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Towards a Way of Conducting Ongoing Evaluation of Individual Students

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Towards a Way of Conducting Ongoing Evaluation
of Individual Students

by

Bruce H. Rindler

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Abstract:

Evaluation is more than giving tests. This paper chronicles my experience in developing a way to conduct ongoing student evaluation in the classroom with the goal of individualizing instruction. Using an ESL class as a focus, this paper examines how and what to evaluate, the problems I encountered with evaluation and the solutions I attempted. The relationships between teaching and learning, and teaching and evaluation are also examined.

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I. Introduction

Language learning is dependent upon many factors. One of the most crucial is the role of the teacher. Furthermore, an essential part of the teacher's task is knowing what the student needs to learn. A guide cannot lead a lost traveler unless he knows where the traveler wants to go. The language teacher usually has a good idea where the student is heading, but the teacher still need to know more. As much as possible he should know where the student is, what progress the student is making, what barriers the student is encountering and what the student needs to reach his destination, language proficiency. These concerns are the foundation to ongoing student evaluation.

In the past, I felt it was the teacher's role to be a map maker. I believed I knew the best route for the students to take to learn the language. I led my students down the path only to find them wandering off the track and getting lost. I would look at my map and change it, or blame the students for not being able to read it and follow it. I did not realize that the same path could never be traveled twice, that each student needed to find his own way.

To be an effective language teacher I needed to be a better guide, not just a map maker. The key element was doing the ongoing student evaluation described above. I needed to be conscious of the students' needs throughout

each lesson for the entire course. Students took side trips and ran out of gas. They were plotting their own courses which I had to respect, but at the same time guide them along to the goal of learning the language.

This past summer I taught a class at the International Institute in Boston. My goal for this, my second internship, was to develop a system for conducting ongoing student evaluations. I wanted to determine what to evaluate as well as how to do it.

The class which I chose to use as the focus for this project was an intermediate level class which met two evenings a week for two hours each session. The course lasted ten weeks. There were eleven adult students including four women and seven men, ranging in age from twenty to fifty. The largest language group was Haitian, with four. The other students spoke Spanish, Greek, Polish, Japanese and French as their native tongues. Their placement tests showed a wide range of experience with formal English training. Those who tended to do better on the oral interview did poorer on the written section. Thus the class was a mix of levels, backgrounds and interests.

The goal for this class was to improve communication skills. The development of speaking and listening skills was emphasized over reading and writing. The curriculum was based on a progression of grammatical items. The lessons, however, often focused more on situations and survival skills than on

grammatical explanations. The grammar forms generally were practiced more than studied.

As I taught this class I sought to develop a way of conducting ongoing student evaluation. This paper reflects the process of that study. The first section examines what I believed was important for evaluation as I headed into the internship. The next section is an analysis of how I conducted evaluation during the first half of the course. The third part identifies factors or problems that affected the success of the evaluation. The fourth section analyzes these problems and theorizes solutions to practice in the second half of the internship. Finally, the last section evaluates the effectiveness of these proposed solutions and reflects on the process of evaluation.

The technique that I have generally used to conduct ongoing evaluation of my classes has been the teaching journal. After each class I would write down whatever occurred to me about the class. Usually, the content of the journal was a summary of what was covered in the class and the successes and failures of the activities. For this course, I chose to focus my comments more on the students and less on the activities themselves. This was to be my major means of doing ongoing student evaluation.

In addition to the journal, I was also going to rely on listening and observing while in the classroom. Although that perhaps sounds obvious, it is a far more difficult task to perform well than it may appear. Also, I planned to use

written exercises and other writing samples as tools for evaluation.

There is much more to teaching than being a capable evaluator. However, I believe that the teacher that cannot continuously focus on the needs of the students runs the risk of leading them astray or losing them altogether. The internship served as a first step in my understanding of evaluation. This paper focuses not only on the content of my understanding but on the process of acquiring it as well. The content I can apply to my teaching immediately, but the process is my vehicle for continued development.

FIRST HALF OF COURSE

II. What Was Evaluated

After the first five weeks (10 sessions) I looked at what I had been able to evaluate, how I was able to evaluate it and what problems arose from this system. This section concentrates on what I was and was not able to evaluate. Why I had these results and what to do about them will be discussed later on. First, what follows is the groundwork for that discussion.

