it makes me nervous."

All replacement teachers shared reservations in their attitudes towards evaluation. While all of them clearly stated the need to have evaluation procedures, their attitudes towards evaluation were not positive. One interviewee said "evaluation procedures intimidate me, I feel like I am under the gun." Another interviewee stated:

> When done in an appropriate manner, I have no problem with evaluation. In the same breath, however, I feel that evaluation procedures and evaluators themselves need to take a long hard look at themselves and the procedures they use to evaluate teachers.

All replacement teachers approve of evaluation procedures and for the most part welcome them. However, it was communicated that the current system of evaluation has some deficiencies. One teacher stated that "at present it seems more of a formality, a ritualistic activity than a conscious effort to help the teacher improve." Another interviewee concluded:

> My personal attitude towards evaluation is that in many cases it does not provide the adequate amount of assistance and guidance, but rather a means of determining if you are fit for the job. Evaluation can be more effective if it addresses particular areas of professional development. Evaluation is very important if approached and implemented in the correct manner.

Research Question #2

What do educational personnel perceive to be the fundamental purpose of evaluation?

What do you perceive to be the purpose of evaluation and evaluation procedures as they are currently implemented? Is it for professional development? Administrative decision-making? A combination?

Tenured teachers strongly believe that evaluation procedures exist primarily for administrative decision making. All interviewees expressed the importance of the administrative aspect, but believe too much emphasis is put on the administrative decision-

making process and little on professional development. One interviewee stated the problem with evaluation as it is currently implemented is that "it is the means to satisfy and justify a personnel agenda, especially in these times of fiscal restraint." Another teacher suggested that "teachers should learn from evaluation, and administrators need them to become aware of the strengths that teachers possess, not only their weaknesses. Too much emphasis is placed on the weaknesses of teachers, very seldom are they praised for their strengths."

Replacement teachers believe that the current evaluation procedures are used for a combination of reasons. However, they believe that professional development is the main reason. One interviewee said "I feel the evaluation I am receiving is for my professional development. However, administrative decision making is probably a part too."

Probationary teachers feel that evaluation exists for both professional development and administrative decision making, with the majority of the emphasis on the decision-making process. As one teacher said "it provides administration with the information to make decisions. In other words, to hire or to fire. A combination of the two is utopia, however, professional development is seriously lacking."

What do you believe to be the positive attributes of evaluation? If any, do you believe these attributes exist under the present system of evaluation? If no, why is this the case in your opinion?

Tenured teachers believe the positive attributes of evaluation to be:

1. So standards can be set and achieved.
2. Accountability is in place.
3. Teacher growth, both professionally and personally.
4. It points out a teachers area of weakness.
5. It highlights a persons strengths.
6. Keeps people on their toes.
7. Chance for constructive criticism.

Most of the teachers felt that these attributes do not exist under the present system. As one teacher suggested:

> It is easier to get rid of a person, especially an untenured teacher than it is to mold that person into a good teacher. Too many people in positions of leadership believe in baptism into the teaching profession by fire. Many a good potential teacher was destroyed because of a idiotic view towards beginning teachers.

Replacement teachers believe the positive attributes of evaluation is the fact that it Allows or gives teachers a forum in which to examine and improve (if necessary):

- techniques of instruction;
- their subject competence;
- planning and preparation techniques;

- classroom control and management; and
- overall professional growth.

Some replacement teachers believe these attributes exist in the present system of evaluation. However, it depended upon the person doing the evaluation, and the procedure being used.

Probationary teachers feel that the positive attributes of evaluation are:

1. Accountability.
2. Sets standards.
3. Improves the quality of instruction.
4. Motivates one to do his/her best.
5. Not only identifies areas of improvement, but provides support and recognition for success.
6. Focuses on the potential of an individual.

One teacher was very firm in stating "as it stands, I feel that there are no positive attributes at all. Evaluation has a lot of potential, however, the current system would need a lot of modification." Another interviewee said "evaluation does motivate and add a degree of accountability, but until more time and energy is given to working with teachers besides scattered one hour visits without a follow-up, little will change." Others thought

that it depended on the evaluator. If the evaluator believed in the process, then it would be beneficial. Many evaluators only go through the motions because it is a part of their job.

Do you think evaluation should exist in all professions, including teaching?

All tenured teachers unanimously agreed that evaluation should occur in all professions including teaching because everyone, regardless of occupation, should be accountable for their actions. One teacher specifically stated that " if the profession is to have any meaning or purpose in society, it should be subject to evaluation to make sure 'it' or 'they' are fulfilling their duties and obligations." Another interviewee suggested "over time, repetitive tasks can become boring. Evaluation can ensure all workers do their best at all times. In our society, the competitive nature of the global market leaves no room for error."

Replacement teachers also unanimously agreed that evaluation should occur in all professions. There was no elaboration beyond this point.

All probationary teachers believe that evaluations should occur in all professions. At the same time, evaluations should not be overwhelming. One teacher said "evaluations should not undermine an individual's professional abilities and perceptions. It seems that many individuals view evaluation negatively thus causing stress because they feel they

are being attacked on a personal and professional level." Another interviewee believed that

> Anyone who is trusted with a public responsibility like educating the youth of society should be held accountable and evaluated to ensure that they are doing what they were hired for. Doctors, lawyers, nurses etc. should be subjected to the same process to ensure that the public gets what they deserve.

Do you see evaluation as a means of being held accountable?

All tenured teachers viewed evaluation as a means of being held accountable, but also had some reservation about the accountability aspect. One teacher said "only if the policy and process was completed properly, but accountability should not be the main focus." Another interviewee redirected the accountability issue by saying "if you are doing the evaluating, would you stick your neck out for mistakes the teacher would/may make in the future? The question suggests a shifting and/or distribution of accountability, and would make the process more fearful."

Replacement teachers believed that evaluation is definitely a way of being held accountable. One interviewee said "teachers are not accountable once tenure is granted to them. They become almost untouchable. More evaluation would solve this accountability problem." Another interviewee simply stated "are they not one and the same?"

Probationary teachers view evaluation as a means of being held accountable, as one teacher phrased it "once a teacher goes in and shuts his/her door they are free to do whatever they want. It also shows a willingness on the part of the teacher to improve by opening themselves to criticism."

Research Question #3

How would an evaluation policy for all personnel impact on the current act of teaching?

Do you believe an evaluation policy would impact on teaching? How? Positively or negatively?

All tenured teachers believe that an evaluation policy would have a positive impact on the act of teaching, if the purpose was to help people improve teaching as opposed to help get rid of people. One interviewee said "if evaluation was geared to ensuring the achievement of a set of standards and the improvement of teaching, it would be an asset. However, it must be objective and consistent." Another teacher pointed to the positive aspect of evaluation by suggesting "if the policy had a philosophy of a view to improve, it would allow the teacher to ask for assistance, thus getting the teacher on the right track long before real pedagogical problems became the norm for that person."

All replacement teachers believe that an evaluation policy would have a positive impact on teaching. One teacher said "it would help teachers concentrate more on being

the best teacher they can be." Another interviewee stated that evaluation would "determine the extent to which teachers are achieving educational aims and objectives in the schools of this province. On the other hand, if evaluation policies are improperly implemented it could negatively affect and retard a teachers professional growth."

Probationary teachers feel that an evaluation policy would have a positive impact upon the teaching profession if "the policy is a result of input from all educational personnel." Another interviewee stated:

> An evaluation policy would definitely have a positive impact. Through evaluation, all teachers should receive the motivation to strive to be the perfect teacher. The standards of education are steadily increasing, through evaluation we as educators should strive to deliver these standards.

