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## MODULE SIX

### UNIT TWO

#### The Rationale for Evaluation

##### Introduction

This unit seeks to explain why evaluation is a necessary tool in monitoring school effectiveness. Many school heads do not utilise evaluation as much as they should do. They merely examine students for examination purposes but ignore, for example, the reports of school inspectors. They see examinations as evaluation and consider the exam results as the end of the process. Evaluation involves reviewing the whole school process to find out why certain things have happened or what should be done to improve poor performance. School heads need to be aware that they are accountable not just to the government but to pupils and parents, as well as the community which is served by the school.

Individual study time: 2 hours

##### Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- list reasons for establishing standards of accountability
- identify the main functions of evaluation
- outline the place of evaluation in effective school management.

##### Accountability

The broad aim of formal education is to produce human beings who are able to appreciate the benefits of education and contribute to the development of the community in different spheres of life, be it political, moral, social, economic or technological. Most governments see education as an important investment and therefore devote huge sums of the taxpayers' money each year to the provision of education at all levels. The government spends money on infrastructure, such as school buildings, on the payment of teachers and other personnel, and on the provision of materials. There is therefore a serious need for each government to ensure that the money provided for education is wisely spent.

The government also needs to know that the aims of education are being achieved. It needs to know, through constant evaluation, where there are areas of shortcomings which need to be corrected so that the goals of education can be achieved. In addition, as schools draw their pupils from the community they are accountable to the

community in many ways, including, for example, the kind of curriculum which is being operated, the quality of examination results, and the safety of the children.

We will look further at the various functions in due course but first let us develop our understanding of evaluation as a management tool, building on ideas introduced in Unit 1.

### **Effective school management and administration**

In Unit 1, monitoring and evaluating were identified as important school management functions, necessary for ensuring effective and efficient schools.

#### **Activity 2.1**

- (1) What do you understand by an efficient and effective school?
- (2) What steps should the school head take to ensure efficiency and effectiveness?

10 minutes

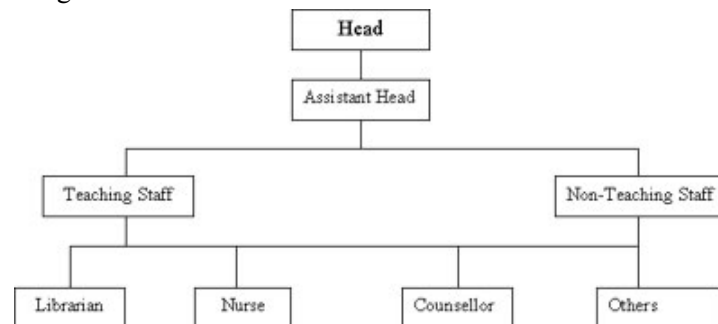
#### **Comments**

This section recalls some of the points made about effective schools in Unit 1 and introduces other issues relating to efficient management and administration. As you read through check whether these notes provide a full list of everything which may contribute to efficient management.

#### **School organisation**

A school is established to give and receive learning. A school that is able to discharge effectively its daily routines is providing value for money. For this to happen, the school should be well planned so that learning can take place in a conducive atmosphere. A pro-active management style is required where planning occurs well in advance of events occurring. An efficient school should have good communication channels for effective administration. The chart in Fig 2 is a model.

Fig 2 School organisation



This simple model shows the hierarchy in the school authority which must be maintained for discipline. A school without discipline cannot be efficient or effective. To each of the offices there are specific duties attached and failure of one officer will affect the effective administration of the school.

**School curriculum**

The head should see that the school calendar is collected from the State Ministry of Education and ensure that all school activities coincide with the school calendar. He or she must see that textbooks, stationery, furniture, games equipment and library books are ready before school resumes. Syllabuses of all the classes must be available and, with the assistance of the assistant head, teachers will be helped to prepare schemes of work.

The head and assistant head should ensure that lesson notes are made daily and that teachers teach according to the lesson notes. Assignments, tests and examinations should be marked and recorded promptly and corrections done where necessary. Teachers should do corrections with their pupils so that they can understand their mistakes. This will help to improve effectiveness in teaching. Making pupils swap their exercise books for marking without their being checked by the teacher is a practice which should only be used occasionally.

**Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)**

The head should ensure that PTA meetings are held at least once a term. It is essential that there is a cordial relationship between parents and teachers for the effective administration of the school. If parents are properly approached they can help in easing some of the financial problems in a school. In many countries PTAs have assisted schools with transportation, building of classrooms, and some have levied themselves to augment the children's feeding.

**Staff meetings**

Staff meetings (of the whole staff, departments and special committees) should be held regularly to review the running of the school. Heads should adopt a democratic system by listening to teachers and understanding their personal and professional concerns.

**School records**

The head should ensure that complete and accurate records, covering pupil and staff records, stock ledgers and registers, and other records which provide a full picture of the life of the school, are kept. It is also necessary for the head to have such records as Time and Movement Books so that absenteeism and irregular movements of staff and school resources can be checked.

**School accounts**

The head should keep proper accounts of income and expenditure and bills and receipts must be accompanied by vouchers. These are required in the auditing of the school accounts as well as promoting the principles and practice of accountability and evaluation in the school. The local government accounting staff will inspect the account books of the school to ensure that votes given to the school are properly spent.