As indicated in the introduction, I assume that a successful teacher is one who concentrates on the needs and progress of his students. The way to gain this knowledge is through ongoing student evaluation, which does not mean only testing, but a whole range of activities that will be covered throughout the paper. Specifically, there were three areas that I wanted to evaluate: linguistic proficiency, psychological behavior and individual learning styles.

These three areas are the cornerstones to my teaching philosophy. The language learned is represented by one's ability to use it. The behavior of the student is represented by his attitude towards learning and the language, as well as through his relationships with his classmates and his teachers. I feel it is important to know as much about the student as possible, his previous history with language learning, his reason for being in the class, how he feels about himself,

and any other information that the teacher can use to help the student break through psychological barriers he has to learning. The third principle is that every student has a unique learning style and that this too must be evaluated and known by the teacher.

In my previous teaching these three areas have stood out as places where students were different from each other. For example, I found some students who were very fast learners but suddenly unwilling or unable to learn more. There were other students who had a more difficult time learning throughout a course. Yet, some of them would work hard and others would turn off. In terms of learning styles, some students enjoyed doing oral drills where the same activity put other students to sleep. Clearly there was a lot going on with these students that I was not catching. Thus, I chose the three areas as a way to focus in on what to evaluate.

In the area of linguistic capabilities, I found that after three weeks I still did not know what the individual student could and could not do with the English language. I had only been able to evaluate the students' general abilities in the different skill areas. Writing came easily to some students where others labored over each word. Some students spoke effortlessly but others stumbled to find the right construction. I had not worked that much with listening and reading, so consequently, I had not evaluated these areas very much. Specifically, I had not broken the skill areas down into smaller components which might have facilitated

evaluation. I was left with saying to myself, "He has a problem expressing himself", or "She's a slow student, isn't catching on to the grammar," or "Did well in the drill."

(See Appendix A for journal entries) Therefore, other than the particular structures I taught during the first few weeks, I only had a vague notion of the English that my students consistently and correctly produced.

In the psychological realm I had more success. The behavior of the students as members of a group and the dynamics of the group as a whole evolved steadily throughout the first ten lessons. I could plainly see which students felt comfortable with each other and which students isolated themselves. One student, for example, who could hardly speak a word of English was very active in working with other students despite his lack of proficiency. Some students spoke up; some were very quiet. However, at a more individual level, a more personal level, I only had clues from a few students as to what they were thinking and feeling. Only a couple of students shared their lives with the rest of the class and talked about events at home or at work. In addition, there were varying levels of comfort shown with speaking English that did not necessarily correspond to ability. Thus, the more overt behavior was noted but I was still unable to evaluate how the students felt about learning and the language.

The third area, learning styles, was clear to me to the extent that it was to the students themselves. Those students who knew how they learned were quick to employ these strategies

in the class. There were students who had to write everything down, others who needed a dictionary in hand. Some wanted rules of grammar where others were baffled by the terminology. One student relied heavily on his native language as a bridge to English. The strategies that the students employed was one facet of their learning style, and the part most easily observable. Another facet was his cognitive process. It seemed that each student would process information differently. It was very difficult for me to see learning take place as the result of a specific activity or way something was presented. I was not making the connection between my teaching and how they actually learned. Thus, I felt that over the years the students had developed ways to approach learning, and these ways were very apparent. What I had been unable to do was make much of an assessment of my students' cognitive processes.

In looking at the three areas for evaluation, linguistic, psychological and learning styles, I felt that what I had evaluated was, with a few notable exceptions, only the surface of the students' needs and problems. For reasons discussed below, I found it difficult to thoroughly evaluate what made each student unique in all three of the indicated areas.

III. How Evaluation Was Done

One of the most accessible ways of knowing what was going on was student feedback. Students who stated that they did not understand a presentation or who had a question about it, were giving me a direct indication of where they were in terms of the specific content of the lesson. Student questions provided obvious information for me about linguistic level but also more subtle clues about how they felt and how they learned. The mere fact that the student asked the question could indicate many things. It could show that he had been paying attention or that he had not. Depending on the tone of the question, I was often able to get a sense of the student's attitude toward the class. For example, if the student already knew the answer, the question came in the form of a challenge to me. Therefore, I could see that the student was focusing on me and not on the task of learning the language. Another student would whine as he asked the questions, indicating that he perhaps felt overwhelmed.