Reflecting on the act of teaching, do you think evaluation practices are an asset or a hindrance?

Tenured teachers held mixed views regarding evaluation practices. All agreed that evaluation can be an asset. One interviewee suggested that "as professionals we can only grow and learn through evaluation." However, all teachers agreed that evaluation policies as they currently exist in this province are a hindrance without merit, especially regarding professional development. The sole reason for their existence is for administrative decision making and the granting of tenure.

Replacement teachers felt that evaluation could be an asset to the teaching

profession if the policy itself was carried out in the proper fashion. One teacher said " it depends on how it is carried out, and why it is carried out. It can be very positive if it is used for professional development."

Probationary teachers believe that evaluation would be an asset, if it was used correctly. One teacher in the focus group said:

> It would be an asset or hindrance depending on how it was used. In itself it is neither good nor bad, if those who administer them are genuine and work to help teachers, and if evaluations are completed in a constructive and supportive manner, everyone will benefit. Otherwise, it is a waste of time.

If for instance you perceive evaluation to have serious consequences on the teacher, what are the consequences?

Most tenured teachers felt that evaluation could have negative effects on a teacher. One interviewee stated that:

> Evaluation can help a teacher to grow to his or her full potential by making the teacher aware of his/her strengths and weaknesses. Growth is always necessary if a teacher is to continue to be effective. Evaluation completed properly can initiate growth. However, evaluation procedures poorly thought out and done as a mere formality can shatter a teachers confidence.

This point was reiterated by another teacher who stated "if the evaluation process serves

only to highlight personal weaknesses, this in itself will be more destructive than constructive."

Replacement teachers stated that evaluation procedures can have negative effects on a teacher. Most felt that evaluation procedures carried with them a high degree of stress and anxiety. They also believed that there are no mechanisms put in place to help alleviate these fears. One teacher said "if evaluation policies are improperly implemented, it could negatively affect teachers. Teachers could become the victims of 'witch-hunts'. Anxieties associated with evaluation could hinder their ability to do their job." Another interviewee stated that "it seems like evaluators receive some kind of perverse pleasure in knowing teachers are literally going through hell."

Probationary teachers felt that a serious consequence could be the stress associated with the process. Teachers may feel like they are being attacked professionally and personally that eventually results in job loss. One interviewee said " the only time(s) I would suspect serious consequences would be if the teacher was experiencing serious difficulty and was in the danger of being dismissed. But then again, what are the consequences if they remain in the teaching profession?"

How can consequences be eliminated or effectively dealt with?

All tenured teachers believed that the consequences of evaluation policies could be eliminated or effectively dealt with. As one teacher suggested:

> By having the evaluation process and procedures developed in conjunction with teachers, and by having the evaluations completed by experienced and respected peers, not board officials and administrators who fear the classroom and simply have no grasp on the act of teaching.

Most replacement teachers were unable to suggest solutions to the negative consequences of evaluation. However, one said:

> Policies must be implemented in a fashion that ensures the professional growth of a teacher. No one is perfect, we can all learn new things that relate to our job. The biggest problem that has to be eliminated is the attitude that exist towards teachers, especially untenured teachers.

Probationary teachers believe that the only way to eliminate or to effectively deal with any serious consequence(s) would be to ensure that every effort is made to help the teacher improve, and is given the support and guidance necessary to overcome any difficulties. One teacher stated "too often, potentially good teachers are destroyed as soon as they enter the profession. The baptism by fire puts a lot of potential careers up in smoke."

In your opinion, what is more important, the positive impact evaluation practices can have on the students, or the negative impact evaluation practices may have on the teacher? (Assuming there are negative impacts).

All tenured teachers agree that the most important impact must be for the student.

One teacher said "they (the students) are the reason why we are teaching. If you feel more negative, why are you in the profession?" Another interviewee stated:

> Students come first. There can be no negative impact on teachers if evaluation is completed properly. There would be a positive impact on the teaching profession as a whole. Besides, incompetency would be greatly reduced. . . and we do have incompetency in our present system. It is just that the people who are carrying out evaluation procedures are not doing their homework by using documentation and due process.

Replacement teachers unanimously agreed that the most important impact as a result of evaluation has to be the positive impact on the student. One teacher suggested that "a policy be developed that had a positive impact on both the student and the teacher. This policy does not presently exist, at least to my knowledge."

Probationary teachers also believed that the most important impact is the impact on the student. One teacher said:

> While the impact on the student is certainly the most important, it should not negatively affect the teacher either. To me the more positive the impact on the teacher the better students will be. A boost to a teacher can do nothing but enhance the act of teaching.

Another interviewee stated that "if evaluation has a negative impact on teachers, then this

is more important because it not only affects the teachers, but also the students."

Research Question #4

Should evaluation processes contain more than a formative aspect; in other words, should evaluation aid in the decision-making process?

How do you feel about the current drive towards being held accountable and the need to have everything documented?

All tenured teachers expressed the view that the current drive towards accountability and documentation is positive for the student. One interviewee said "it keeps teachers in line and it's not a big deal for those who are doing their jobs, and it makes others who may be 'slack' do theirs too." Another view expressed was that "accountability adds some consistency to the educational system." One teacher stated that "accountability is an area as grey as student learning and is unsettling when viewed from the most optimistic perspective."

There were mixed reactions regarding accountability and documentation. For the most part, all replacement teachers felt the need to be accountable, however, as one teacher explained:

> Professionals need to be accountable within reason for their actions. Teachers cannot be held totally accountable for students who do not want to learn or who are not capable of learning. There are more elements that

factor into the equation of student achievement outside the classroom that is beyond the control of the classroom teacher. This may be against the philosophy and beliefs of some researchers, but there is also literature available in the educational field that refutes the current stand that everything outside the classroom has no impact on the performance level of the student.

Probationary teachers held mixed views regarding the current drive towards accountability. One teacher stated "this drive puts tremendous pressure and anxiety on new teachers. Everyone is bound to make mistakes and being accountable to so many levels and people makes it seem that the slightest error can cost you your job." Another interviewee firmly believed in accountability and the need for documentation. "This seems like a lot of work, but we live in an age where liability is becoming an issue, and I see a day when 'teacher malpractice' may be an issue in this province, so I think covering yourself is essential."

Assuming that evaluation practices are standard and a part of professional development, what type of evaluation would you prefer? Peer evaluation, self-evaluation, or a team approach (peer, administrative, and district personnel) Why?

Tenured teachers expressed a desire to have a variety of evaluation strategies. Some focused on the team approach because "observations can be compiled to get a complete picture of the individual. Therefore, personal opinions should not cloud

judgements. For example, the teacher and the principal may have a personality conflict, but the teacher may be an effective teacher." One teacher suggested "peer, self-evaluation, and students. We need to give students more credit for their input into creating good teachers. Students have a lot to offer in critiquing a teachers' abilities."

Replacement teachers were not quite sure what type of evaluation they preferred. Those interviewed believed that anything other than what is currently practised would be an improvement. One teacher suggested a team approach because it "would allow for a more accurate and unbiased assessment." Another respondent said that "peer evaluation sounds like a step in the right direction because other teachers are not so far removed from everyday teaching. They can relate better to situations, techniques, and the generation of kids that we are dealing with."

Probationary teachers felt that any approach which used a variety of methods for data collection would be beneficial. Emphasis was put on peer evaluation and a team approach. Most of the teachers felt that self-evaluation and reflection would yield results as good as if someone told them how to improve. One teacher stated "we are professionals, and as professionals we should be able to look at ourselves and determine areas of weakness."

Research Question #5

What are the crucial ingredients of an evaluation process?

