THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOLING AND OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

MONOGRAPH N° 4

THE ROLE OF EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL AND A MEANS OF IMPROVING EFFECTIVENESS AT SCHOOL AND LOCAL AUTHORITY LEVELS

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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In the context of the activity on the Effectiveness of Schooling and of Educational Resource Management, the Secretariat has invited a number of experts to prepare reports on the areas of interest highlighted in the Framework for the preparation of country reports (SME/ET/90.28).

The attached report discusses the role of evaluation and accountability as a management tool and a means of improving effectiveness at school and local authority levels. It has been written by Mr. Jean Aubégy, of the Mission for Training National Education Personnel in the Orléans-Tours academic region of France, in his capacity as consultant to the Secretariat. The opinions expressed are those of the author and they do not necessarily reflect those of the Organisation or of the national authorities concerned. The report was discussed at a meeting of experts held in Paris on 15-16 July 1991.

This report is being circulated for INFORMATION at the meeting of national representatives and experts to be held in Paris on 9th and 10th December 1991.
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Preface

The subject of this study is "The role of evaluation and accountability as a management tool and a means of improving effectiveness at school and local authority levels".

In our study of this subject, we propose to begin, in the introduction, by defining the conceptual references and notions which we believe necessary if evaluation and accountability are to be used as effective management tools.

Moving on from that introduction, and drawing on our particular experience of the French educational system, we shall show how the evaluation of schools fits in to an existing educational system. The description of this evaluation praxis will enable us to arrive at a first analysis of the characteristics of any such evaluation and of the problems which it reveals or creates. It will also lead us on to the definition of a number of prerequisites which must be met to enhance the relevance and efficiency of this praxis.

In part Two, we shall describe the ways and means that seem to us the most appropriate for an assessment of an existing process of school evaluation. Using four main inputs:

-- evaluation of the autonomy of the establishment (strategic level);
-- choice of objectives of evaluation (tactical level);
-- determination of decision-making levels and structures (management system);
-- methodologies used (operational level).

We shall attempt to establish an experimental framework.
Introduction

Good management is impossible without adequate and reliable information on the way in which the system concerned functions. One role of evaluation may be to obtain that information and present it in such a way that it can be used by decision-makers.

To generate such information, prior agreement must be reached on the concepts of effectiveness and efficiency. We shall then go on to define the areas covered by evaluation and decision-making. That will pave the way for a more precise approach to the main categories of factors to be included in the evaluation of a school. We shall then attempt to define the decision-making procedures and the decision-making levels and structures in the schools and local authorities. Finally, for the actual implementation of the evaluation, a choice must be made between the available models of evaluation as a function of the factors to be evaluated and the times at which that evaluation is made.

Effectiveness and efficiency

It is essential to define, in this introduction, one of the key terms used in our study, i.e. the concept of effectiveness. A precise definition must be accompanied by the further definition of another semantically related term, i.e. efficiency. The UN Evaluation Lexicon provides a good approach to these two terms through the following definitions.

Effectiveness is the extent to which an activity, project or programme attains the objectives assigned to it. Efficiency is the measurement of the return of an activity for a given cost or input. It thus represents the productivity of the process of implementation, i.e. the effectiveness with which the inputs are converted into outcomes. The notion of productivity could, however, be excluded from the second definition. We may then propose the following formulation: "efficiency means the attainment of objectives at minimum cost (or at a lower cost)".

These two definitions permit a more precise approach to the problem posed here: we need to know not only whether the objectives have been attained, but also under what conditions, and how they have been so attained. The question as to the characteristics of the outcome measured against the intentions and norms defined or laid down, is thus of necessity accompanied by a further question as to the processes by which that outcome is arrived at.

The spheres of evaluation and decision-making

In addition, the need to take account of these two main categories of objects of evaluation (the processes and the outcomes) leads us on to a
definition of the main areas covered by the evaluation and the decision-making process which is inherent in it. Here we shall refer to the model developed by D.L. Stufflebeam. This author draws a distinction between four areas or phases which permit a generic definition of the factors to be evaluated when the workings of an organization or of an institution are studied through the implementation of an action programme. These areas are:

-- evaluation of the context;
-- evaluation of the input;
-- evaluation of the process;
-- evaluation of the outcome.

Evaluation of the context sets out, through a detailed diagnosis of the immediate and broader environment, the problems and the needs ... to determine the targets and objectives to be pursued (changes to be made). It emerges onto planning decisions.

What planning operations are performed by schools and local authorities? On what basis and how are they initiated? That is the crux of the problem of planning at micro-local and local levels, with the underlying question of the relationship between planning and decision-making always in the background. What information do the schools have on their immediate and broader (socio-economic and institutional) environment? How is such information perceived in relation to the background, history (roots) and the educational policy of the establishment? In other words, what values and norms will shape the attitudes and development of the school and its educational efficiency in the medium and long term?

The purpose of evaluation of the input is to determine possible lines of action as a function of the potential of the system which is envisaged and of possible strategies. It thus seeks to identify and assess potential resources and suitable patterns of implementation adapted to local conditions. It does of course depend on the normative decisions taken after the contextual evaluation which is the previous step. It entails decisions on the structure of action and appropriate strategies. In addition to the precise identification of the inputs, one of the fundamental questions which arises here is that of the authority to decide on the quantity and quality (characteristics) of these inputs. In some countries "desectorization", i.e. the lack of catchment areas (choice of school left to the discretion of the families themselves), makes this topic particularly relevant.

Process evaluation amounts in fact to ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the action programmes in their operational phase. That evaluation enables improvements and adjustments, which could not be foreseen at the preparatory phase, to be made to these action programmes.

In terms of methodology, process evaluation is beyond any doubt the type of evaluation which raises the most delicate problems. It may be approached in several different ways, each of which has an interest and pertinence of its own. It may for example take as its inputs the main operational dimensions of a school establishment:

-- the social environment of the school;
-- relations between the school and its institutional and political partners;
-- the quality of the teaching and professional work;
-- the conditions of internal organization (communication, living environment);
-- administrative and financial management.