However, student feedback was more than just questions. Students came up to me during the break and after classes to express interest in various activities. One student often asked for more grammatical explanations, always concerned with the rules, especially regarding the use of verbs. Another student was more concerned with expanding his vocabulary. He requested more reading assignments and vocabulary building exercises to achieve this. This feedback helped me not only

find out their interests, but also better understand their particular learning styles.

A second basic way I evaluated students during the class was simply by observing and listening. Every utterance, every movement, every facial expression carried a message. I heard perfect English and I heard gross errors. I saw people smiling and wincing. In short, having my ears and eyes open to the students provided me with a lot of useful information.

To evaluate specific things, I set up specific exercises. By listening in a general way, I had not been able to get a sense of specific structures that were or were not known. However, when the class was focused on a particular grammar point and the exercises were constructed to test that point, then I could make an evaluation. In other words, if I were listening only for the correct use of "have" in the present perfect, I was able to observe and mentally take note of the performance of each student.

Setting up a specific exercise to test for a specific point was a useful activity for evaluation. However, this experience also highlighted a basic problem that I had encountered. Not only did I have to observe and listen, but also I had to focus my attention on a specific point, and then I had to remember it. As shown above, student feedback helped individualize evaluation; but the real challenge for me was to always be alert, to observe, to categorize what I saw or heard and to remember it or record it in some fashion.

IV. Problems Encountered With The Evaluation

To investigate more closely the problems of evaluation, the teacher himself must first be looked at. I needed to determine whether the English produced by the student was correct or not. Furthermore, I had to isolate the student's problems in order to work on them in class. These are fundamental steps in evaluation. Yet, my success depended to a large extent on my ability to free myself to do them.

As a teacher, I often found myself thinking of myself and my lesson plan and less about my students. What I needed to do was the opposite - to focus on them, or I would not be able to evaluate them. I had to be available to see and hear them in order to help them overcome their barriers, and correct their errors.

A large part of the problem for me in focusing was my great concern for the lesson plan as though it were the goal itself. I listened for the success of an activity, the production of the correct English as a verification that I was a good teacher. I was too often caught up in my lesson plan and its "success" to listen to the students.

A key part of this problem was not being able to focus on the individuals. This was especially important for making linguistic assessments. In contrast, in the psychological realm, evaluating the group as a whole was equally as important as concentrating on the individual. With my previous experience as a social worker, I felt comfortable evaluating the group dynamics, as well as making some individual assessments. I

already had that skill. However, when it came to linguistic evaluation, I could not see past the group.

I found I was evaluating the group, not the individuals because I was concerned with my activity, not the students. The relative ability of the group to perform an activity gave me a general idea of the level of the group itself but little indication of individual problems. I was continually concerned that my activities be appropriate for the group. The need for verification that I was a good teacher, that what I was doing was right, got in the way of focusing on the individual.

This misfocus I attribute largely to inexperience. I was unable to think about or plan for individual problems because I was too busy watching my activities unfold. I perceived the "success" or "failure" of these activities as a judgement of myself as a teacher. Even if I possessed the skills of observation necessary for evaluation, I lacked the confidence to focus primarily on the students.

I was especially at a loss in evaluating the more proficient members of the class. Their mistakes came less often and their needs were more subtle. In addition, the activities that I had chosen did not challenge them as much as the other students. I was not giving them sufficient opportunities for demonstrating the limits of their knowledge and consequently their needs. Thus, I found that I was evaluating students based on how well they did the activity that I gave them. Since my concern was that the activity be

be appropriate for the class level, and since the range of proficiency was so great, I found I was not challenging the more proficient students. My journal was filled with, "This student is doing well, no problems today" and similar comments that were evidence that how I was evaluating was somewhat limited.