Let's assume that there is to be a new evaluation policy established in every district of the province: in your opinion, what do you view to be the crucial ingredients of the policy itself?

Tenured teachers had varied ideas to contribute as to what they thought should go into the evaluation policy. Below is a summary of their ideas:

1. The policy must contain a human element, for no one is perfect.
2. Feedback to the individual evaluated.
3. Corrective processes for any problems detected.
4. Growth oriented for all educational personnel.
5. Practical.
6. Series of stages to improve. It must not be a one-time deal. There must be a process.
7. The school districts philosophy of evaluation must be communicated to personnel.
8. Personnel need to be in-serviced
9. Must be developed by teachers for teachers.
10. Evaluators must be qualified.
11. Must be student focused, after all, this is the purpose of education.

Replacement teachers for the most part could not list any crucial ingredients that they thought might go into an evaluation policy. The only suggestions given are as follows:

1. Clear and concise objectives aimed towards the positive growth of educators.
2. Effective strategies and procedures for evaluations.

Probationary teachers, like replacement teachers were unable to fully convey their thoughts regarding the crucial ingredients of an evaluation policy. Some of their points are:

1. Involve all personnel.
2. Be more extensive and consist of more than sporadic visits.
3. More emphasis on professional development.
4. Be evaluated by different individuals.
5. Evaluator must have knowledge of the subject area being evaluated.

Research Question #6

What, if any, are the current barriers inhibiting effective evaluation programs?

Do you think there are barriers that prevent effective evaluation? What do you perceive to be the barriers that inhibit the practice of effective evaluation? For example, lack of administrative time to effectively evaluate personnel.

All tenured teachers felt that there are barriers that prevent effective evaluation. Some of these barriers are as follows:

1. Difficult to give a comprehensive evaluation during an hour long class a few times a year. As it is currently practised, it is too much of an isolated experience.
2. There is an 'elitist status' of most evaluators, and many of these individuals do not focus on the positives.
3. Incompetent, uninformed evaluators with their own agendas.
4. Some teachers will show their best work when they are being evaluated (does not depict the real situation).
5. Students are inhibited by an 'alien' presence in the classroom.
6. The view of the evaluator with respect to the evaluation process from start to finish.
7. The views and perceptions of the evaluated (fear mostly).
8. Lack of administrative time and subject knowledge by administration. Sometimes the administrative staff have been so far removed from the actual teaching aspect of the job that they may not be able to make accurate assessments.

Replacement teachers also believed that there are barriers that prevent effective evaluation. Their list of possibilities include:

1. Evaluators being removed from the rigor of everyday teaching. The outcomes they expect are based on theory rather than reality.
2. Artificial classroom environment which is often created by the presence of the evaluator.
3. Evaluation is for the most part sporadic and an examination of independent events.
4. Teachers often feel nervous and uptight due to the nature of evaluation and thus affects their performance.
5. Evaluators are often unaware of 'intangibles' that need to be known before evaluation can take place.
6. One or two people usually take care of evaluations. To get a fair evaluation more people should be involved in the process.

Probationary teachers also believe there are barriers that prevent effective evaluation. Some of these barriers are:

1. Often when a guest comes into the classroom, the environment changes and this often makes the experience artificial.
2. The attitudes people have about evaluation.

3. Evaluators should focus on evaluation for the purpose of improvement of the person evaluated.
4. The person evaluated should look at evaluation as the opportunity to have areas of weakness pointed out. This is not the case.
5. Evaluating subject areas with little knowledge of content.
6. Not following up with constructive criticism and providing the teacher with the proper professional development.

Do you detect any opposition to the establishment of evaluation practices for all educational personnel? For example from: the NLTA, teachers, or administrators.

All tenured teachers felt that there would be opposition to the establishment of evaluation practices for all educational personnel. One teacher said "there will be opposition to anything of this nature. The degree of opposition will depend on the selling job as to the purpose of the process." Another interviewee believes "teachers are scared to be evaluated for fear of the truth coming out." One teacher stated there would be opposition unfortunately because "some people believe that when they have been teaching for a number of years or have attained a higher position in the educational field, they do not need evaluation. These people, perhaps, are more in need of evaluation than most."

Replacement teachers said yes, there would be opposition, but were unable to suggest reasons why.

Probationary teachers felt there would be opposition to the establishment of

evaluation policies for the simple reason that no one likes to be evaluated and opened up to, or for criticism. Teachers may feel that they are the only group evaluated, and as one teacher said "honestly, I have never heard of anyone other than teachers being evaluated, perhaps because I am a fairly new teacher." Another interviewee suggested that there may be opposition to the idea of evaluation because people get set in their ways and change does not happen easily or without opposition and resistance."

Research Question #7

What do educational personnel perceive as their role in the formulation of evaluation policies?

What about the development of the policy? How can this policy be developed? Who should develop it?

Tenured teachers felt that input should come from all stakeholders in the education field. However, they unamiously believed that the major contribution must come from the teachers. One teacher stated:

> Teachers must have a vital role in the creation of an evaluation policy if it is to work. Too often in this profession everything has been dictated to us, and as a result, there has been tremendous opposition. If we are professionals, then treat us as professionals. For the most part, the people who are in positions of power have the same level of education as most

classroom teachers. However, they do not have all the solutions to the problems in education.

Replacement teachers felt that any policy that is developed should be developed by a panel comprised of all educational personnel, and no one group should be represented more than any other group. One teacher suggested that the list of representatives should include: teachers, administrators, government officials, school board members, students, and parents. Replacement teachers firmly believe that an evaluation policy can be developed even in light of current practices by allowing or giving all educational personnel the opportunity to contribute, make suggestions, and to raise points of contention.

Probationary teachers believe that any policy that they will be subject to should be formulated only if they have input into the process. If the policy is imposed rather than mutually developed, the negative attitudes that currently exist towards evaluation will only increase. All educational stakeholders are needed to develop an effective and usable policy.

Probationary teachers also believe that before any policy is developed, all existing policies on evaluation should be critiqued to determine strengths and weaknesses. They believe the most important element needed is consultation throughout the process. Teachers need to feel that they are a part of the process, not only subjected to it.

What is needed to make the process work? Is it possible for all stakeholders to mutually agree on a process and a final policy? Why or why not?

Tenured teachers believe that a final workable policy is a definite possibility, and can be a reality if certain precautions are taken. The one key element common among all teachers was consultation. One teacher summed up the group's response by saying "there must be mutual respect and understanding from all stakeholders. The reality is that teachers are central to the evaluation policy and its implementation. Teachers are the main recipients, and thus should be its main developers."

Replacement teachers shared mixed reactions to the idea of mutually agreeing to an evaluation process and final policy. Some believed that if the necessary precautions were taken in advance, a policy could be generated with which all stakeholders agreed. Others thought that it would be impossible or at the least very difficult. One interviewee said "it would be very difficult due to the natural conflict of interest that exists between the various stakeholders in the education field."

Probationary teachers unanimously agreed that for the process to work, more than lip service must be given to all the stakeholders. There has to be a willingness to allow new alternatives to evaluation to be tried and honestly assessed. There has to be trust for any developments to take place. Teachers must trust fellow teachers, the administration of the school, and the school board personnel. The administration of the school, and school board personnel must in turn trust and view their teachers as competent

professionals. It is imperative that this trust be reciprocated.

Research Question #8

How can an evaluation policy be brought to fruition for all educational personnel given the traditional and current evaluation policies?

What do you see as the solution to overcoming the barriers towards evaluation practices?

