

APPENDIX A

GROUND RULES

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The following ground rules are given by Amidon and Flanders and have been followed during the course of this study.

Rule No. 1

When not certain in which of two or more categories a statement belongs, choose the category that is numerically farthest from Category 5. This is true except when one of the two categories in doubt is Category 10, which is never chosen if there is an alternative category under consideration. Because those categories farthest from the centre (5) of the category system occur less frequently, the observer maximizes information by choosing the less frequently occurring category (except 10) when there is a choice. For example, if the observer is not sure whether it is a 2 or a 3, he chooses the 2; if in doubt between a 5 and a 7, he chooses a 7.

Rule No. 2

If the primary tone of the teacher's behaviour has been consistently direct or consistently indirect, do not shift into the opposite classification unless a clear indication of shift is given by the teacher. The trained observer is in the best position to judge whether or not the teacher is restricting or expanding the freedom of action of class members. If the observer feels that the teacher's pattern of behaviour is generally one of expanding the freedom of students to act, a slightly more direct statement in a very indirect pattern may tend to look, in contrast, like a more direct statement than it actually is. On the other

hand, he must remain alert to momentary shifts to one of the more direct categories. Conversely, if the observer feels that the teacher has been consistently restrictive in his behaviour, he is particularly careful in his use of the indirect categories.

In observing this rule, the observer is reacting to the general tone of the teacher's influence, either direct or indirect, and does not use the opposing categories unless it is clear that the teacher has shifted from this more general pattern. He must, of course, be certain that the teacher has established a direct or indirect pattern before he categorizes consistently in either of the two areas. Clearly he must also be ready to change when the teacher obviously moves all the way up the system; that is, to 1 or 2 from 6 or 7, or when the teacher moves all the way down to a 6 or 7 from a 2 or a 3. This rule is often called the rule of the unbiased biased observer; that is, the observer is operating in a climate of general direct or indirect influence, and although he is ready to move to the opposite set of categories, he must feel that the teacher has definitely moved to the opposite type of influence before he is willing to grant a change in interaction pattern.

Rule No. 3

The observer must not be overtly concerned with his own biases or with the teacher's intent. Rather, he must ask himself the question, "What does this behaviour mean to the pupils as far as restriction or expansion of their freedom is concerned?" If, when the teacher attempts to be clever, pupils

see his statements as criticism of a pupil, the observer used Category 7, rather than Category 2. If the teacher is being sarcastic says how good the children are, again Category 7 is used. If a statement intended as a question has the effect of restricting students' freedom so that it becomes a direction, then it must be classified as a direction. The effect of a statement on the pupils, then, and not the teacher's intent, is the crucial criterion for categorizing a statement.

This rule has particular value when applied to the problems of helping teachers to gain insight into their own behaviour. In trying to categorize their own tapes, teachers comment, "But I meant.....," or "I was really trying to get the pupils to talk more", or "I think that I wanted them to answer that question", or "I was trying to praise them" or "I meant to use that child's idea". All these protests indicate that the teacher is thinking about his intent rather than the effect of his behaviour on the class members.

The meaning and value of this category system for an individual teacher come from the attention it gives to the effect of teacher behaviour on the freedom of the class. Use of this criterion requires a great deal of training, particularly when a teacher is categorizing a tape of his own teaching. He must learn to be non-defensive about categorizing the behaviour, recognizing that there is absolutely no evaluation or good-bad orientation implicit in the category system. The question is simply, "What category best describes this particular bit of interaction?"

Rule No. 4

If more than one category occurs during the three second interval, then all categories used in that interval are recorded; therefore, record each change in category. If no change occurs within three seconds, repeat that category number. This rule is concerned with the situation in which statements from two categories occur during a three-second period. Generally, an observer writes down a category number every three seconds. The pace of recording is generally maintained at a constant level so that only one category number is written during this period.

However, if there is a change in categories during this interval, the observer records the change. Within the three-second interval, for example, the teacher may ask a question, the child answers, and the teacher praises the child. The observer attempts to record all three of the categories. The fourth rule, therefore, is that a category number is recorded every three seconds unless the teacher changes categories within the three-second interval. If he changes categories, or if more than one category occurs during the three-second interval, then all categories used in the time period are recorded.

Rule No. 5

Directions are statements that result (or are expected to result) in observable behaviour on the part of children. Examples of directions are "Go to the board, read question 3, go to your seat etc." Some teacher statements sound like directions but cannot be followed by observed student compliance.

These statements often precede the actual direction; for example, "Let us get ready now to go to recess" (Orientation, Category 5), "Now Row Five get their coats" (Category 6).

Rule No. 6

When the teacher calls on a child by name, the observer ordinarily records a 4.

Rule No. 7

If there is a discernible period of silence (at least 3 seconds), record one 10 for every 3 seconds of silence, laughter, board work, etc.

Rule No. 8

When the teacher repeats a student answer, and the answer is a correct answer, this is recorded as a 2. This tells the student he has the right answer and, therefore, functions as praise.

Rule No. 9

When the teacher repeats a student idea and communicates only that the idea will be considered or accepted as something to be discussed, a 3 is used.

Rule No. 10

If a student begins talking after another student (without the teacher's talking), a 10 is inserted between 8's or 8's to indicate the change of student.

Rule No. 11

Statements such as "Uh huh, yes, yeah, all right, okay", which occur between two 9's are recorded as 2 (encouragement). These statements function as encouragement (all student continues talking after the 2) and are therefore classified as 2.

Rule No. 12

A teacher joke, which is not made at the expense of the children is a 2. If the joke makes fun of a child, then it is coded as a 7.

Rule No. 13

Rhetorical questions are not really questions; they are merely part of lecturing techniques and should be categorized as 5's.

Rule No. 14

A narrow question is a signal to expect an 8. If the student gives a specific predictable answer, this is an 8. If the child expands, documents, or justifies his answer, the observer should begin tallying 9's.

Rule No. 15

An 8 is recorded when several students respond in unison to a narrow question.

Use of these ground rules has been found to improve reliability. Observers considered to be ready for classroom

observation need to be checked to determine the extent of the reliability of their observations. This reliability can be defined in terms of inter-observer reliability (the agreement between two observers observing a period of classroom interaction or tallying a tape of that interaction) or in terms of self-reliability (agreement between recordings of two separate hearings of one tape session by a single observer). Use of the Scott coefficient affords an approximation of observer agreement, although it does not reflect the extent to which two observers agree on the sequence of categories they have recorded. What the Scott coefficient does give is a general idea of the extent to which two observers agree on the amount of a particular category a teacher employs. For training purposes, of course, the observers need to have as much information as possible about their progress. Higher Scott coefficients, after increased practice, indicate progress. No method is yet available for dealing with the problem of the reliability of sequential ratings.