**Inspection records**

The head must keep a record of all inspection reports and discuss these with the staff

so that recommendations with regard to how the system can be improved and developed may be implemented.

### **Activity 2.2**

- (1) Make a list of some essential features you should look for in an inspection report.
- (2) Describe how you presently use inspection records to contribute towards improvements in your school and the mechanisms for implementing change.

20 minutes

### **Comments**

You will probably have included a range of features in your list including observations of lessons which focus on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The important point, which we wish to highlight here, is that inspection records, together with the data contained in various school records and reports, should provide information for the school head which he or she may use as a means of institutionalising changes in schools. If this is done then evaluation and monitoring become major tools for effective management.

Let us now look at the functions of evaluation more closely.

### **Functions of evaluation**

It is through evaluation that we learn to what extent the goals of education are being achieved. It enables us to review the progress of education and to devise new measures for its improvement and development. Four main functions of evaluation can be described.

### **Diagnosis**

You can use evaluation to discover or locate weaknesses in your pupils as to what they do not know. Diagnostic testing will enable you to decide whether some of your pupils need remedial courses or not. Pre-tests given at the beginning of a class are good for determining what the pupils already know and what they do not know. For instance, at the start of an English lesson, you may ask for the meanings of some words to find out if your pupils have come across those words. You may then have to explain the meanings of such words even before the passage is read. This is to facilitate the reading exercise. This is a form of diagnostic evaluation - you have got some information by which you have judged the knowledge of the pupils and finally you have taken action to remedy the situation.

### **Prediction**

Sometimes we give tests to identify the aptitudes and abilities of the pupils. This sort of test is varied so that different types of abilities are catered for. From this test you can predict pupils who are creative, technically or arts oriented and as a teacher you give them exercises that will help develop each individual's interests. The National Examination given in Nigeria to select gifted children is a good example of this.

### **Selection**

Through evaluation we learn where additional and better resources - human, material

and financial - are required. Thus evaluation is used to identify suitable persons for particular courses, jobs, entitlements, etc.

### **Grading**

Evaluation whereby pupils are ranked and graded in order of performance is commonly used in schools. Grading between schools in terms of exam results and other performance criteria provide parents and the public with a measure for choosing which school to send their children to.

### **Evaluation and target setting**

In target setting, you need to have a specific objective (or target) you want to accomplish, a plan as to how you will achieve that target and then evaluation procedures to indicate whether it has been achieved.

For example, you may have many underqualified teachers in your school, who can adversely affect the quality of education. You may decide you need to enable them to obtain training, through upgrading. You will need to set a time limit for this upgrading programme and also decide what method of upgrading will be immediately useful. After setting the time target for the upgrading, you will need to plan your approach. As teachers on the job, their upgrading programme has to be an in-service course. You then need to decide how many of them should go for Sandwich Programmes held during the holidays and how many of them could be upgraded using a Distance Learning Programme, such as has been provided in Nigeria by the National Teachers' Institute (the NTI). The final step in the process is to decide on criteria for evaluating whether the objective has been achieved - and to ensure that the results of any evaluation are utilised to plan the next development.

### ***Activity 2.3***

Can you provide examples of ways in which the neglect of evaluation reports has hindered the development of effective teaching and learning in your school?

10 minutes

### **Comments**

You may be able to cite examples of evaluations of projects undertaken with particular goals, for example improving the quantity and quality of food in your school, repairing damaged furniture, improving discipline, etc. When actions are not taken as recommended in evaluation reports then there is unlikely to be any improvement and the quality of teaching might be affected. You might like to reflect on why evaluation reports are so often ignored, before turning to the next short activity.

### ***Activity 2.4***

(1) What problems have you encountered within your school in trying to implement changes recommended by school inspectors?

(2) What problems have you encountered in getting the Local Government Authority (or District Education Office) to improve your school as a result of recommendations made by school inspectors?

10 minutes

### **Comments**

Problems in improving the school might be due to some of the following factors:

- failure to communicate and share recommendations with those who need to know
- failure on the part of the Ministry's officials to act
- financial and resource constraints
- inexperience in how to set about using the recommendations to implement changes
- lack of organisation in the school to enable the implementation of the recommendations
- mistrust of the value and accuracy of the evaluation reports.

The last point is important. Often the quality of information available through evaluation exercises is rather questionable and subsequent units will explore this issue further.

### **Summary**

In this unit you have studied the reasons why monitoring and evaluation are essential characteristics of effective school management. The major functions of evaluation have been identified. These fall into two main categories: evaluation to assess the extent to which goals are being achieved in order to improve performance; and evaluation for accountability purposes, in order to justify performance to others. Evaluation is about asking questions and gathering information, and attention has been drawn to both the quantity and quality of information which the school head needs in order to help improve school effectiveness.

### **Self-evaluation exercise**

Imagine you are an inspector of schools. Write an inspection report on your evaluation of a particular school in your locality, perhaps your own!

You could select one of the following points for particular attention: learning conditions, discipline, channels of communication, school administration, supervision by the school heads, record-keeping, involvement of PTA or staff meetings.

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