In addition, going back a step to the structure of the activities themselves I had a problem determining the causes of the students' errors. Were they confused by the way the activity was set up or because the language was too difficult? Was the hesitation and incorrect usage a reflection of the complexity of the exercise or an accurate demonstration of the student's level of proficiency? Taking this point further, it seems that some students froze during certain activities, especially when transformations were required. In these cases, I was getting some good clues about their learning styles, even if I still could not evaluate them linguistically.

Another important problem that I encountered with evaluation in the first half of the course was remembering the data. It occurred to me that I had been exposed to students' problems but that I really could not remember what they were. Even when I was free to listen, when the activity was set up appropriately, and the student had given me the data, it too often just slipped away. By the time the class was over, and I was making entries into my journal, I usually could not remember exactly what had been said or what had happened. This was exacerbated by trying to remember too much, and not

having a suitable framework to do it in. The students' attitudes were the most easily remembered because they seemed to be ongoing. The linguistic elements came in a flash and were gone. If the problem was severe and recurring I generally noticed it enough to remember. However, the issue remained as to how to look at a student and recall what specific facet of English he needed to work on.

SECOND HALF OF COURSE

V. Proposed Solutions for Improving Evaluation

In an effort to deal with the problems outlined above, I decided on some solutions to employ for the second half of the course. The problem of developing confidence in myself as a teacher could best be cured through time and experience; yet I saw more careful planning of lessons as an aid in that process. I realized that if I spent more time planning lessons then I would be more confident of their success and less distracted by them during classes. I could gradually focus more attention on the students.

Two of the other problems which presented more immediate possibilities for solution were activities and recording. Evaluation could be significantly improved if the activities in the classroom were designed not only for learning but for purposes of ongoing evaluation. As stated above, evaluation is a process, not a singular event and must permeate as much of the class as possible. Evaluation is knowing where the students are and where they should be heading. I saw that the activities were essential to that process. As for the problem of recording the data, the solution seemed to be some kind of student record. The details of these proposed solutions follow.

Recording Data

First, to get at the problem of remembering what I had observed, I sought to develop an instrument for recording the

data. This would serve the dual function of keeping track of where the students were linguistically as well as providing me with a way of directing my attention to the individual. Up to the midpoint of the course I relied on a teacher journal for the purposes of recording what happened during the class. This technique fell short of my needs because it was directed more at the class as a whole than at the particular students. Therefore, the task was to restructure my post-class writing to allow me to focus more on each student as well as more precisely on his needs and problems.

The instrument that I chose to focus my evaluation was a structured student record. For each student, I set aside a page in a notebook which would be his record for the rest of the program. I planned to make a short entry after each class. The record had two parts, linguistic and behavioral. The behavioral component included both psychological behavior and learning styles. (See Appendix B.)

First, as review, the linguistic area focused on the problems that the student had with the language itself. To make this task more manageable I chose six headings: word use, word order, verb tense and use, affix problems, pronunciation/intonation, and other. The idea was to have these categories in my mind to act as a way of ordering what I heard in the classroom. These categories did not include all points of grammar. I came to these criteria after reviewing all of the linguistic information I had gathered during the first five weeks. This information took the form of the mistakes,

problems and needs that I had observed. I tried to arrange this data into manageable groups. The key to using this as a teaching tool was that it would remind me of what the student needed work on.

The intent of this linguistic record was to find problem areas by recording incorrect patterns of speech over time. Writing down what I heard in one class allowed me to start the next class by listening for it and reinforcing correction. In addition to being aware of the problem, I could work on it with the student. Thus I was able to shape specific parts of the activities to the particular needs of the students. For example, I had one student who left off the final "s" in verbs in the third person singular of the present tense. Therefore, in the course of an exercise I would ask the student to make a transformation to the third person for verbs the class was working on. If we were talking about shopping, the student might be asked to go from "I buy food at Shop-Rite" to "He buys at Star Market."

The form of the linguistic part of the record had the name of the student at the top of the page, and the date of each class on the left, next to the comments on each class. The linguistic categories did not appear on the individual sheets, but were on the cover of the notebook. They served more as a reminder than specifically as a check list.

The bottom half of each page was for comments I wanted to make about the students learning style or his relation to others in the class including myself. These entries were dated

as above but did not follow strict guidelines for content. This half of the record was called the behavioral component.