This procedure entails the risk of a check list of questions whose relevance and completeness may always be questioned.

An analysis by major functions may also be chosen and might perhaps permit a more refined approach to the processes that are actually implemented. We shall therefore consider the following:

-- the political function: guidelines, general planning, coordination, coherence, conformity, results of the action;
-- the administrative function: information, general management, technical advice, control of actions;
-- the function of evaluation and internal monitoring: determination and follow-up of criteria and indicators;
-- the educational and pedagogical function: quality of the educational climate and services provided, educational efficiency.

Associated with precise observation of the activities pursued in the schools to enable those activities to be updated, this procedure is similar to that of the functional audit and seems more appropriate for a precise identification of the processes actually implemented. It does, however, raise the question of the way in which these different functions fit together and are handled by the different categories of actors or sub-systems involved in the functioning of the school.

Finally, the outcome of evaluation involves measurement and interpretation of the effects of the action programmes. It will lead to decisions on the continuation, modification, redesign or non-renewal of such programmes.

This evaluation refers directly back to the norms and values which underlie the educational action and the objectives pursued. Effectiveness will be first and foremost a socio-political consideration, coloured by the individual situation and referring back to values such as the training of autonomous and responsible citizens, concern for justice and equality or else to cognitive and methodological aptitudes and skills. All these different factors may be combined to varying degrees, depending on the particular educational system under consideration. At this level, the questions must therefore remain very open. They must, in particular, permit a precise identification of the nature of the outcomes sought as a function of the systems of reference, in other words the exact nature of the effectiveness which is aimed at. Here again, the question of the criteria and indicators used is particularly important.
A general model of the functioning of the school and of its evaluation

Following the presentation of, and comments on, Stufflebeam’s approach, we shall move on to propose a general model of the functioning of a school and of their evaluation based on five main criteria relating to pertinence, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and outcomes (or results or effects). This model reveals the role of the evaluation as it affects the functioning of the school and the conditions for its effectiveness and efficiency as a management tool.

General description of the workings of the school and of their evaluation

This description can be approached through three key questions:

-- What does the school do? That question concerns the context and the inputs and refers first of all to the pertinence of its activities.

-- How does it do this? That question deals with the processes and refers to the coherence of the school’s activities.

-- What has it achieved? That question relates to the outcomes and concerns effectiveness (% of objectives attained) and efficiency (ratio of resources to outcomes); the latter point involves all the processes which come into play.
The main categories of objects of evaluation

Regardless of whether the school is considered from the angle of its principal dimensions, Stufflebeam's decision-making pattern or what is known as the functional approach, it is possible to agree, taking this general model of the workings of the school as our base, that the major categories of factors on which information must be gathered (here we have analyzed a wide sample of current practices and highlighted the constant factors), must cover:

-- the environment: institutional control, working norms and procedures, general and local social needs, outlets for pupils;

-- workings of the school: strategies pursued, living and working climate;

-- teaching and learning: entrance level, evaluation of the lessons, quality of the learning;

-- overall administration: management and allocation of resources;

-- pedagogical administration: monitoring the progress of pupils, revision of the lessons;

-- the syllabus: social relevance, effectiveness;

-- the teaching system: compulsory and optional lessons;

-- the pupil: evolution of the clienteles, educational needs, satisfaction of those needs;

-- staff: teachers, ancillary staff, initial and in-service training;

-- services: quality and effectiveness, needs of users, workings.

A decisional typology

After defining the questions relating to the evaluation areas and factors, we must now outline a framework enabling decisions on the information which has been gathered to be categorized. D.L. Stufflebeam proposes such a framework comprising four main types corresponding to the four areas set out previously. He distinguishes between:

-- Planning decisions which point to the major changes to be made. These decisions consist in determining guidelines and objectives to be pursued: the aims and objectives of the action are the issue here.

-- Structural decisions which involve operational strategy: this is the development of a programme of operations.
implementation decisions concerning the effective realization of the
programme, procedures, follow-up, monitoring and refinement of the
operations as a function of the contingencies encountered.

decisions of interpretation and revitalization which seek to evaluate
the observable results and determine whether the operations should be
continued, revitalized or abandoned.

From a different perspective, Guba and Lincoln place the emphasis on
collaboration and negotiation. They thus maintain that all the parties
concerned must take part in the decision-making process and not simply the
managers or "deciders". In the opinion of these authors, evaluation is thus
associated first and foremost with explanation and description, rather than
with laying down criteria. Like Naisbitt, they view the social interest of
evaluation as a means of generating, recognizing and promoting new values in a
context of "participative democracy" in which the institutional actors of the
school will be closely associated with the actors of the environment in which
that school is situated.

It would be inappropriate here to seek to determine the a priori value
of one or other of these approaches per se. We shall simply posit the
hypothesis that the validity of any one of them will clearly depend on a prior
analysis of the context and nature of the factors to be evaluated.

Decision-making structures

Consideration of the decision-making operations must be accompanied by
an identification of the decision-making structures. At least two types of
structure can be defined:

-- permanent or "formal" structures, by which we understand
institutional bodies and groups defined by statutory provisions;

-- temporary or "informal" structures, i.e. temporary bodies of one kind
or another created to meet short term needs for the implementation
and control of a project or policy.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the school must be judged in part by
the degree of synergy between these structures and the functions and tasks for
which they are responsible in the light of the types of effectiveness which are
sought. Effectiveness may be of the following types:

-- homeostatic (seeking an equilibrium);
-- gradual (slow and structured changes);
-- metamorphic (radical transformations);
-- neo-mobilistic (innovation).