Tenured teachers posed a variety of potential solutions to overcoming the barriers towards evaluation practices. Among these are:

1. Hold teachers individually accountable for their students success. Teachers should be judged by their end product. As well, have proper evaluators who are suitable for the task. Only a teacher can evaluate a teacher. The next best candidate would be a student.
2. Evaluators be viewed as equals, not superiors.
3. Self, peer, and student evaluation utilized more, (e.g. interview students, department heads, colleagues, etc.)
4. Have more student input, they are the ones ultimately affected.
5. Evaluators be trained in subject areas, i.e. department heads. However, this may lead to problems with colleagues.

Replacement teachers were unable to suggest solutions towards overcoming the barriers of evaluation practices.

Probationary teachers believe that there are several things which could be initiated to reduce or overcome the barriers that exist towards evaluation practices. The list includes:

1. Changing the perception of evaluators as being negative.
2. Appropriate personnel evaluating personnel in their own field of expertise.
3. More structure to the process.
4. Time for teachers to seek help and work on alternatives (time for Professional Development).
5. More conversation between administration and personnel to reduce any stress that may arise.
6. Observe personnel outside the classroom duties. There is more to teaching than what happens inside the walls of a classroom.
7. The administration should have teaching duties, then they would be able to appreciate the trials and tribulations a regular teacher encounters everyday.

How can opposition be overcome?

Most tenured teachers expressed the view that opposition could be surmounted if the purpose and practice of evaluation were more clearly defined. One teacher suggested

that "detailed sessions be conducted outlining the purpose and the benefits of an evaluation process." One teacher was more militant by saying "get rid of the incompetent teachers and have only dedicated professionals. Dedicated professionals will welcome evaluation as a professional development tool."

Replacement teachers felt that the only way to overcome any opposition would be to make evaluation mandatory for all educational personnel. Then individuals will not feel like they are being singled out.

Probationary teachers felt that the first step to overcoming any opposition is to change the perception of evaluation that exists among teaching personnel. Evaluation has to be seen as constructive and non-intimidating for the benefit of the teacher.

Do you perceive evaluation of all educational personnel to be a radical practice in light of traditional practices?

Not one tenured teacher thought that the evaluation of all educational personnel was radical. One teacher said that " evaluation is radical in terms of what is presently practised, but not in terms of what should be." Another interviewee stated "evaluation is just common sense. The radical aspect is that it was not always the case." One teacher looked at evaluation from another perspective and stated "if we assume that the people in organizations that traditionally spearheaded evaluation procedures will expose themselves to evaluation, then it would be radical."

Replacement teachers felt that the majority of the teaching force would view evaluation as radical. One teacher said "no matter what the idea, it would be viewed as radical and useless by the personnel with negative attitudes that exist in our education system." In the focus group sessions, all agreed that evaluation is the way of the future whether it be in education, health care, or the automobile industry.

Probationary teachers were divided in their views on whether evaluation practices for all personnel would be radical. Some said it would be radical because of the long tradition that existed in this province and the security given to tenured teachers. Another teacher said an evaluation practice is radical but "one that is essential for accountability and ensuring excellence in the profession." The teachers who said no, believed that change is necessary in order for the most effective teaching to occur.

In light of our current environment, do you think that evaluation of all educational personnel should be standard practice? If so, why? If no, why not?

Tenured teachers had a mixed reaction to the concept of evaluation as it currently exists. All teachers believe that evaluation should be for everyone, however, under the current environment that would be an impossibility. One teacher said "no, not without a more tolerant and supportive evaluation policy that is the product of the teachers, and all educational stakeholders." Others made comments like "yes, as long as the criteria is acceptable to teachers and the summative aspect is not the main purpose. Standards are

necessary." "Yes, everyone should have to meet a set of standards to be effective in their job."

All replacement teachers felt that evaluation should be standard practice. One interviewee said that "if improving the quality of education is the main goal, then evaluation needs to be completed at all levels." Another teacher stated:

> The business environment that our students are entering makes teacher evaluation a necessity, students now need the best qualified individuals available to teach them. Then again, it is not the qualified aspect that is important, but their ability to demonstrate it. It is a well-known fact that a teacher who has a glowing university transcript does not always make the most effective teacher.

Probationary teachers believe that the only way to make the process work is to make it standard practice. Otherwise there would be no consistency or uniformity to ensure fair and equal treatment.

What are your overall attitudes towards evaluation?

Tenured teachers had different attitudes towards evaluation. While all of them favored an evaluation process, some were very apprehensive. Some of their comments were as follows:

> "very positive theoretically, in practice however, there are many problems

with who is qualified to evaluate, and what is the motive of the person evaluating."

"Evaluation is a necessary evil as it exists, but can be a constructive tool to good teaching."

"Generally, I have positive feelings, however, I am aware that evaluation as it currently exists lacks credibility because it gives such a narrow picture of the ability of the teacher, and is usually completed by personnel who may have been absent from the classroom for many years. Also, if the motives are to 'get rid' of teachers, then that should not be the purpose."

"I have mixed feeling towards evaluation. I have positive feelings towards how evaluation should be conducted and negative feelings towards what evaluations are used for."

Most replacement teachers had a positive attitude towards evaluation when it was conducted in a positive manner. One interviewee said "it depends upon the nature of the evaluation policy and the manner in which it is being implemented. At present, evaluation practices and procedures need to be improved."

Probationary teachers had different overall attitudes towards evaluation such as:

> "Right now I view evaluation as a formality, but that is based on how evaluation policies are used at present. In itself I think evaluation has great potential when used properly."

> "Evaluating can be very beneficial if everyone affected has a positive attitude towards the evaluation process. My overall attitude is positive."

> "Evaluation is intimidating, unproductive towards teaching methods, and in its present form, useless."

How can the administrators of the school board involve all stakeholders in the development process?

Tenured teachers felt that administrators must activate a consultation process in the development phase. One teacher said "facilitate everyone's input and give weight to that input. It must be more than mere lip service." Another teacher suggested "the primary aim of evaluation will have to be the improvement of the teacher's ability to deliver a program. As professional educators/parents we have to be trusted to speak for the ultimate stakeholder, the student."

Replacement teachers suggested that everyone be a part of the development process. Only then will the process and eventual policy work. They suggested that there

has to be the buy-in process before anything can begin.

Probationary teachers suggested that the school board conduct interviews and surveys to get a feeling for the attitudes and perceptions of the teachers. Probationary teachers also believe that all stakeholders must be involved in the process for it to work. It was suggested in the focus group sessions that the time of 'power over' or domination is gone, now we are into the age of 'empowerment'. The group suggested that the only problem with this philosophy is that it requires a different style of leadership from what is currently practised.

Summary

Data for this study were collected by interviewing and performing focus groups with fourteen educators who were of either of tenured, replacement, or probationary employment status. Six of these educators are teaching in the intermediate division, and eight in the senior high division. The interview data were organized along the lines of eight research questions. Responses were gathered regarding evaluation as an integral aspect of teaching, perceived fundamental purpose of evaluation, impact of an evaluation policy on teaching, crucial ingredients of an evaluation process, current barriers inhibiting effective evaluation programs, educational personnel's perceptions as to their role in the

formulation of evaluation policies, and evaluation policies and their impact on current teaching practices.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the study, a statement of the problem, its significance, suggestions from relevant research, methodology, and the findings of the study. The summary of the findings examines the interview data of educational personnel's attitudes and perceptions towards evaluation with respect to educational personnel's view towards evaluation as an integral aspect of teaching, the purpose of evaluation and its positive attributes, identification of the barriers perceived to inhibit effective evaluation, overcoming identified barriers, evaluation policies and their impact on current teaching practices, crucial ingredients of an evaluation model, and evaluation policies as standard practice. The discussion section examines the findings of the study, and the conclusion section looks at the general themes that have emerged from the data. Finally, recommendations are presented for the establishment of an evaluation system and suggestions for further study and research.

