



The Forum is a place for Journal readers to express their feelings on any topic they think is important to Extension. Don't make it longer than one double-spaced page. Send to: Jerry Parsons, editor, 310 Poe Hall, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, 27607.

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Gerald Udell (Sept./Oct. '75) wrote a practical and realistic article. The operational points he made are several years ahead of acceptance and utilization. Funding isn't yet "tight" enough to force the adoption of the described principles and practicums.

Verbalizing on the term evaluation is commonplace. Evaluation as an act occurs less often. Examination of facts isn't a regular task of the practicing educator. Evaluation is the domain of the education researcher. In performance, the latter statement is correct; while in practice, it should be false.

In education, evaluation is of two levels—performance and consequence. As noted by Udell, the consequence level is the one which is less frequently attempted. Performance evaluations are designed to measure such quantities as the number of staff hours expended, number of students taught, number of programs conducted, etc. Consequence evaluations delve into what changes to students or the societal environment occurred as the result of contacting "X" number of people, conducting "Y" number of meetings, and working "Z" number of staff hours. Such is the manner of criteria used in post-program evaluation.

Program planning is the stage in which evaluation criteria are established. The depth or specificity of planning determines which level of post-program evaluation can be used. Without a study of the total socioeconomic situation and its components, the performance level is the only evaluation possible.

Pressures from administration and program managers may be the only communication used in establishing priorities during the program planning process. Such priorities aren't oriented to the socioeconomic situation of the local clientele.

My interpretation of the Udell article is that evaluation is the cement which binds program plans to program

performance, program performance to program accomplishment/effect, and program accomplishment/effect to program plans. Evaluation criteria are the ingredients of that cement.

One might well suspect that evaluation is seldom performed since so few educators know how to engage in the process. If that's true, then it's time that practice be taught and acceptable evaluation procedures and criteria be required.

Those who provide funds are becoming increasingly concerned about the socioeconomic effect of the monies being allocated. The most difficult aspect of establishing evaluation criteria is deciding to create them.

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Congratulations to Laverne Forest for his Jan./Feb. '76 *Forum* contribution, "Do We Really Want to Evaluate?" He certainly hit the nail on the head in a highly perceptive analysis. It's the most practical copy on the subject I've seen printed. The constant press for evaluation of the programs in the classical sense so often printed in the *Journal* may give some people something to do, but I question that it's a positive factor in improving Extension programs.

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The *Forum* section continues to be my favorite. Short comments on one idea usually prove to be thought provoking. For example, Udell's comments about the feelings of on-campus faculty toward Extension or Brook's ideas about advancement for paraprofessionals. Laverne Forest's comments about evaluation may prove to have more influence on Extension in the future than any other article in that issue.