The two principal evaluation paradigms

We shall conclude this introduction by looking at the models, methods
and techniques of evaluation to be implemented with a view to the use of
evaluation and accountability as a management tool and a means of improving
quality. This a central question, since the potential value of the contribution which an evaluation may make to the management process depends in no small measure on the ability of the structures established to handle and deal with the complexity of a real life situation through the plurality of information, reference frameworks and values which it involves, i.e. in particular on their ability to propose and implement approaches that respect at one and the same time the need to explain the real situation and the complementary need to interpret that situation so as to facilitate management and/or the desired changes.

Broadly speaking, a distinction can be drawn between two main approaches: the elementalist approach based first and foremost on a logic of facts, and the holistic approach which centres primarily on value considerations through an overview which structures and establishes links between different meanings and tries to take account of all the interactions between them. That approach of the clinical type is governed by time factors whereas the former is related to space.

Each of these approaches requires its own specific form of implementation. In the elementalist, or formalistic approach, the evaluation will take the form of an expert report; whether or not the latter carries conviction will depend on the internal validity of the methodology used. The holistic or naturalistic approach will be based on a logic of consultation and negotiation of decisions; the process focusses on a concern for external validity.

The formalistic approach or paradigm views evaluation as an instrument of planned research by means of which data is obtained, analyzed and summarized so as to make it useful to, and usable by, the decision-maker. The guidelines for the evaluation are thus determined at the outset by identifying the successive phases of the work in a clear and precise manner. Use is made first and foremost of quantitative methods and standardized instruments. The formalistic evaluation may be summarized in broad outline as follows:

-- a predetermined model with precise stages;
-- centring on the targets of the project or programme;
-- in the service of decision-makers;
-- precision and objectivity;
-- objective data gathering techniques;
-- standardized measurement instruments;
-- statistical analyses;
-- formal evaluation report;
-- formal communication.

The best known models of this paradigm are those of Tyler (attainment of objectives), Stake (internal/external judgement) and Stufflebeam, Provus and Alkin (decision-making).

The naturalistic paradigm for its part treats evaluation as a process which cannot be planned in advance since it emerges from a given situation. The emphasis is placed on problem areas, controversies and points of friction encountered by the different "target audiences". Rather than gathering data, this paradigm involves the acquisition of points of view which are compared in
a pluralistic interpretation of the situation or institution under review. The naturalistic approach tends to make use of case studies and qualitative methods without systematically rejecting more quantitative approaches. The evaluator does not remain aloof from the subject of his evaluation.

The characteristics of this approach can be summarized as follows:

-- the model emerges from situations and changes as a function of events which occur;
-- its pattern is flexible and negotiable at any stage;
-- it centres on the activities of the organization;
-- value and social utility;
-- non-reactive, historical, global approach;
-- minimum constraints on the subjects or situations;
-- sensitivity to the different value systems of participants;
-- minimum constraints on the behaviour pattern of subjects;
-- informal, ongoing communication;
-- techniques for gathering data in the field;
-- the main instrument is the human being;
-- non-technical reporting.

The best known model of this paradigm is that drawn up by Guba and Lincoln, known as the conjunctural model.

Interest and scope of these models

In practice, however, things are not so clear-cut and a mixed approach often proves the most pertinent if effectiveness and social utility, rather than "scientific truth", are the primary aim. It is nonetheless true that, in terms of dominants, the question of what J. Cardinet calls "the right connection", i.e. the choice of the "way in which the author believes he can discover reality" cannot be avoided. The issue of the use of evaluation as a management tool and a means of improving effectiveness is closely bound up with that of the degree of its integration into the general workings of the school as one of its intrinsic components, or alternatively into a concept which views evaluation as a technology or an external procedure.

Is it possible to interpret and manage social reality through a purely objective approach (detection of regular relations between phenomena and formulation of laws)? Should we not also take account of the fact that this rationality is necessarily limited by the realization that human beings react less to facts than to the meanings which they ascribe to those facts?

Evaluation viewed as a systemic approach which combines these two paradigms may perhaps be one way of breaking out from the apparent incompatibility of these two models, since its interactive orientation enables account to be taken of the consensual and conflictual factors which are inherent in any social action construct. Ideally, an evaluation of this kind could be effected only by multi-disciplinary teams comprising educators, administrators, sociologists, psychologists, economists etc.
Part One

An Approach to Existing Practices and to the Conditions to Improve Efficiency

A research project on which we are currently engaged for the French Ministry of National Education (Directorate for Secondary Schools) may provide a useful point of reference to illustrate, through one precise (if limited) example, the questions and problems raised by evaluation and accountability as a management tool and a means of improving the effectiveness of schools and local authorities.

Taking that example as our point of departure, we shall seek to:

-- describe the measures which have been taken in practice;

-- analyze the different types of data and results which we have already managed to gather;

-- define, on the basis of this example and the theoretical and conceptual references outlined in our introduction, the conditions and parameters to be taken into account in the construction of a questionnaire structure capable of answering the question posed by this study.

A. Description of the research resources used

Suitability and strategy

The school itself lies at the origin of the production of a very substantial part of the information used to guide the educational system, but not necessarily to guide its own strategy.

If evaluation is seen as a management tool, it must be designed and practised as an integral part of the workings of the school itself.

Evaluation and accountability must be viewed as complementary sources of knowledge which help to guide and develop educational efficiency.

Starting out from the general assumption that evaluation is a factor in the service of development when it forms part of the system of strategic guidance of the school, this research sets itself the target of studying the place, role and procedures for the implementation of the evaluation in the schools themselves.
Such an evaluation cannot be envisaged outside the limits of a precise approach to what we shall call the evaluation reference framework for the schools, drawn up by the local and regional educational authorities in the context of the existing policy for a school project.

Practical implementation

The research methodology is as follows:

-- reasoned inventory of the internal evaluation practices of the schools belonging to an academic region (enquiry questionnaire addressed to all the schools);

-- description and analysis of the innovative evaluation practices after a more detailed study of the information supplied by the survey questionnaire;

-- recording the aspects of the internal evaluation which the establishments wish to explore further or put into practice;

-- formulation, on the basis of this data, of the needs and expectations of the schools;

-- proposal of new measures of aid, support and training, with a view to increasing the educational efficiency of the establishments.

