

October 31, 1958

To: Howard Waltman  
From: Stanley K. Sheinbaum  
Subject: Participant Evaluation, RE Your memo #44, October 23.

I have passed on to Stan Gabis and Elsie Cunningham your suggested rating form for participants and have solicited their reactions. In general, the three of us are very much in agreement that this kind of form does not provide us with the kinds of information that is wanted. In the early days of the program, I played with something similar, and recently Elsie has made an attempt in this direction. There are several shortcomings.

First, it is hard to communicate to the Rater the kinds of things for which we are looking. Bear in mind that most of the Raters will be people on whom we have already imposed for sometime to direct some phase of the participant's work. Follow-up reports, as a result, usually receive superficial treatment from them.

Second, the superficial treatment is quite often reflected in the kinds of one sentence or sometimes only phrase answers to questions. For instance, to your 1-C question on cultural adjustment, I can foresee (because I have already seen in responses to similar questions) the single word "good" or "well adjusted" as the responses so often that it would be meaningless.

Rather than a series of answers to a set of "objective questions", I am quite sure we are much better off with interview situations by those people who have an immediate and continuing concern with the participants. In this case, I refer to Elsie, Stan and myself. This kind of procedure results in concise but comprehensive statements, and would probably cover broader ground and reflect a better "feel" for what is happening to the participants. I grant that we would be unable from such information to develop the kind of profile you would like to have for purposes of participant selections in the future. I don't think this is a serious shortcoming because our operating criteria for selection, leaves us so limited anyway and because, generally speaking, profile attempts have not proven too successful when dealing especially with large numbers.

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We might want to look over some of your records for the evaluation work we have done. Last spring Elsie and I spent considerable time working with each of the participants at the end of their tour. Our present plan, to follow to the extent possible your own suggestions, is to spot these interviews with the participants at points during their stay in the U.S. However, in addition to interviewing the participants, we will keep in touch with their supervisors to the extent possible. As you know, many of them are out of town and the interview situation is not generally applicable. In these cases, we might proceed with your form, although I repeat that such attempts have previously resulted in practically useless information.

I am a little bit surprised when you say that you have not "been kept better informed on the activities and progress of the participants". I am certain that there has been a steady flow of information regarding their training and various arrangements. As for "progress", that is partially the subject of this exchange of memos, and I will be anxious to have your reaction to this memo.

SKS/aeg

cc: Gabis ✓  
Cunningham