SUMMARY

Statement of the Problem

We are living in a society where there is an increased emphasis on documentation

and accountability. Teachers are now more than ever being held accountable for their ability to teach by the achievement levels attained by their students. With emphasis on being accountable, teachers are feeling tremendous pressure to perform, and have their students perform on various tests and performance indicators. Fiscal restraints on the education system of this province, and the elimination of the Professional Development Centre has meant that educators are in need of a system to ensure that they are being accountable, and are providing the best instruction to the students of this province. The goal of the Professional Development Centre was to inservice teachers with the latest technology and teaching strategies to better prepare the students of this province for the next millennium.

It has been suggested by educators within the educational community that a possible solution may lie in the formulation and establishment of an evaluation system for all educational personnel in the province to include replacement, probationary, and tenured teachers. This present study examined the degree to which educational personnel from the intermediate and senior high levels perceive the purpose and process of evaluation and how, if at all, the evaluation process can improve the education system of this province. The intent was also to identify what they perceive to be the positive and negative aspects of evaluation, and how barriers might be overcome in an evaluation process. The final purpose of this study was to identify what educational personnel view as critical

ingredients in the formulation and establishment of an evaluation policy, and how the process can be brought to fruition.

Review of the Literature

Research literature on evaluation clearly states that its purpose is to help make administrative decisions. Decision making is an integral aspect of evaluation, the problem arises when administrative decision making is the only purpose. The literature suggests that ongoing evaluation is an integral and necessary aspect that contributes to personal and professional growth, and is viewed as the key to maintaining effective teaching. Attitudes towards evaluation are varied among educational personnel. Research indicates that there are a variety of factors which determine if educational personnel will be receptive to an evaluation process. The predominant reason being if the teacher was actually involved in the process.

Methodology

This study relied on the qualitative research paradigm for data collection. Due to the nature of the study, semi-structured interviews were employed to gather information from educational personnel. Focus groups were utilized after all individual interviews were conducted to further discuss the issues surrounding their attitudes and perceptions of

evaluation. Focus groups were used to provide direction to the study, and also to give teachers a chance to reflect and collaborate on the issue of evaluation. The fundamental aim of the study was to determine the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards evaluation, and if they would be receptive to the idea of an evaluation policy for all educational personnel in this province.

Summary of Findings - Interview Data Analysis

Evaluation as an integral aspect of teaching

1. Disagreement among teachers as whether evaluation is integral to effective teaching

Replacement and probationary teachers were in agreement with evaluation being a necessary and integral aspect of teaching, but probationary teachers were divided as to whether evaluation is absolutely necessary to ensure effective teaching. Tenured teachers, however, were in disagreement with the view that evaluation is necessary to provide effective teaching. All teachers at the senior high level felt that effective teaching can or does occur without evaluation. Yet, evaluation is necessary in general for the sole purpose to ensure consistency and ensure standards are being met by all educational personnel. The intermediate tenured teachers were of the opinion that continuous evaluation is necessary to keep abreast with the current innovative teaching styles.

2. Agreement that evaluation should be for all educational personnel

All teachers held strong convictions that all educational personnel should be evaluated. It was conveyed unanimously that no one regardless of their position in the hierarchical structure of the educational field should be beyond evaluation.

3. Agreement that there is a need for evaluation

All educational personnel interviewed were in unanimous agreement that evaluation should exist in education at all levels. It was conveyed that because of the nature of the profession and the stakes involved, that being the education of our youth, there has to be some mechanism in place to ensure that the aims and objectives of education in this province are being met. It was also communicated that being held accountable is a reality. The competitive global market dictates, and is one of the performance indicators of whether educators are in fact doing their job. While it was suggested that the education field is not totally responsible for the province's current high unemployment rate and performance in the global market, the education profession naturally has to take and accept some of the responsibility. It is believed that consistent and continuous evaluation of not only the educational personnel, but the programs offered, will drastically increase performance, and thus better prepare the youth of this province to compete in the global marketplace.

Perceived Fundamental Purpose of Evaluation

1. Disagreement on the fundamental purpose of evaluation

The teachers interviewed disagreed with the fundamental purpose of evaluation. Replacement and probationary teachers believed that evaluation exists for both professional development and for administrative decision making. Replacement teachers felt that emphasis is placed on professional development as opposed to administrative purposes. Probationary teachers suggested that the primary reason for evaluation is to justify administrative decision making. In theory, professional development is a fundamental aspect, but in reality teachers felt administrative decision making is the underlying motivator camouflaged under a shroud of evaluation.

Tenured teachers strongly believe that evaluation procedures exist primarily for administrative decision making. All interviewees expressed the importance for the need of the administrative aspect of evaluation, but believe too much emphasis is put on the administrative end of the continuum, and minimal emphasis placed on professional development. Two of the respondents reported they have witnessed evaluation procedures used primarily as a means to get teachers out of the profession. The person(s) affected were not given the opportunity to effectively deal with the problems they were experiencing, and as a result, the stress and pressure of being consistently evaluated and told they were ineffective teachers forced them out of the profession. Incompetency was

not the issue, nor was ever proven, it came down to blatant misuse of an evaluation policy. These two respondents communicated to the group during a focus group session that cases like these leave a bitter taste in the mouths of educators. Events like these tear schools and staffs apart and unfortunately they do not stay within the walls of the school. As a result, evaluation of personnel is not looked upon favorably for obvious reasons.

2. Agreement on the positive attributes of evaluation

All personnel agreed that evaluation has some positive attributes that are very beneficial to both teachers and students. Some of the attributes include:

1. Allows standards to be set and achieved.
2. Ensures accountability is in place.
3. Promotes teacher growth. Improves the quality of instruction:
   - techniques of instruction;
   - subject competence;
   - planning and preparation techniques;
   - classroom control and management; and
   -overall professional growth.
4. Points out a teachers area of weakness so it can be rectified.
5. Highlights a persons strengths and rewards ingenuity.
6. Motivates one to do his/her best.

7. Keeps individual teachers on their toes.

3. Disagreement as to whether the positive attributes exist under the present system

Tenured and probationary teachers conveyed the opinion that most of the positive attributes that should be in evaluation policies are not included in or exercised in current evaluation procedures. Both groups felt that evaluation procedures have the potential to make significant contributions to the field of education, but given the way they are currently practised, many modifications would need to occur before evaluation procedures are brought to fruition. Replacement teachers felt that many of the positive attributes exist in the current system, however, their existence depends upon the person doing the evaluation. This perception was in line with tenured and probationary teachers. The three groups concluded that the evaluator was the underlying and deciding factor as to whether positive attributes exist in an evaluation policy.

Impact of an Evaluation Policy on Teaching

1. Agreement that an evaluation policy would have a positive impact on teaching

All respondents unanimously agreed that an evaluation policy would have a positive impact on teaching if the fundamental and primary objectives are to help improve the act of teaching, and to further enhance the learning outcomes of students.

2. Agreement that an evaluation policy would be more of an asset than a hindrance

All respondents felt that an evaluation policy would be a definite asset to the education system of this province if it was designed with the emphasis on professional development. All teachers realized the need for evaluation to aid in the administrative decision-making process, but also felt that decision making should not be its fundamental purpose for existence. The process becomes a hindrance when it is more summatively oriented.

3. Agreement that evaluation policies can have negative consequences for the teacher

All interviewees held the opinion that evaluation practices could have negative repercussions for teachers being evaluated. All respondents clearly stated that there is a tremendous amount of stress and anxiety associated with evaluations. The focus groups also communicated that the current system of evaluation lacks the mechanisms to help alleviate the stressors associated with the process. It was suggested by the interviewees that these negative consequences resulted in the negative perceptions and attitudes that exist towards evaluation.

