

Rating Scale for Teachers

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The Rating Scale (see below) used in this study has been used for a number of years by the College of Agriculture and the Department of Chemistry at Oklahoma State University. The scale has been utilized several times by the Department of Chemistry in an attempt to improve the quality of instruction in chemistry. This is a report of one instance of use.

For present purposes, the scale was administered to classes in beginning chemistry with the teaching assistant absent. The students were asked to check the point on each line which best described the behavior of the teaching assistant. In addition they were told, "When you have completed the front page, turn the sheet over and write as you choose, enlarging upon and adding to the material on the front. Use your own honest judgment." Scales were filled out by all students in beginning chemistry at the end of the first semester, 8 and 9 January 1964. These became a part of the data for this study.

It must be recognized that the items on the lines are not "scalable" (Sherif and Sherif, 1956), not necessarily equal, and, for some respondents, do not even represent a continuum. More precisely, these are *ordinal* and not *interval* scales (Van Dalen, 1962). This necessitates an analysis that does not involve a mean. The procedure used was to establish a breakpoint—to divide the scales into two parts: those positive for acceptable teaching behavior, and those items generally indicative of poor teaching.

This division called for subjective judgment as to what is proper teaching behavior. Thirteen individuals were asked to divide the scales subjectively: four were undergraduates, two were graduate students, two were teaching assistants participating in this research, and four were chemistry staff members. Their common judgment was then used to determine the breakpoints; if there was a divergence of opinion, the most plausible breakpoint was located subjectively.

The breakpoints were placed at the division point between scale positions 2 and 3 for scales numbered 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, and 15; and between scale positions 3 and 4 for scales numbered 1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 13, and 14 through 20.

Next, student ratings for each assistant were summarized. If 10% of the responses were below the breakpoint, the item was listed as a *problem* for that teacher. If 25% of the responses were below the breakpoint, the item was marked as a *major problem*.

Material from the back of the rating scale form (elicited from students asked to enlarge upon or add to the material on the scale) was analyzed by using a type of item analysis similar to procedures used in anthropology and called "Participant Observation" (Becker and Geer, 1960). Essentially the adaptation of this procedure consisted of listing the students' statements in their own words. Usually, the first occurrence of a statement was generalized; subsequent recurrences were coded as duplications of the first whenever meanings seemed to overlap. A count was made of the total number making each response. When summaries were developed for a total group of teachers, the problems were reanalyzed and similar statements combined. The importance of the problems was determined by the number of students voicing the criticism.

The positive criticisms (favorable responses) found in the written comment on the back of the forms were classified as criteria for proper teaching behavior from the student viewpoint.

RATING SCALE FOR TEACHERS

Please rate your instructor as to each of the points named below. It is necessary in each case merely to circle the number at that point on the line which seems to be most accurate.

Please make this rating conscientiously and individually. Your instructor will receive only the final summary of the results from the class as a whole. He will use them for self-improvement in teaching.

Do not sign your name or make any other mark which might serve to identify you.

1. PREPARATION FOR CLASS MEETINGS.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Class meetings very carefully planned | Usually well prepared | Preparation often inadequate | Little preparation | No preparation |

2. TEACHER'S INTEREST AND ENTHUSIASM IN SUBJECT.

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Very enthusiastic and interested | Frequently shows enthusiasm | Only mildly interested | Very seldom shows enthusiasm | Subject irksome to him |

3. ABILITY TO AROUSE INTEREST IN STUDENTS.

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Interest usually runs high | Students frequently show interest | Students occasionally show interest | Students seldom interested | Majority inattentive most of period |

4. ORGANIZATION OF COURSE.

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Every lesson well organized | Most lessons well organized | Some organization but not always clear | Very little organization | No organization |

5. THINKING DEMANDED OF STUDENTS.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Thinking always necessary | Work demands much thinking | Some thinking required | Very little thinking required | No thinking required |

6. ASSIGNMENTS.

| | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Clear and definite | Carefully given but indefinite | Definite; often hurriedly given | Rather indefinite and often hurriedly given | Very indefinite; usually hurriedly given |

7. SENSE OF PROPORTION.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Stresses fundamental topics, disregards trivial details | Spends most of time on important topics, stresses few details | Stresses important topics and details equally | Spends more time on details than on important topics | Often neglects subject for other irrelevant topics |

8. ENUNCIATION.

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|---|--|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Speaks very clearly and distinctly | Distinct but not loud enough at times | Loud enough but not distinct | Words sometimes indistinct and not easy to hear | Words very indistinct often impossible to hear |

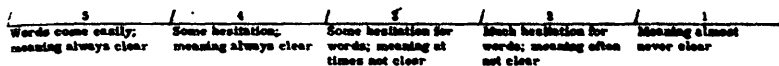
9. SENSE OF HUMOR.