The general working principle adopted is that of a close association, around the research team, of the members of the academic regional group set up to assist the school project (sixty or so persons representing the different categories of staff employed by the schools).

Questionnaire structure

This centres on eight main inputs:

-- objectives of the internal evaluation (for what purpose?)

-- areas of the internal evaluation (with what aspects does the evaluation deal?)

-- approaches, methods and evaluation tools used (how?)

-- nature of the outcomes;

-- initiative and responsibility for the evaluation praxis;

-- practitioners and partners in the evaluation (with whom?)

-- addressees of the evaluation (with whom?)

-- resources for the evaluation praxis.
For each of these main questions, a check list of items drawn up during an initial survey was supplied. By way of illustration, the items proposed for the question dealing with the objectives of the internal evaluation and the other questions posed in this heading, are set out below.

**Objectives of the internal evaluation (for whom?)**

1) What are the five essential objectives that you assign to the internal evaluation of your school? (Mark 1 in the box of your first choice, 2 in the box of your second choice -- up to five)

- assistance with the drafting of a school project: 1
- integration of the school into its environment: 2
- optimization of the resources of the establishment: 3
- formation of functional teams: 4
- improvement of the internal climate of the establishment: 5
- assistance with management and guidance of the school project: 6
- obtaining additional resources in the context of contractual relations: 7
- information on the situation of your school in relation to academic regional and national objectives: 8
- obtaining information on the movements of pupils and success in examinations: 9
- improvement of internal and external communication: A
- other (please number...and name them): B

2) Does an internal "evaluation plan" exist in your school? (Mark the appropriate box)

   YES  1   NO  2

2a If YES, please describe briefly:

3) Does the internal evaluation conducted in your school currently meet the targets that you have assigned to it? (Mark the appropriate box...)

   YES  1   PARTLY  2   NO  3

3a If you have answered PARTLY or NO, what are the shortcomings or imperfections? Please name not more than three:

- 
- 
-
B. Analysis of the available data and results

A few general observations

This survey was not so much intended to describe the current state of evaluation praxis in schools as to analyze the role of evaluation as a management tool. Although, on the whole, the survey broadly reflects a desire to respect the values and norms laid down by the direct supervisory authorities (local or regional education authorities), it also brings to light a significant under-utilization of the margins of autonomy enjoyed by schools in regard to their educational policy; that fact can be attributed in large measure to a widespread under-development of the use of evaluation techniques in schools (which prefer to stick to established patterns of behaviour and lack the relevant know-how and evaluation expertise). A clear difference of perception exists between teachers and the school management on the desirability and implications of the transition from a policy of identical action for all to a policy of individual identity in which the exercise of autonomy is associated with a more detailed and sustained consideration of features specific to the local environment. There is also a lack of any systemic perception of the new decision-making context (links between the school, the local political supervisory body and institutional governance). In other words, the schools still operate and perceive themselves as essentially administrative entities, rather than as sub-systems of a complex whole with which they find it hard to establish a relationship. The sociological model of the 1970s often remains the theoretical reference which justifies continuing inertia at a time when the laws on decentralization have opened up possibilities for change. In this general context, academic regional policies for the continuing training of personnel and a new approach to communication would seem at present to be the most pertinent forms of action to instil more dynamic attitudes.

Brief analysis of the main points of the questionnaire

The objectives

Evaluation implemented by the schools themselves is designed essentially to attain the following objectives:

-- optimization of the resources of the school;
-- assistance with the development of a project for the school;
-- aid with project management and guidance.

This questionnaire was generally answered by the school headmasters.

Factors evaluated

Evaluation centres on outcomes; this results in a serious lack of information on the workings of the processes and changes under way in the schools. Items receiving particular attention include:

-- the evolution of pupil guidance systems;
-- the evolution of percentages of pupils moving up to a higher class at
the end of the year;
-- success in examinations.

**Approaches and tools**

In answer to the question as to the type of approach which should be
given priority, an overwhelming preference is expressed for a mixed approach.
But analysis of the replies dealing with the precise research resources chosen,
shows a strong emphasis on the quantitative approach: monitoring cohorts of
pupils, statistics.

Finally, a small minority of schools indicate that they already have an
"evaluation plan".

**Nature of the outcomes**

The outcomes to which the evaluation gives rise vary widely:
statistical data -- studies of cohorts of pupils -- information days for
parents and partners -- reports on meetings, with lists of conclusions --
school brochures -- lists of indicators ... There can be no doubt that
regionalization and the abolition of fixed catchment areas are encouraging
schools to develop more elaborate strategies for internal and external
communication, in the absence of genuine evaluation plans.

**Initiative and responsibility for internal evaluation praxis**

The questionnaire dealt with three aspects:

-- who (persons or bodies) determines the evaluation targets?
-- who (persons or bodies) determines the factors to be evaluated?
-- who (persons or bodies) determines the procedures and resources to be
deployed?

The answers to these three questions bring to light the preponderant
role of the headmaster whose proposals are generally endorsed by the board of
governors of the school.

The whole system is based on a consensus -- sometimes explicit -- to the
effect that this matter is the specific responsibility of the headmaster who,
in his turn, tends not to intervene to influence pedagogical initiatives and
practices in the strict sense of the term, the assessment of those practices
being considered (although this is a distortion of the relevant statutory
texts) as a matter falling under the authority of the school inspectors: the
board of governors is merely "informed" ("Having regard to their specific
nature and technicality, decisions on this matter fall within the terms of
reference of teachers who must inform the other members of the community on the
way in which pedagogical practices help to attain the defined objectives" --
This also means that evaluation of personnel, especially teaching staff, remains extremely formal and infrequent. For some years now, continuing training courses have in effect become the main venue for an (informal) evaluation of the practices and aptitudes of personnel, through the explanations, exchanges of views and analyses to which they give rise. This phenomenon, among others which we shall not be looking at in this paper, has certainly contributed to the current process of redefinition of the functions of the school inspectorate, especially those involving the assessment of teachers.