4. Agreement that the negative consequences could be effectively dealt with

With the exception of the replacement teachers, all other respondents felt that the possible negative consequences could be effectively dealt with if the policies and procedures were genuine in helping teachers become better educators. Eliminating negative impact would depend upon teachers initial and continuous involvement in the

formulation of the evaluation process, rather than being subjected to evaluation.

5. Agreement that the most important consequence is the positive impact evaluation can have for students

All interviewees unanimously agreed that the most important consequence is the positive impact evaluation policies can have for students. Respondents communicated that students are the most important stakeholders in the educational process and every possible measure should be put in place to ensure that students are receiving the best possible education.

Crucial Ingredients of an Evaluation Process

Only the tenured teachers were able to suggest what they perceive to be the crucial ingredients necessary for an effective evaluation process. Both the replacement and probationary teachers were unable to suggest what they felt were crucial ingredients. During focus group sessions, the interviewees explained that the reason for their inability to suggest crucial ingredients was due to their lack of experience in the teaching profession. Most of them at this point had little experience with evaluations and never actually thought about what should be included.

Tenured teachers were able to identify more elaborately with the evaluation process, and thus the crucial ingredients of an effective evaluation policy. During the focus group sessions tenured teachers suggested that an evaluation policy include:

1. A human element, for no one is perfect.
2. Feedback to the individual evaluated.
3. Corrective processes for any problems detected.
4. Growth oriented for all educational personnel.
5. Practical. It must be a policy that can be implemented, if not, then it is useless.
6. A series of stages to demonstrate improvement. It cannot be a one-time deal. Emphasis must be on evaluation as a process with an eventual judgement, not mere judgement.
7. The employers philosophy of evaluation must be communicated to the personnel.
8. Personnel need to be inserviced before, during, and after the process begins to ensure it is a positive experience.
9. Must be developed by teachers for teachers.
10. Evaluators must be qualified and consistent among evaluations.
11. Must be student focused which is the whole purpose of education.

Current Barriers Inhibiting Effective Evaluation Programs

1. Agreement that there are barriers that inhibit effective evaluation programs

All interviewees regardless of their employment status or teaching division felt that the current evaluation practices contain certain barriers that seriously hinder an effective performance appraisal system. Among these are:

1. Difficulty in giving a comprehensive evaluation during an hour long class several times a year. As it is currently practiced, it is too much of an isolated experience.
   - some teachers will show their best work when they are being evaluated (does not depict the real day-to-day situation).
   - evaluation is for the most part sporadic, and an examination of independent isolated events.
2. There is an 'elitist status' of most evaluators and many of these individuals do not focus on the positives.
3. Incompetent uninformed evaluators with their own agendas.
   - evaluators should focus on evaluation for the purpose of improvement of the person evaluated.
   - evaluators are often unaware of 'intangibles' that need to be known before evaluation can take place.
4. Students are inhibited by an alien presence in the classroom. Often

when a guest comes into the classroom the environment changes, and this often makes the experience artificial.

5. The view of the evaluator with respect to the evaluation process from start to finish.

6. The views and perceptions of the evaluated. Teachers often feel nervous and uptight due to the nature of evaluation.

7. Evaluators being removed from the vigor of everyday teaching. The outcomes they expect are based totally on theory rather than the teachers realistic situation.

8. The attitudes educational personnel have towards evaluation. The person evaluated should look at evaluation as the opportunity to have areas of weakness pointed out. This is seldom the case.

9. Not following up with constructive criticism, and providing the teacher with the proper professional development.

10. Evaluating areas with little subject knowledge.

11. One person is usually in charge of evaluations. To get a more accurate evaluation, more people should be involved in the process.

12. Lack of administrative time. Sometimes the administration has been so far removed from the actual teaching aspect of the job that

they may not be able to make accurate judgements.

2. Agreement that there would be opposition to the establishment of an appraisal system for all educational personnel

All teachers felt that there would be a certain degree of opposition to the establishment of an evaluation system for all educational personnel. Probationary and replacement teachers were unable to suggest underlying reasons for such opposition other than the fact that no one likes to be scrutinized. Tenured teachers suggested that any process that opens an individual up to criticism will be challenged, especially by the NLTA. The NLTA would have to act on the consensus of its membership as most teachers dread the thought of opening their classrooms and their teaching skills, or lack of skills, to an evaluation process. Tenured teachers identified the bureaucratic structure that exists in the educational system, and the natural division that has taken place between employer-employee, and teacher-administration to be a major contributing factor to the opposition of the establishment of an appraisal system.

It was communicated by the interviewees that teachers have been stripped of their professional dignity and self-respect within the last decade. Most of the negative aspects within the educational system is seen as the direct result of teachers. Seldom is it realized, or acknowledged, that the problems may be the direct result of the system that the educators are functioning under. Four out of six tenured interviewees said change of any kind will never occur easily because of the barriers that have been created between the

various stakeholders in the educational field. The current structure does not contain a human element, and as a result, a wall exists between the various stakeholders involved within the profession.

It was also suggested that despite the perception, teachers would welcome evaluation procedures because they are very competent, and deeply care for the students they teach. It was reiterated that if teachers were not concerned professionals, they would not dedicate the tremendous amount of time and energy into planning, extracurricular activities, and the numerous tutorial sessions outside their regular teaching duties.

It was unanimously agreed that the opposition would come from the perceptions of how evaluation procedures would be used. Interviewees suggested that because of the government's track record, and the inhumane treatment of some administrations and school boards towards teachers, teachers will seriously wonder about the fundamental and underlying purpose of evaluation. Many are convinced that it would not be for the betterment of education for the students of this province, but to aid in the administrative decisions in light of the fiscal realities that this province is facing. In essence, the degree of opposition would greatly depend upon the selling job as to the purpose of the evaluation process.

Educational Personnel's Perceptions as to their Role in the Formulation of Evaluation Policies

1. Agreement that any evaluation policy should be developed by all educational stakeholders

All respondents suggested that the crucial ingredients necessary in the development of any evaluation policy would be the direct involvement of all educational personnel in the process. All groups also thought that the major contribution and input should come from the teachers themselves. One interviewee summed up the ideas of the focus groups by saying "teachers must have a vital role in the creation of an evaluation policy if it is to work. Too often in this profession everything has been dictated to us, and as a result, there has been tremendous opposition."

2. Disagreement that it is possible for all stakeholders to mutually agree on a process and a final policy

Tenured and probationary teachers agreed that a final policy is possible and can be brought to fruition if certain precautions are taken before the process actually starts. Most replacement teachers also thought that if certain precautions were taken the process would work. Others thought that it would be impossible to have all stakeholders agree, or at the least very difficult due to the differences that exist between them.

The main precaution that became evident throughout the interviews and focus groups was the need for a consultation process. This process would have to be more than just a series of meetings to understand peoples feelings and merely paying lip service to

the process, and then go off and develop the policy. Teachers were concerned that the current tactics implied by all administrative structures are to consult and bestow empowerment. These are the current buzz words, however, the only purpose served is to make people feel good. As long as people think they are consulted and involved, everything will go over smoothly. Teachers have seen this process before, and are very weary of being asked for input.