The psychological factors that I was interested in were confidence, interest, interaction, willingness and anything else noteworthy about the student's attitude or behavior. As with the linguistic component, I wanted to be reminded of the problems or barriers that the student was facing so that I could help him improve his readiness to learn. It seemed especially important to monitor behavior over time as patterns did not emerge in behavior as quickly as in speech. A faraway look in a student's eyes could be many things, but an unpronounced final "s" was more easy to diagnose.

Thus, the two parts of the student's record each should have had a notation for every session. The record was to be made up-to-date soon after each class and reviewed while planning for the next day's activities. The written record kept track of the observations that I made in the classroom. (See Appendix C.)

Activities Designed for Evaluation

Structuring activities with evaluation in mind was another key factor in improving the process of evaluation. There were three specific areas that I considered important: allowing for differing abilities, creating listening time for the teacher and accounting for a variety of learning styles. There were other factors that I kept in mind as guidelines for designing activities that contributed to overall learning,

but it was these three areas that I concentrated on to further my success as evaluator.

Previously, I had structured activities based more on teacher factors than student ones. For example, I concerned myself with clarity of presentation, time that activities would take, and allowing for practice and use. These concerns, while certainly important, needed to be augmented by the factors mentioned above to make the activities more suitable to ongoing evaluation.

Each student had a level of proficiency that was unique. If the student stayed within that level he would never demonstrate what he did not know. Furthermore, a student who was swimming in language that was way over his head, would drown, and the teacher would not easily be able to focus on the causes of the student's problems. To allow for differing abilities meant structuring activities such that all students were challenged past what they knew. Yet, to allow the students to show what they did know, the activities had to be within their range. For example, if students were being asked to answer questions orally, I could ask more difficult follow-up question to those students who were able to answer the basic questions without difficulty. The challenge was to find the middle ground for an activity yet have avenues open for expanding it to address the individual needs of the students.

In addition to the problem of levels was that of differing learning styles. Where one activity would have one student demonstrating near native fluency, the same activity had a

comparable student stuttering and confused. To be able to accurately evaluate the student's proficiency, the activities had to be varied. Students were to work on their own, in groups and with the teacher. They were to be asked to make transformations and substitutions, but also to speak freely. They would write stories as well as fill in the blanks. Again, the bottom line was for the student to show me what he knew and what he did not know.

Perhaps the most important factor in structuring activities was to allow for teacher listening time. The more I was able to listen and observe, the better I was able to evaluate. Although that may sound obvious, I did not have time to listen to my students unless I planned for it. The less I had to talk and participate, the more I was able to relax and listen to the students. My focus shifted from the activity itself to the student and his relationship to the language. The task of evaluation and the advantage of being silent had a large impact on my teaching style. I decided as much as possible to plan activities where my function was to listen and correct, and perhaps give cues.

An example of the kind of activity that resulted from my desire to be quiet and observe was the role play. In this activity the students would receive notecards outlining their tasks. Usually I would ask them to produce a conversation similar to one we had recently done in class. In this way the students could work with each other, concentrate on using the

language and I could remove myself to listen, observe, guide and correct where necessary.

Teacher Confidence

Careful planning outside of class boosted my confidence and aided evaluation. In addition to just following my course outline, I had to review the records I was keeping and also plan for listening time. Since one of the key factors that influenced how well I was ready to listen to my students was my level of confidence in my lesson plan, then the importance of careful planning was obvious. If I knew that my planned presentation was clear, that I completely understood the grammar structure involved, and that the practice session was well structured, then my focus could be placed on the student with little worry.

My preparedness was equally as important for the students. They could relax more as they felt I was organized and setting appropriate limits. In this way the students provided more accurate samples of their language proficiency. Thus, time spent by me outside of class was key for developing activities according to the guidelines above, as well as for giving me a level of confidence about what would happen in the class so I could concentrate on the language and the students.

This past section has attempted to outline some of the reasons behind what I did to improve the state of evaluation in the second half of the course. The solutions came directly from the factors both positive and negative which influenced

the quality of student evaluation in the first few weeks of class. It is important to keep in mind that these "solutions" were not for the larger umbrella problem of language learning but specifically to help the teacher in the task of evaluation. The following section will examine the success of these attempted solutions.

