

# Pupils Need to Know Shortcomings

**S**CHOOL systems that diminish or ignore constructive evaluations of students' work are not doing the youngsters a favor.

The omission might make under-achievers feel better if they aren't required to face the fact that others do better work, but that won't prepare them for life or for careers.

Business still evaluates employees according to the job each was hired to do. Employers must rate them for productivity and pay if they expect to earn a profit on their work. They are trying to devise adequate, legal methods for doing this.

It isn't easy. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has jurisdiction over hiring methods used and it can sue employers if they are suspected of using discrimination on the basis of race, age, sex, or marital status or other visible traits.

Employers also are restricted in questions they ask that would reflect on prospective employees' integrity, reliability and competence. Eventually, though, these factors usually are revealed.

The Conference Board, a business research organization, reports that half of 293 firms it surveyed have developed new employee appraisal systems during the last three years.

Final decisions usually are left to supervisors but businesses are devising questionnaires, checklists and rating forms that may be used within the severe restrictions of EEOC regulations.

For example, J.I. Case advertises that with its "Case Human Resources Identification System" it "can examine 4,000 separate and distinct criteria for each individual through a non-computerized, co-incident light card system." Other firms use computer screening.

A movement of significant proportions is spreading across the country to install testing for "minimal competency" in schools. It is supported by the public and by students, but many teachers do not like it. "Some fear that test results will . . . be used to judge teacher performance," says U.S. News & World Report.

In a national survey, nearly two-

thirds of teen-agers favored requiring all students to pass uniform examinations showing some grasp of reading, writing and mathematics in order to get high school diplomas.

In objecting to implementation of competency testing in Oklahoma City schools, an official asserted that "it labels the pupil as a failure." Uneducated diploma holders may find that out anyway.

Later evaluations inevitably will be made in an individual's life, whether or not he or she is graduated from high school as a competent citizen or as a "functional illiterate."

In order to motivate youngsters to exert necessary efforts to meet minimal standards for productive living, evaluations ought to begin early in life.

Pupils and their parents, as well as teachers, need to know of shortcomings in time to make needed adjustments. Then, when they are old enough to graduate, their high school diplomas will mean something. They should at least be able to support themselves.