Evaluation Policies and their Impact on Current Teaching Practices

1. Agreement that there are solutions to overcoming the barriers towards evaluation practices

Replacement teachers were unable to suggest solutions to overcoming barriers towards evaluation practices. All tenured and probationary teachers interviewed suggested solutions. These include:

1. Conduct inservice sessions for all personnel prior to any development of policy.
2. Allow the process to evolve. Time must be invested if it is to work.
3. Emphasis must be on growth as opposed to judgement.
4. Evaluators must be viewed as equals rather than superiors.
5. Evaluators be trained in the subject area being evaluated.
6. Time to seek help if problems are detected. The need for a tracking

system. A teacher should not be put 'on review' for one unfavorable evaluation.

7. Evaluation must be a process, not an isolated event.

8. Have teachers individually accountable for their students success.

9. Utilize a variety of evaluation methods for data collection.

10. Evaluations should include more than just the classroom exercises. A holistic approach.

11. Administration should have teaching duties so as to be able to identify with the regular classroom teacher.

2. Agreement that the evaluation of all educational personnel is not a radical practice

All educational personnel interviewed believe that a performance appraisal system would not be a radical practice because of the tremendous responsibility that is involved with the job of educating the youth of this province. It was communicated that the stakes are too high to leave to chance therefore, there has to be some mechanism in place to ensure that every student is given every chance for the best education possible.

3. Agreement that evaluation should be standard practice

All teachers thought that evaluation of educational personnel should be standard practice, and that the only way for any evaluation process to work would be to evaluate all personnel. Most teachers agreed that the process would not be able to work the way it is

currently practiced in this province. It was suggested that current evaluation policies need to be reevaluated with strengths and weaknesses highlighted. It was also communicated that if education is to improve in this province, one must continuously evaluate the curriculum and the methods used to teach students.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that educational personnel regardless of employment status favor the establishment of a performance appraisal system within the research setting. Traditionally in this province, evaluation practices existed only for replacement and probationary teachers. Once teachers were granted tenure, they were no longer evaluated for their performance except when placed on review by the school administration and the school board. As a result, the current evaluation procedures practised in this province are viewed as merely ritualistic lacking the effectiveness necessary to foster professional development and due process to justify any administrative decision making.

There is a consensus among educational personnel in this study that some sort of change is necessary in the education system to ensure that the youth of this province are receiving the necessary education to compete in the ever changing competitive global workplace. Educational literature explicitly states that student achievement is inextricably

linked with teacher effectiveness. It is the aim and philosophy of the current government administration to ensure that the highest quality of teaching occurs in the classrooms of this province. The government also identifies the need for an accountability system to monitor the performance of the students, educators, and every facet of the educational system. However, the government's degree of financial commitment will largely determine the extent to which any of these aims are brought to fruition.

Teachers realize the need to be held accountable and for the most part welcome an accountability process. However, teachers in this study communicated that before one can be held totally accountable, there must be a system in place to monitor and ensure teacher effectiveness. Teachers feel that they are being held more accountable than ever before, but at the same time believe the accountability paradigm lacks the process. The problem with the current system of evaluation is that teachers feel they are being judged rather than assessed.

Teachers see a dire need for an evaluation process beyond the probationary and replacement time frames. The interviewees communicated the idea that evaluation is a process rather than a product. It was also emphasized that our society is continually evolving and changing, therefore, there is an increased need for the evaluation of teachers, programs, and teaching styles. While many teachers disagree on the fundamental purpose of evaluation, they all agree that evaluation practices will have a positive impact on the

group that matters the most in this endeavor, the students. The purpose of education is to prepare the youth to face and accept the challenges ahead of them. The job of educators is to prepare students to meet these challenges. An evaluation system of educational personnel can only enhance this process.

Teachers in the present study identified the need to be evaluated, however, they also realize that a process that opens oneself to criticism will have certain repercussions. As a safeguard, the current process must undertake a series of developments and further refinements. Believing in the need for an evaluation policy is one realm, bringing it to fruition is another. Teachers identified barriers that inhibit effective evaluation programs, but firmly believe these barriers can be overcome if all educational stakeholders enter the process without having hidden agendas. These agendas when identified will destroy any confidence the stakeholders may have placed in the system.

Educational personnel identify with the current drive to be held more accountable. Educational personnel in this study want a system of evaluation that will not only judge their effectiveness, but develop good teachers into more effective ones. Teachers realize more than any other group that education is a life long journey that is constantly changing in light of new technologies and the demands from the global workplace. An effective practical evaluation system will only enhance and ensure that educators are doing what they are hired to do.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Contrary to perceptions within the educational profession that teachers are unwilling to accept evaluations on a regular basis, the findings of this study do not support these claims. The teachers interviewed in this study were somewhat enthusiastic and positive towards the concept of evaluation. While most had reservations, the overall attitudes and perceptions of the interviewees were positive.

Research literature suggests that if an evaluation system is to help solve some of the problems that exist in education, teachers need to be placed at the center of the process. Research indicates that there are a variety of factors that determine if educational personnel will be receptive to an evaluation process, but whether or not the teacher is actually involved throughout the process is the predominant factor. All the interviewees in this study shared the same concern as to the actual policy development. It was not a matter of being receptive to the idea, but whether they would have actual meaningful input into its development. Many of the problems encountered with teachers and their overall willingness to participate in ventures have nothing to do with teachers. The administrative structure in which teachers have to operate, is the problem. It must also be pointed out that administrators feel trapped by the same system. It will not be until all stakeholders agree that they want something other than what the current system is providing will any real change occur. An idea for further research would be to look at the attitudes and

perceptions of administrators and school board personnel that represent the other end of the continuum in the educational administrative structure.

Research literature suggests that the main and deciding barriers to the establishment of an evaluation policy are the attitudes and perceptions of the educational personnel. These barriers were found in the literature to be more prevalent in the personnel of post-secondary institutions than regular schooling environments. These barriers were evident in this study. For the most part, teachers in this study had positive attitudes and perceptions towards evaluation and the establishment of an evaluation policy. Barriers they identified were the results of the way evaluations are currently conducted in this province.

The main theme that was communicated throughout the interviews and focus groups was for the direct involvement in policies that will have an impact on both the teacher and student. The teachers interviewed in this study appear to be willing to have evaluation as a regular aspect of their job given that they have a voice in the formulation, establishment, and functioning of any performance appraisal system. The literature recommends, and is reiterated by the interviewees in this study, that any system of evaluation must contain certain elements and take certain precautionary measures before any policy is formulated and implemented. The problem is how to develop and implement an evaluation system that highlights instructional and professional improvement, and at the

same time facilitates the administrative decision-making paradigm.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that despite the perceived attitudes and perceptions regarding teacher evaluation, teachers are ready and willing to accept the challenge to help develop and implement an evaluation policy for all educational personnel. The intention is to improve instructional and professional development, and increase student learning while aiding the administrative decision-making process. It is this combination of both the formative and summative aspects that will have optimum impact on the student, and solve or at least increase the accountability issue. Society is experiencing a period of change, and the educational field is in the midst of it. As Fullan (1982) suggests change is never easy. Teachers have the option of doing one of two things, they can continue with the status quo, or they can accept the challenge and strive to prepare the students of this province for the next millennium. The attitudes and perceptions for educational change is very positive in spite of the fact that morale is at an all time low. It is these attitudes and perceptions that really demonstrate the professional character of the teachers of this province.

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APPENDIX A

(Interview Schedule)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL'S VIEW TOWARDS EVALUATION AS AN INTEGRAL ASPECT OF TEACHING.

a) Were you ever evaluated in your teaching career?

i) How would you describe your experience with evaluation? Why?

- positive

- negative

b) What are your current views towards evaluation?

i) Do you view evaluation as an integral aspect of teaching?

ii) Do you feel effective teaching can occur without some sort of evaluation?

c) How do you feel about the current drive towards being held accountable and the need to have everything documented?

d) How would you define evaluation, or what is your philosophy of evaluation.

e) Do you think evaluation should be for all educational personnel?

i) Are there any exceptions?

ii) Why should they be excluded?

f) Do you feel there is a need for evaluation in teaching? Why?

g) What is your personal attitude towards evaluation?