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Has been scarce of humor | Frequently shows real humor | Humor occasionally, but not often exhibited | Manifests little or no humor | Humor obviously not spontaneous |

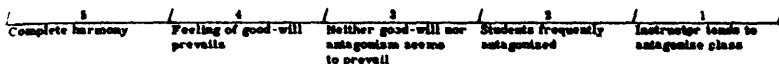
10. SCHOLARSHIP.

| | | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Knowledge of subject broad and accurate | Knows appreciably more than is in text | Knowledge limited to text material | Knowledge apparently deficient at times | Knowledge very plainly deficient |

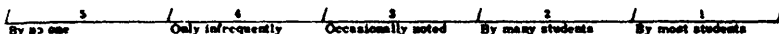
11. ABILITY TO EXPRESS THOUGHT.



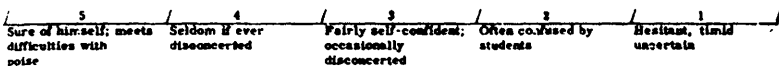
12. FEELING BETWEEN INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENTS.



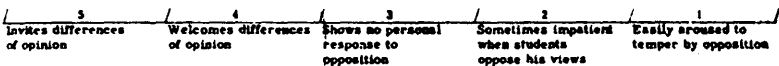
13. PREVALENCE OF CHEATING ON EXAMINATIONS.



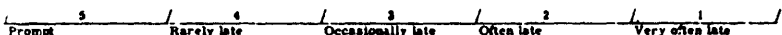
14. SELF-CONFIDENCE



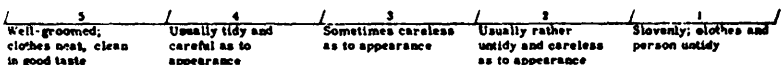
15. TOLERANCE AND LIBERALITY.



16. PUNCTUALITY IN MEETING AND DISMISSING CLASSES.



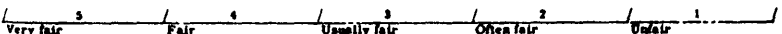
17. PERSONAL APPEARANCE.



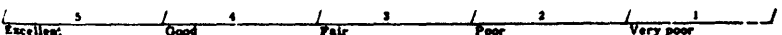
18. PERSONAL PECULIARITIES.



19. FAIRNESS IN GRADING.



20. GENERAL ESTIMATE OF INSTRUCTOR AS A TEACHER.



Since the problems mentioned on the back of the sheet were recalled by the students without any clues, it appeared that such material was more credible than that derived from the structured scales. Because of this, all problems from the back of the sheet were listed as *problems* for a particular assistant when 1% of his students mentioned them.

A summary was made of the major and minor problems from the rating scale for assistants teaching chemistry at Oklahoma State University for the year 1961-1962 and again for the year 1963-1964. On the rating scales for the first year, the most major and minor problems were:

(1) Lack of preparation for class

(4) Lack of class organization

(11) Much hesitation or meanings not clear—inability to express thought.

- (13) Prevalence of cheating on examinations
- (18) Personal peculiarities that distract
- (19) Fairness in grading

For teaching assistants in the year 1963-1964, the most major and minor problems were:

- (2) Lack of interest and enthusiasm in subject
- (11) Lack of ability to express thought
- (18) Distracting personal mannerisms.

No indication was apparent concerning the reason for this shift in problems.

The following problems were mentioned on the back of the forms by 1% of the students and, therefore, were considered problems:

Does not answer students' questions

Distracts students with mannerisms and speech difficulties

Unsure of self—lacks confidence

Does not have the interest of students at heart

Talks over heads of students—goes into detail too much

Presents material not relevant to course—lack of correlation with lecture

Shows favoritism

Lack of respect of students

In the 1963-1964 study, the following five problems were the most important student comments on the back of the scales:

Meanings not clear—does not explain fully

Unsatisfactory communication techniques — enunciation poor, low speaking voice, handwriting poor

Lacks confidence, appears shy

Inability to arouse interest in students or shows an impersonal attitude

Talks over heads of students

Though the methods of compilation of these two sets of problems were slightly different, it will be noted that five were included for both years.

This study represents an attempt to systematize the analysis of data collected by an instrument which might be used for the improvement of college teaching. The seriousness, objectivity, and insight of the students were impressive. Compared with other sources of data gathered at the same time, responses showed high validity concerning classroom behavior of instructors.

LITERATURE CITED

- Becker, Howard S. and Blanche Geer. 1960. Participant observation, an analysis of qualitative field data. In: R. N. Adams and J. J. Pries (ed). *Human Organization Research*. Dorsey Press, Homewood, Ill p 266-289.

- Sherif, Muzafer and Carolyn W. Sherif. 1956. *An Outline of Social Psychology*. Harper and Bros., New York. p. 520.
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- Wall, Ephraim. 1964. A preliminary report on the identification of instructional problems of teaching assistants in Chemistry which might be met with a training program. *Proc. Okla. Acad. Sci.* 44:185-188.