There is, however, a tendency now to set up "evaluation committees" when the need arises to define a policy specific to the individual school (this is the case with many vocational secondary schools whose very survival hinges on such a policy).

Practitioners and partners in the evaluation (with whom?)

The need here was to determine who was actually involved in the implementation of the evaluation praxis in the school. The answers are as follows:

-- an educational team and pedagogical teams: in all cases;
-- pupils: sometimes;
-- parents: sometimes;
-- elected local councillors: sometimes.

The interviews designed to seek further information will enable the nature of this involvement to be clarified (areas concerned, nature of decisions and authority to take them). As we have seen above, all these activities function in the context of the permanent statutory bodies (board of governors, standing committee, teaching council, class council), but only a very small minority of schools have established a specific evaluation body vested with methodological responsibility and charged with the task of coordinating all the data produced by the school.

Addressees of the evaluation (for whom?)

No general trend emerges other than the expressed intention of circulating the information to the largest possible number of partners and actors. This point clearly highlights the need to coordinate an "evaluation plan" with a policy of communication inside and outside the school establishment. The planned phase of interviews to obtain fuller information will once again enable knowledge of the workings of the system to be refined, with particular reference to the nature and form of the information circulated, depending on the audience involved.

Resources of internal evaluation

Nine items were indicated: co-training by an accompanying colleague -- training (at academic region or national level) -- consultation of the academic regional group assisting the school project -- a "school activities" academic
region team -- the CRDP-CDDP network -- an academic region "project" cell -- a "school activities" team for the "département" -- the school inspectorate -- various sources in published literature -- other....

Of these different items, miscellaneous reading matter -- co-training by accompanying colleagues -- training -- and the "school activities" team at the level of the "département" are those which appear most frequently.

The main resources to be developed are the following:

-- training (at academic region, "département" and national level);
-- information tools: news letters, statistics, achievement lists...;
-- the role of school inspectors;
-- external consultancy: participative audit, resource persons.

An analysis of these replies shows that the schools on the whole feel that they are not receiving enough help in responding to the problems which the practice of evaluation raises for them.

The supervisory authority and its reference framework for evaluation

A study currently being conducted by the General Inspectorate of National Education and circulated at the level of the rectorates of the academic regions, defines in six points the reference framework for evaluation of schools and of their projects. The value of this study which aims, through a policy for individual school projects, to effectively develop the educational efficiency of the schools, lies in the fact that it summarizes all the institutional expectations in regard to the workings of school establishments. This reference framework is already being brought into use at local and regional level through the creation of "academic regional cells" whose membership and working methods are left to the initiative of the rectors and resident academic regional inspectors.

This evaluation reference framework is characterized by an endeavour to promote micro-local initiatives (in the schools), while guaranteeing the national coherence of the action (the notion of public service). Its novelty and potential contribution to change reside in a desire to reconcile the instructions (each of its six points comprises the verb "must") and the implementing process (allowing for time, the environment, knowledge and expertise).

The study is outlined briefly below:

i) What must the school project respect?

-- national targets and programmes;
-- targets and guidelines of the academic regional project;
-- the general principles and statutory provisions governing the public education service.
ii) What must its aims be?

-- to make its contribution to the attainment of the national success targets while taking account of the diversity of the school population and teaching situations;
-- the definition of a strategy;
-- the expression of the expectations and collective wishes of a particular community, thus highlighting shared values;
-- to lead on to a definition of targets and a stable strategy open onto the environment.

iii) What must it include?

-- the pedagogical project;
-- relations with the environment;
-- structures, methods and contents personnel training;
-- the launching of clear ideas, capable of significantly improving the workings of the public service.

iv) How is it to be drawn up?

The key words here are: a collective approach -- progressivity -- teams -- participation.

On the latter point the emphasis is placed on allowance for local constraints, analysis of local needs, consultation, the collective search for solutions, development of an action programme, creation of an evaluation procedure.

i) How is it to be guided?

-- use of various instruments: overall management of funds, training plan for staff;
-- creation of a contract with the departments of the academic region;
-- regular monitoring of implementation;
-- achievement list with precise indicators relating to the attainment of the objectives pursued;
-- existence of an internal evaluation procedure;
-- annual activity report forwarded to the administrative departments and local authorities concerned.

ii) How is it to be monitored?

-- the academic regional authority is to ensure its internal coherence and make sure that the national and academic regional objectives are respected;
-- autonomy implies responsibility, evaluation and assessment of the consequences.
Comparison of this reference framework for evaluation laid down by the supervisory authority with the practices described above in the schools themselves, shows that the endeavour to use evaluation and accountability as a management tool and a way of improving effectiveness, presents problems at five different levels:

-- axiological: internal structure of the value systems and reference norms;
-- epistemological: nature and methods by which knowledge is acquired;
-- sociological: nature of the power and negotiation relations;
-- methodological: reference model selected to implement the process of evaluation and accountability;
-- organizational: organization of information circuits, importance of time limits.

Following on from the theoretical and conceptual considerations developed in our introduction, we shall now look at a number of prerequisites which must be met if educational efficiency is to be enhanced through evaluation and accountability.

C. Prerequisites for increasing educational efficiency through evaluation and accountability

Identification of the margins of autonomy of educational policies at local and school level.

More precise identification of the structure of links between the school and supervisory authority and the complementary features of school evaluation and accountability.

Definition of the main functions to be evaluated and of the methods used.

Identification of information which is useful for each function (precise subject areas).

Definition of levels of guidance and decision-making.

Desirability of an evaluation methodology which is appropriate for the factors covered and can serve as a basis for the development of plans or even of systems of evaluation.