2. THE PURPOSE OF EVALUATION AND ITS POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES.

a) What do you perceive to be the purpose of evaluation and evaluation procedures as they are currently implemented?

- is it for professional development?
- administrative decision making?
- a combination?

b) What do you believe to be the positive attributes of evaluation?

c) Do you believe these attributes exist under the present system of evaluation? If no, why is this the case in your opinion?

d) Do you think evaluation should occur in all professions, including teaching?

3. IDENTIFICATION OF THE BARRIERS PERCEIVED TO INHIBIT EFFECTIVE EVALUATION.

a) Do you think there are barriers that prevent effective evaluation?

b) What do you perceive to be the barriers that inhibit the practice of effective evaluation? For example, lack of administrative time to effectively evaluate personnel.

4. OVERCOMING IDENTIFIED BARRIERS.

a) What do you see as the solution to overcoming the barriers towards evaluation practices?

b) Do you detect any opposition to the establishment of evaluation practices for all educational personnel? Such as:

i) NLTA

ii) Teachers

iii) Administration

c) How can any opposition be overcome?

5. EVALUATION POLICIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON CURRENT TEACHING PRACTICES.

a) Do you believe an evaluation policy would impact on teaching? Why?

i) Positively

ii) Negatively

b) If for instance you perceive evaluation to have serious consequences on the teacher.

i) What are the consequences?

ii) How can they be eliminated or effectively dealt with?

b) In your opinion, what is more important, the positive impact evaluation practices

can have on the students, or the negative impact evaluation practices may have on the teacher? (Assuming there are negative impacts).

6. CRUCIAL INGREDIENTS OF AN EVALUATION MODEL.

a) Lets assume that there is to be an evaluation policy established in every district of the province.

i) In your opinion, what do you view to be the crucial ingredients of the policy itself?

ii) What about the development of the policy?

iii) How can this policy be developed?

iv) Who should develop the policy?

v) How can the administrators of the board involve all stakeholders in the development process?

b) What is needed to make the process work?

i) Is it possible for all stakeholders to mutually agree on a process and a final policy? Why or why not?

7. EVALUATION POLICIES AS STANDARD PRACTICE.

a) Do you perceive evaluation of all educational personnel to be a radical practice in light of traditional practices?

b) In light of our current environment, do you think that evaluation of all

educational personnel should be standard practice? If so, Why? If no, Why not?

c) Do you see evaluation as a means of being accountable?

d) Reflecting on the act of teaching, do you think evaluation practices is an asset or a hinderment?

e) Assuming that evaluation practices are standard and a part of professional development. What type of evaluation would you prefer? Why?

- peer evaluation
- self-evaluation
- team approach (peer, administrative, and board personnel)

f) What are your overall attitudes towards evaluation?

8. <u>OTHER COMMENTS</u>

Are there any issues, questions or concerns that you feel is important to an analysis of this topic that what not covered in the interview. Are there any questions that you would like to ask me regarding the topic.

APPENDIX B

(Letters of Consent)

P. O. Box 126
Catalina, NF
AOC 1JO

September 1, 1996

Mr. X
Superintendent
District Y
ZOZ OZO

Dear Mr. X,

I am requesting approval to conduct a qualitative research project at Juniper High during the fall of 1996 as part of my thesis for the requirements for the Master of Education program at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

The research proposal is under the supervision of Dr. Clar Doyle of the Faculty of Education and is currently under review by the ethics committee.

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards evaluation and evaluation procedures. With the current restructuring of the educational landscape of this province there is pressure to have students achieve provincially and nationally. As a result, there is emphasis placed on the teaching force of this province to be more accountable. Evaluation is commonplace in everyday life and exists in all other professions. The aim is to see how educational personnel in all divisions, regardless of classification; replacement, probationary, and tenured feel about evaluation and an evaluation process.

The research procedure would involve interviews and focus groups with teachers. The interviews will be approximately one hour in duration and the time and location will be at the discretion of the interviewee. The interview will be structured with an open response. Structured in the sense that specific questions will be asked, yet, open in the sense that teachers are free to relate any information they feel is pertinent to the study. Participation is strictly voluntary and the teachers reserve the right to refrain from answering any line of questioning that they do not feel comfortable with. The teachers also have the right to opt out of the process any time they so desire. At the conclusion of the study, any interviews recorded will be destroyed to ensure confidentially.

Neither the school board, school, nor individual teachers will be identified in the study. If you require any further information on this subject, or if this does not meet your satisfaction, then I will gladly met any requirements you may have. If you so wish a copy of the thesis will be made available to you to analyze before its submission to the thesis committee.

You consent would consist of a signature on the form attached to this letter. I thank you in advance for your support.

Yours truly,

Gordon Broderick

I _____ give permission is given to Gordon Broderick to conduct a study on the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards evaluation and evaluation procedures as described in his letter to me on September 1,1996. It is the option of the school board to review the study before its final submission to the thesis committee.

_____ _____

Date Signature

P. O. Box 126
Catalina, NF
AOC 1JO

September 1, 1996

Dear Interviewee,

I am requesting your consent to participate in a research project that will be conducted during the fall of 1996 as part of my thesis for the requirements for the Master of Education leadership program at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

The research project is under the supervision of Dr. Clar Doyle of the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland, and is currently under review by the ethics committee. Permission has been granted to conduct this study by Mr. Jones, Superintendent of District X . There will be no identification of individual teachers or the school district in the final document. Complete confidentially of data will be exercised by the researcher.

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards evaluation and evaluation procedures. With the current restructuring of the educational landscape of this province there is pressure to have students achieve higher levels provincially, and nationally. As a result, there is emphasis placed on the teaching force of this province to be more accountable. Evaluation is commonplace in everyday life and exists in all other professions. The aim is to see how educational personnel in all divisions, regardless of classification; replacement, probationary, and tenured feel about evaluation and an evaluation process.

The research procedure would involve your participation in an interview and a focus group session with other teachers. The interviews will be approximately 1 to 11/2 hours in duration, and the time and location will be at your discretion. The interview will be structured with an open response. Structured in the sense that specific questions will be asked, yet, open in the sense you are free to relate any information you feel is relevant and pertinent to the study. With your permission, I would like to record the interview on audio cassette to avoid the task on taking notes during the interview and to eliminate the possibility of losing valuable data. At the conclusion of the study, any interviews recorded will be destroyed to ensure confidentially.

Your participation would be greatly appreciated in this endeavor, however, your participation is voluntary and you reserve the right to refrain from answering any line of questioning you do not feel comfortable with. You will also have the right to opt out of the process any time you so desire. Again, neither the school board, school, nor individual teachers will be identified in the study. If at any time you require further information on this subject, or if this does not meet your satisfaction, then I will gladly met any requirements you may have. If you so wish, a copy of the thesis will be made available to you to analyze before its submission to the thesis committee.

You consent would consist of a signature on the form attached to this letter. Again, I wish to assure you that your participation is voluntary, non-obligatory, confidential and you reserve the right to withdraw at anytime. I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Gordon Broderick

I _____ give permission to Gordon Broderick to conduct an interview on the attitudes and perceptions of educational personnel towards evaluation and evaluation procedures. It is my understanding that no reference will be made to my name in any part of the research process, or any part of the final document. I have the right to review the document before its submission to the thesis committee, and reserve the right to retract any information that I may reveal during the interview process.

_____ _____

Date Signature