Ralph W. Tyler developed the first systematic approach to educational evaluation. This evolved from his work in the 1930s and early 1940s on the Eight-Year Study at Ohio State University (Smith and Tyler, 1942). Since that time, Professor Tyler has continued to develop aspects of evaluation, particularly at the national level following the growth of federally funded programs in education. The extent of the esteem in which he is held can be gauged, in part, by the large number of highly reputable evaluators who have based their methodology on the Tylerian approach.

Before Tyler published his model for evaluation in 1942, studies focused on the student and the measurement of student attainment. Evaluation was therefore virtually identical to measurement. Tyler endeavored to swing the emphasis to a wide range of educational objects, such as curricula and facilities. He also emphasized the necessity to establish, classify, and define objectives in behavioral terms as initial stages of an evaluation study. Evaluation then became the process of determining the congruence between these objectives and performances.

The Tylerian concept has often been applied with a narrowness of approach that Tyler never intended. Most significantly, whereas Tyler offered a practical means to provide feedback during the course of an evaluation
study, attention became fixed on data (usually connected with student achievement), which became available only when the program had run its full cycle. Despite the disadvantages of evaluation being construed as a terminal process and of a narrow focus being placed on objectives, Tyler's work stands as a milestone in the growth of evaluation as a science.

Ralph W. Tyler is generally considered the father figure of educational evaluation. There are possibly two main reasons for this. First, he proposed, described, and applied a developed approach to evaluation — something that had not been done earlier. And second, his methodological approach has been both pervasive and influential. Outstanding contributors to the field of educational evaluation, such as Michael and Metfessel, Provus, and Hammond, have provided further dimensions to Tyler's work while retaining his basic philosophy and technology.

In general terms, Tyler considered that evaluation should determine the congruence between performance and objectives. Tyler reached this conclusion following his work in the 1930s and early 1940s on the Eight-Year Study at Ohio State University. Some years later (1950, p. 69) he summarized his deliberations in these words:

The process of evaluation is essentially the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually being realized by the program of curriculum and instruction. However, since educational objectives are essentially changes in human beings, that is, the objectives aimed at are to produce certain desirable changes in the behavior patterns of the student, then evaluation is the process for determining the degree to which these changes in behavior are actually taking place.

In this unit major aspects of the Tylerian approach to evaluation are presented. In addition, the work of Michael and Metfessel, adherents of the model conceived by Tyler, are briefly outlined. After you have completed the body of this unit, you will be directed to complete a knowledge test of the Tyler assignment, checking your answers against those provided, and an application exercise, comparing your responses with those provided. Finally, the unit ends with discussion topics (and their possible uses) under "Questions Without Answers" and suggested readings.

Objectives

The following are the objectives of this unit:

1. To develop an understanding of the intention of Tyler's approach to evaluation by considering his procedure for evaluation design, advantages of the Tylerian approach, and uses of the Tyler model.