The task for the future outlined here is thus that of facilitating the emergence of a body of internal expertise in evaluation, and of enhancing the responsibility of the school itself by the same token.
Part Two
Proposals for an Experimental Framework of Evaluation

Preface

To situate this experimental structure for the evaluation of existing systems in the context of an improvement of management and effectiveness through evaluation and accountability at the level of schools and local authorities, we propose to use four main inputs:

I. Evaluation of autonomy at the level of the reference frameworks (strategic and axiological levels)

II. Identification of the factors to be evaluated (tactical and epistemological levels: main types of information and knowledge)

III. Identification of structures and decision-making levels (sociological and organizational levels -- management system)

IV. Nature of the approaches and tools used (methodological and epistemological levels: referents and representations of evaluation and accountability praxis)

This structure is to be treated as an outline which will have to be amended and enriched by subsequent, multi-disciplinary work.

The problem posed by this proposal for an experimental structure, resides first and foremost in the question of the degree of relevance of the four inputs selected to approach the problem. Are these inputs capable of reflecting the complexity of the systems which they seek to describe?

I. Evaluation of the autonomy at school and local authority policy levels: value systems and reference standards

A. Frame of reference of local authorities -- frame of reference of schools

1. Nature of the reference frame at the level of the local authorities

This frame of reference can be interpreted in terms of the five categories of requirements involving:

-- the reference values which are highlighted
-- the objectives for education and teaching
-- the statutory and administrative provisions
-- organizational and financial arrangements
-- methodology

Each of these five levels might be further defined by formulating a few typical indicators.

2. Nature of the targets for evaluation and action in the schools

What types of value are highlighted?

-- in educational terms
-- in teaching terms
-- in terms of the type of effectiveness sought
-- is reference made to an explicit project?
-- main features of the school policy

These values might be illustrated by means of a few standard objectives for each item considered.

For points 1 and 2, the key questions to be posed relate to:

-- the coherence and structure of these reference frames (at the level of the school and local authorities)
-- the nature of the problems and dysfunctions encountered

3. Existence of a reference frame for the evaluation targets

a) At local authority level

-- existence or absence of an appropriate reference frame;
-- existence or absence of formalized objectives;
-- level of definition (aims, general and operational targets);
-- nature and level of the requirements (do the authors suggest, ask or demand?);
-- existence of indicators for effectiveness and/or efficiency.

b) At school level

-- existence or absence of a reference frame of evaluation targets
-- existence or absence of formalized objectives
-- existence or absence of an "evaluation plan"
-- formulation of evaluation indicators

As regards point 3, the key questions concern:

-- the points of convergence between these reference frames;
-- identification of the nature and possible causes of points of friction;
-- the mechanisms proposed for adjustment and regulation.
B. Description of relations between schools and local authorities

Reverting to and widening the field of investigation, the questions to be put here would relate mainly to:

-- the existence of a formalized or other contract between the school and the local authorities
-- the question of the respective roles of each partner in monitoring implementation (occasional or ongoing follow-up)
-- the existence, or absence, of an annual report on evaluation of the school for presentation to the local authorities
-- the existence of feedback from the local authorities on the school situation in the sector
-- the role of the inspectorate
-- the obligation to achieve results and/or the nature of any obligations
-- the method used for management of resources
-- the nature and percentage of "uncommitted" resources

This approach to autonomy must of course be seen in the context of the objectives and requirements of the regional and national supervisory authorities; this is an essential prerequisite for a more pertinent analysis of the relative degree of autonomy existing at school and local authority level.

C. Identification of the needs of schools and of their environment

Nature of these needs

-- socio-economic needs, outlets for pupils
-- needs of pupils (educational, socio-cultural, pedagogical)
-- need for physical resources (major equipment)
-- need for human resources
-- personnel recruitment
-- personnel training
-- needs in terms of programmes and teaching syllabus
-- services needed (quality, operation)
-- communication needs

Who identifies and formulates which particular needs?

-- at local authority level
-- at school level
-- which types of needs are given priority by the local authorities?
-- which types of needs are given priority by the school?
-- who decides in the last resort on the needs to be satisfied as a matter of priority?

Methodological and technical aspects

-- what criteria and indicators are chosen to formulate these needs?
-- what techniques are used to gather and analyze needs?
For this study of the needs, the key questions are those pertaining to:

-- validity: have the needs been correctly identified?
-- coherence between the identified needs and the activities and resources utilized (reference to targets and processes)

II. The objects of evaluation (tactical level)

A. Functionning and functions

The aim here is to determine the aspects of the working methods and functions of the school which may be given priority in the evaluations made by the schools themselves and by the local authorities.

Aspects of working methods to which priority is accorded by the school and the local authorities in their evaluation praxis

-- quality of pedagogical and professional work
-- social environment of the school
-- conditions of internal organization (communication, living environment)
-- administrative and financial management
-- relations with the institution and with local and regional partners

Types of functions which can be evaluated by school establishment and the local authorities

-- generation of aptitudes and management of teacher/pupil resources
-- organization of work, management of personnel, human resources, potential
-- management of resources, organization
-- management of the living environment
-- development and external relations
-- evaluation and monitoring
-- management

B. Definition of the objects to be evaluated

If the investigation is focussed on the main aspects of the workings of a school (rather than on its functions which may vary from one country to another), the factors to be evaluated at school and local authority levels might be defined as follows (without prejudging their distribution between the bodies and structures responsible for management and decision-making):

1. Inputs

   a) Socio-economic environment

   -- quantitative needs (percentage of pupils obtaining diplomas)
   -- qualitative needs (nature of the skills to be developed)
   -- needs for information passed on to this environment
b) Socio-institutional environment