VI. Evaluation Of The Solutions

Of the three major solutions outlined above, the one that fared the worst was the recording instrument. The criteria that I chose were not that useful. My comments usually did not follow the indicated guidelines (word order, word use, etc.), but were statements of specific errors that I heard in class. A more exhaustive list of grammar points in a checklist form could have served better at least as a record of what the student knew. However, the comments I recorded summarizing the students linguistic performance were ultimately more valuable than a checklist.

A tool that is not used serves no function. Often I found that I either did not have the time or perhaps the inclination to write about my students after the class. Perhaps if I had found the record more useful, I would have made a more conscientious effort. Thus, the failure of the instrument in this project was due in part to the fact that after the first few weeks I used it less. I recorded fewer items and referred to it less for information in planning the following sessions.

With all due respect to a written record, part of what happened was that I started to remember what was going on with my students without the need to write it down. As I heard a mistake or a pattern emerge repeatedly in class I would correct it or work with it at that moment. Taking that step reinforced the student's behavior, as well as served the purpose of alerting the student himself to the problem.

Therefore, I started remembering more as time went on. I knew my students better, and felt less of a need to write about them. However, for a larger class, especially for the first few weeks of a program, the written record could be a useful instrument.

The activities I chose for my classes did improve my ability to evaluate significantly. Keeping in mind the need to allow for teacher listening time, varied learning and performing styles, as well as a range of abilities, I was able to develop activities that were suited to promoting evaluation.

The main activity in the classroom became structured conversations. I selected a text, Side by Side,¹ that allowed the students to practice with each other. The text provided the cues, thus freeing the teacher for correction and evaluation. This practice session generally followed a presentation of the material by me and gave me the opportunity to check on understanding. As a listener during these sessions I was effectively able to note chronic linguistic problems, as well as observe how students interacted.

The structured conversations were also a tool for dealing with differing abilities. Once the practice material was mastered I could slowly build on it and push past it to find out what students could do. For example, with the less proficient students, I would stay within the boundaries of the basic conversation. With the more advanced students I

¹Steven J. Molinsky and Bill Bliss, Side by Side II, (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1981).

could ask follow-up questions that required greater proficiency. I found teacher-student questioning helpful not only to challenge the students, but to work on the specific errors that I had heard during the practice sessions. In this way I was able to work with what I had observed immediately.

Another activity that proved useful was role playing. Students were given tasks to perform in accordance with their abilities. Some students, who were not comfortable with the manipulation of material required with the structured-conversations, often performed better with role plays. Allowing for differing learning styles and cognitive abilities was important in getting the students to work with the language and not get distracted or frustrated by the structure of the activity itself.

Role plays also gave me the opportunity to evaluate sociolinguistic elements that were not as apparent in more structured exercises. For example, in a role play that required a student to ask for a loan at a bank, tone of voice and degree of formality were equally as important as correct grammar usage. Often, in the structured exercises, where the language was not being manipulated in a real life context, these sociolinguistic factors were less relevant.

A third kind of activity that was most useful was the written exercise. These exercises were designed to test for specific points and had the advantage of being completely observable. I was not distracted while correcting them as I would be in the classroom. Also, for less verbal students,

it was a very valuable tool for finding out what they knew. Since the focus of this course was not on writing, I did not use this as a tool for evaluation very often. However, the point to be made is that writing is a useful way to evaluate because the data is recorded for the teacher. It does not disappear as does the spoken word. Yet, the limitation is that language proficiency and writing ability are not synonymous.

The third solution that I had mentioned was the development of the teacher. Over the course of this summer I saw my confidence grow as my teaching improved. The more that I worked outside of the classroom the more ready I was to enter the classroom as an evaluator. This readiness allowed me to be a better listener.

During the summer a sense of trust was built between the students and me as well as within myself. As I became more relaxed I was able to be more objective in my evaluations. I was less judgmental of myself and my students and thus better able to analyze problems and be open to solutions.

Also, with experience came spontaneity. I was more ready to deviate from prepared lessons. This flexibility provided greater opportunities for evaluation as it often meant responding to student enthusiasm by letting them expand on an activity past where I had planned it. A student who was working enthusiastically could more easily break through barriers that were keeping him from speaking, thus providing me with more information.