-- precise nature of the education and teaching programmes
-- the suitability and pertinence of these programmes in relation to the evolution of qualifications and needs
-- personnel resources (teaching and administrative staff) to administer and implement these programmes
-- courses and options offered

c) Nature, quantity and quality of basic equipment

-- adequacy and quality of the premises
-- material and human maintenance resources
-- developments which might be envisaged and can be foreseen

d) Nature, quantity and quality of pedagogical and documentary resources

-- documentation centre (teachers, pupils)
-- audio-visual equipment
-- teaching equipment in the classrooms and facilities for independent study
-- computer equipment
-- qualifications of personnel responsible for teaching aids

e) Personnel

-- numbers and qualifications of administrative and service personnel
-- numbers and qualifications of teaching and management personnel
-- staff to pupil ratio
-- recruitment of staff (by the school? local authorities? the national ministry?)

f) School population

-- social characteristics
-- recruitment characteristics (choice of establishment by file, interview, competition, school report card, other...)
-- school characteristics:
  * "presumed" level (of pupil leaving a particular class or type of school)
  * "verified" level (tests relating to cognitive, psycho-motor, socio-affective skills)
-- pupil catchment area

The key question here is that of the quantitative and qualitative adequacy of the inputs, measured against the set targets.
2. Processes

a) Working methods - living environment

-- bodies for consultation and control
-- communication within the school (methods used)
-- health and social care
-- socio-educational and sports activities

b) Administrative workings

-- working methods of the statutory bodies
-- nature and variety of the administrative services
-- reception of pupils, parents, partners
-- information on the school

c) Overall and financial administration

-- distribution and use of resources
-- delegation of authority to use resources
-- financial assistance for pupils (scholarships...)
-- relations with other establishments in the sector

d) Pedagogical functions

-- quality of the courses and of learning
-- pupil follow-up, supportive actions
-- teaching practices
-- teamwork
-- consultation (regular or otherwise - included in the timetable or not)
-- presence of teaching staff in the school outside school hours
-- average number of hours presence of teaching staff in the establishment each week
-- in-service training for staff

e) School population

-- rights and obligations of pupils
-- is schooling free of charge - semi-free - fee paying?
-- transition from one class to another (indicators)
-- system for recognizing merits and imposing sanctions
-- school system (day pupils, day boarders, boarders)
-- organization and distribution of activities (lessons - socio-cultural and sporting activities - independent studies)
-- internal rules laid down by the school itself, the local authorities or others
-- types of evaluation used
-- examinations, diplomas:
  * under the responsibility of the establishment
  * under the responsibility of the local authorities
  * other
-- is account taken of results obtained during the school year for the award of diplomas?
It would be cumbersome, time-consuming and ultimately unrealistic to attempt to monitor these processes continuously and exhaustively.

An order of priority of the processes to be evaluated must therefore be drawn up; these priorities will be periodically reviewed in the light of the different terms of reference, constraints and outcomes. Irrespective of the individual circumstances, the key issue here is that of the coherence between the priority objectives pursued and the activities which are offered and implemented.

3. The outputs (outcomes, results, effects)

Our definition of the term "outputs" is that given in the ISIP Glossary (under the heading "Outcomes"): "achievement of the educational goals of the school in terms of socially defined needs ... and individually defined needs".

We would also stress the notion of effect which relates to the short, medium and long term impact of the educational action on individuals and on their environment.

a) Quality of the services produced
   -- improvement of the functioning of the services
   -- quality of internal information

b) Communication with partners and the environment
   -- image of the school
   -- quality of information supplied to the outside world
   -- impact on the immediate and broader environment

c) Personnel
   -- maintaining or enhancing skills
   -- staff movements (requests for transfer...)
   -- promotion and valorization of staff

d) School population
   -- evolution of pupil guidance
   -- evolution of the rate of transition from one class to the next higher class
   -- skills acquired
   -- examination successes
   -- outlets, further studies

The three key questions here are as follows:

-- pertinence: compatibility between the outputs and the needs
-- effectiveness: compatibility between the outputs and the goals
-- efficiency: compatibility between the outputs and the resources/processes
III. Schools’ and local authorities’ policy-making bodies
(the management system)

A. Initial description of the decision-making bodies

1. Local authorities: their nature
   -- elected or appointed by the local territorial entities
   -- administrative structure of the educational institution
   -- mixed structure: elected? appointed? by whom?

2. School management
   -- appointed by the school institution
   -- elected by the school staff
   -- elected by the local authority
   -- collegial system under which the head of the establishment is the executive

For points 1 and 2, the key questions relate to:

-- the nature of the terms of reference and powers of these bodies
-- the distribution of the areas of authority between them
   (administrative, financial pedagogical...)
-- the mechanisms provided for adjustment and regulation

B. Specification of the decision-making bodies

1. Local authorities (identification of their different forms)
   -- inspectorate
   -- management body
   -- co-management: school/local authorities
   -- general administrative structure
   -- distribution of functions between bodies with a possible delegation of authority

2. The school
   -- nature and method by which the permanent consultation and decision-making structures are constituted;
   -- nature and method by which the temporary decision-making and follow-up structures are constituted.

On this point, the key issue is that of the precise nature of the relations between these decision-making bodies (internal to the establishment and external).
C. Identification of schools’ and local authorities’ areas of competence

1. At local authority level
   -- advisory intervention
   -- modification of the project or programme
   -- improvement of the project or programme
   -- transformation of the project or programme
   -- prescriptive intervention
   -- acceptance/rejection of the project or programme
   -- suspension of the programme
   -- replacement of the programme

2. At school level
   -- same questions as under 1.

The key questions here are:
   -- the possibility or otherwise of negotiation between the two levels;
   -- the nature and scope of the areas in which the school enjoys autonomy;
   -- the possibility for the school to draw upon third parties (for example an audit).

D. Identification of schools’ and local authorities’ decisions

(The same questions apply to both the schools and local authorities).
   -- Conjunctural level: the decisions relate to (or deal as a matter of priority with)
     -- the foundations of educational action
     -- action planning
     -- introduction and implementation
   -- Structural level: the decisions relate to (or deal as a matter of priority with)
     -- conformity with the prescribed or selected goals
     -- conformity with the statutory procedures
     -- conformity with the anticipated results

In short, looking at a specific programme or action project for education and/or teaching:
   -- What are the levels at which the
     * school
     * local authorities
     intervene?
   -- planning
   -- structures
   -- introduction/follow-up
   -- interpretation/revitalization
- What types of conformity are given priority?

-- conformity of the goals
-- conformity of the procedures
-- conformity of the outcomes

-- What are the consequences if the results achieved on any of these points do not accord with the specified criteria?

E. Objects of decisions

The aim here is to specify the level (school, local authority) at which, and the structure(s) by which, decisions taken are evaluated:

-- the context and environment of the school
-- school inputs
-- the processes for change implemented in the school
-- the outcomes of education and teaching (number of pupils achieving diplomas, effects on the socio-economic environment...)

Each of these levels refers back to information given on the factors detailed in II above.

F. Results and efficiency of decisions

-- who measures and evaluates them
-- who formulates the criteria and indicators, in particular those relating to
-- the goals
-- the functioning of the decision-making structures
-- the inputs
-- the processes
-- the outputs
-- the evaluation methodologies used

Questions which refer back to the general pattern of functioning of the school and of its evaluation set out in the introduction to this study.

IV. Evaluation methodologies used

In the first part of this chapter "Evaluation methodologies", we shall draw attention to the principal references and values in relation to which appropriate evaluation approaches may be conceived, designed and implemented.

A. Evaluation: references and values

Function

This may be formative or summative, even if the distinction is not always so clear-cut in practice.
Methodological approach

This may be structural (plan established in advance) or conjunctural (developed as the activities progress and questions emerge)

Subjects

The evaluation may be targeted on the processes or on the outcomes

Epistemological perspective

This may be formalistic (standardized tools) or naturalistic (historical, holistic approach)

Tools

Objective: search for neutrality based on operational definitions and excluding all value judgements

Subjective: importance accorded to intuition and interpretation

Deontological concerns

The degree of importance accorded to rules and principles of an ethical nature which underlie evaluation as a social practice, to determine the quality and value of this evaluation.

In relation to these six elements which help to define the evaluation, each school establishment and local authority may select and adjust the options which seem to it to be the most appropriate to attain the goals and cover the areas selected.

At each level, the explanation of the chosen evaluation model may avoid friction of all kinds, facilitate regulation and ultimately increase the coherence and efficiency of the evaluation system which is introduced.

We also felt that these elements could be usefully completed by information relating to the analysis of the needs and to decision-making.

B. Range of methodologies and tools that may be used

We cannot prescribe one single methodology here: the evaluation practices and cultures in each country, the socio-institutional frame and many other parameters condition the pertinent methodological choices which will have to be made. The elements for identification presented above may help to guide these choices.

We shall therefore confine ourselves to providing a few references to illustrate the variety of the possible approaches. That variety is in our view capable in large measure of contributing to the emergence or development of a body of expertise of "integrated evaluation" in the schools and local authorities.
Analysis of needs

Aubégny (J.), 1989, Formation et développement, Paris, l’Harmattan (see in particular: the nominal group technique)

Barbier (J.M.), Lesne (M.), 1977, L’analyse des besoins en formation, Paris; Ed. R. Jauze

Nadeau (M.A.), 1988, L’évaluation de programme, Québec, Presses de l’Université Laval.

Function: formative/summative

Among the large number of studies which deal with these functions, we would draw particular attention to the works by Allal, Cardinet, De Peretti, Dominicé, Hadji, Scallon, Scriven and Stake, without quoting any specific works.

Methodological approaches

We shall not quote any particular work here, as these approaches depend on the references and parameters to which we have already alluded: the range here extends from long term planning emerging on multi-year evaluation plans, to specific individual tools drawn up for a particular situation.

Self-analysis of the school establishment


Audit

Functional audit:


Participative audit:


Subjects (processes - outcomes)

Barbier (J.M.), 1985, L’évaluation en formation, Paris, PUF.


Epistemological perspective

1. General works


Leconte (A.), Rutman (L.), 1982, *Introduction aux méthodes de recherche évaluative*, Université de Carleton, Ottawa


2. More specific works

Formalistic approach


Stake (R.E.), 1967, *The Countenance of Educational Evaluation*, Teachers College Record, 68

Naturalistic approach


Tools (objective - subjective)

We shall quote two works:


Deontological aspects

Crête (J.), 1987, "L’éthique de la recherche sociale", in Gauthier (B.), Recherche sociale, collectif, Québec, Presses de l’Université du Québec.

Hameline (D.), 1988, "De l’estime", in CEPEC (Delorme C.), L’évaluation en question, Paris, ESF.

Decision-making

In addition to the work by Stufflebeam cited above, we would refer to:

Ghertman (M.), 1981, La prise de décision, Paris, PUF.

OECD Study, 1977, Decision making in educational systems, Paris (available on microfiche).


These bibliographical elements also provide a brief guide to the works to which reference was made in the preparation of this study.
Conclusion

To conclude our study, we propose to formulate ten principles (not cited in any order of priority) which may also serve as recommendations.

In practice, evaluation and accountability must be treated as effective dimensions of the activities of the school.

The usefulness of the evaluation (added value brought by it) must be demonstrated and derived information reinjected into the system concerned.

The information obtained must be presented and circulated in an accessible manner.

The diversity of the methods and tools must match the diversity of the subjects (Ashby’s Law applied to evaluation).

A balance must be sought between evaluation of processes and evaluation of outcomes.

Criteria and indicators must be drawn up to assess the key features of a particular system or sub-system (search for pertinence rather than exhaustiveness).

The reference frames of the action (at any level whatever) must be explained and reference frames and plans for evaluation constructed as a function thereof.

Priorities must be established at the level of each type of subject (needs, inputs, processes, outcomes).

Constant attention must be given to harmonization of evaluations at different levels: an integrated evaluation is first and foremost a concerted, negotiated and regulated evaluation.

All the personnel working in the educational, administrative and service sectors must be trained to acquire evaluative skills.