Spontaneity played another role which was alluded to above. As I felt more confident I worked on student problems whenever I could. This step closed the circle of evaluation. I took data from previous classes and from the day's exercises and I brought it back into the activity. The more that my attention could be focused on the needs of the individual students, the more capable I was of remembering and knowing what they needed to work on and inject these needs directly into an ongoing activity.

Thus, the development of myself as a teacher was a most important solution to the problem of evaluation. My readiness to listen, my ability to be spontaneous and my developing self-confidence contributed greatly to the success I had this summer. Gaining experience as a teacher is a painstakingly slow process but it is at the heart of being an effective evaluator.

VII. Conclusion

Evaluation is the tool for knowing what the students need to learn. Without it, the teacher operates in a vacuum. Before this summer I had often felt that I had been teaching for myself, for the "success" of my curriculum. Learning had taken a back seat to the amount of material covered.

This summer my focus moved to the individual student. Recognizing that I needed to be aware of each student's personal needs, I set out to become a better evaluator. This paper has chronicled that development.

The first half of the course was a time for analysis. I got a sense of what obstacles I had to overcome to be able to evaluate my students more proficiently. The second half of the course was a time of trial. The solutions that came out of the needs that I perceived for myself as an evaluator were put to the test in the classroom. Finally, this paper has served as a reflection on this process and has left me convinced that evaluation is crucial to being a successful teacher.

Just as evaluation needs to be ongoing so does teacher development. I have entered the process of being a more effective evaluator. If I truly hope to become a guide and not just a map maker I must treat myself as I would my students. I must be patient, take time to observe myself and engage in activities that meet my own learning needs. My challenge is to integrate the learning of this summer into my teaching and to continue to develop my skills and awareness through further exploration and analysis.

VIII. Appendix A.

Journal excerpts from the first half of the course:

June 29 - (third class). There seems to be different levels of schooling and knowledge. How can I deal with it? Probably have to start at the beginning. Many different behaviors. Two guys were acting out. I think I need a tighter format to keep things moving and everyone interested. Also, I've got to talk less and get them talking more.

July 5 - (fifth class). Class went well. Bank sequence was cut short, didn't really have time to do the vocabulary work I wanted. There is still a very wide range of levels. How can I get the fast ones more interested? The pictures were helpful as a prop. Everyone seemed to respond to them. They all seem to like the one-on-one conversations where where they can work at their own pace. I've got to link the functional activities more to the grammar I'm trying to teach.

July 12 - (seventh class). My presentation didn't go real well. I confused the issue with "already" and "yet." I should have introduced them separately. I've got to remember to make sure that when I do teacher-student questions that they have meaning. If they can't see the airplane, how are they going to tell me what it's doing? The students seemed to pay more attention tonight because Kathy was sitting in to supervise me.

Appendix B.

Form used as the model for the student record:

<u>NAME OF STUDENT</u>	
DATE	GRAMMAR/LINGUISTIC COMMENTS
	FOCUS: Word Use Word Order Verb Tense and Use Affix Problems Other
<hr/>	
COMMENTS ON LEARNING STYLE AND BEHAVIOR:	

This blank form was attached to the inside cover of my notebook and served as a guide for student record entries.

Appendix C.

Example of a student record from the second half of the course.

Anastasia

- 7/27 - No apparent problems with word use or order. Occasional problem with speaking too slowly.
- 7/29 - Must-might confusion.
- 8/3 - Subject/auxiliary backwards in indirect speech. Good verb use.
- 8/5 - Didn't notice her tonight.
- 8/10 - Mispronounced her final -ed in past tenses, still has problem with the rhythm of English.
- 8/24 - Did well on exam but had some problems with the articles.
- - - - -
- 7/27 - Knows grammar terms well and can manipulate structures. Participates actively in all exercises.
- 7/29 - Seems confident. Does her homework.
- 8/3 - I got down on her too much and flustered her.
- 8/5 - She was hesitant to speak up in class. Is her security gone?
- 8/10 - She was more confident tonight. Her learning style is not very aggressive. She is not very creative so when we get away from Side by Side she is not as comfortable. I think her slow speech reflects her fear of taking risks.