A STUDY OF SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOL ELEMENTARY TEACHER AND ELEMENTARY ADMINISTRATOR ATTITUDES TOWARD THE USE OF GRADES AS COMPARED WITH SELECTED ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF PUPIL PROGRESS REPORTING

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This is to certify that the

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF SELECTED
PUBLIC SCHOOL ELEMENTARY TEACHER AND
ELEMENTARY ADMINISTRATOR
ATTITUDES TOWARD THE USE OF GRADES
AS COMPARED WITH SELECTED ALTERNATIVE FORMS
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The researcher approached the question of elementary teacher and administrator attitudes toward the use of A B C D F grading as those attitudes compared with attitudes toward seven selected alternative forms of reporting. The alternatives included: Blanket Grading, Check List Reporting, Credit-No Credit, Narrative Reports, Parent Conferences, Pass-Fail and Self Evaluation. Not only were attitudes sought, but the rationale for those attitudes. Five demographic variables were applied. They included: sex, degree(s) held, grade level taught or administrative post held, years of paid experience in education and goegraphic location (state).

A selected sample of 1,018 elementary teachers, grades pre-Kindergarten through six, and 107 elementary administrators was taken. Sampling was by random selection of four states from initial groupings of a selected northern, 3 selected mid-eastern and 5 selected southern states. Those states selected at random from the original groupings

were Georgia, Michigan Tennessee and West Virginia. Thirty schools were then randomly selected from each state and a commitment sought from the building principals for participation in the study. A response rate of 58.91% was obtained from the total number of available teachers, 82.94% from the available administrators and 86.15% from the schools as separate units.

Multivariate analysis of variance of repeated measurements, frequency counting, Chi square analyses of correlations, standard deviation augmented by application of Cramer's Ø for magnitude of association, and frequency distribution were used in the analysis of data.

Results indicated that elementary teachers and administrators surveyed favor the use of parent conferences as a reporting method regardless of the type of written report which might be offered by the school.

The A B C D F method, in being chosen as the second most preferable reporting system, was held in high esteem as a reporting practices by the respondents, although they failed to agree that "A B C D F is a darn good reporting method which hasn't been bettered." Check List Reporting and Narrative Reporting were, also, indicated by many respondents as being suitable for elementary use.

Blanket Grading, Pass-Fail, Credit-No Credit and Self evaluation were not conisdered by respondents to be as valuable for elementary reporting purposes.

It was found that teachers and administrators did not differ significantly in their attitudes toward reporting practices.

Teachers and administrators, both as separate and combined groups, listed the interests of students as being the primary rationale behind their attitudes toward reporting practices. The interests of the parents was the least often cited rationale for selecting reporting practices thus leading to the conclusion that the elementary educators surveyed see reporting practice decisions as more of an in-house determination.

The conclusion was reached by the researcher that the elementary teachers and administrators surveyed from Georgia, Michigan, Tennessee and West Virginia, felt quite strongly that Parent Conferences are a necessary element in the reporting process and that A B C D F, Check List Reporting and Narrative Reporting are acceptable as long as Parent Conferences are continued.

It was found by the researcher that the expressed attitudes toward Parent Conferences, A B C D F, Check List Reporting and Narrative Reporting are very similar among most respondents. Essentially, the same rationale for selecting these methods was cited by the respondents althoug the A B C D F method idd not produce as much unanimity of feeling as Parent Conferences, Check Lists and Narratives.

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By

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When this document goes to print and a binding is affixed, only one name will appear indicating authorship. I suppose that must be the case, for if all the names of the people who helped in the completion of this study were included on the cover, the gold leaf supply at the bindery would be sorely depleted. They deserve their names alongside mine, but since that cannot be done, I hope to offer appropriate, and very humble, thanks to the many people who assisted so greatly along what often seemed like an endless road.

Dr. Louis Romano, Committee Chairman, deserves uncounted accolades for his quiet, gentle handling of problems big and small. His willingness to listen, encourage and assist was limitless. Dr. Donald Hamachek, who encouraged me to explore further and challenge myself deserves all the thanks I can give. He was the first professor of education I ever had and his examples of teaching genius over the years will never be forgotten. Dr. Sam Moore, who stepped into a vacant committee slot during the last year of my work, is probably one of the best examples of administrative competence ever to grace the field. His subtle demand for excellence was forever before me and will continue to prompt me long after this document has been published. Dr. T. H. Patten, cognate adviser from the School of Labor and Industrial Relations, also filled a void

in the committee during the last year. His total willingness to assist in any way went beyond the call. He made me feel very valuable as an individual and, through his teachings, gave me insights into the field of compensation and incentives which few people ever find through other, less dedicated instructors.

My typist, confidante, unofficial adviser and organizer, Mrs. Lorraine Hull deserves roses for her continuing assistance over a period of six long years. Her tireless work in preparing this work in its final form can never be truly repaid. I will miss working with her.

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The following acknowledgments are the most difficult to write. There is so much emotion involved in them that the words often find it hard to move from mind to paper. I shall start with my children, Billy, our youngest who never really could figure out why banging at a typewriter was sometimes first and playing with him second. I can assure him that that will change. Susie, our oldest, who did understand even though it sometimes made her sad. Disneyland is coming honey and we'll have a ball!

My Mother, who through her example of optimism and display of physical fortitude in battling a crippling disease, has provided an inspiration which is unmatched. Her moral support through some tough times made the way seem easier.

To my lovely wife of 12 years, my inspiration, my adviser, my fortitude over the years, I offer my most loving thanks for the tons of understanding, love and devotion. Thank you, honey, for keeping the fires burning and for giving the encouragement which was so often needed. Ours is a very special relationship and I mean it completely when I say that I could not have done it without you.

To my Father, William E. Scharffe, who left this earth on October 31, 1975 and who so very much wanted to be the first to call me "Doctor". This work is dedicated to his memory.

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Chapter I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

In 1912, two researchers, Daniel Starch and Edward C. Elliott, reported the results of a study they had made which explored the element of teacher biases in marking. Starch and Elliott maintained that they had found indication of distinct and wide variances in the marks accorded to a given English paper by a sample of English teachers in 200 different secondary schools. Their report marked the beginning of a debate concerning the value and validity of grades (or marks). The debate is still being carried on today.

Since 1912, the arguments both for and against the use of grades have changed little. Investigations of the literature show that most authors in the grading and evaluation field present almost the same arguments. A few, such as Robert Ebel, have been bold enough to have outwardly supported grades, while others, such as Sidney B. Simon, have led the fight to remove grades as a method of reporting pupil progress. The works of Bradfield, Moredock, Donald J. Brown, Dressel, Mehrens, Lehmann and TenBrink, when compared, show little variation in the presentation of the cases for or against grades and grading. The argument is not new, nor has it changed much since 1912.

When reading either the affirmative or negative case in the grading debate, however, it becomes obvious that both sides feel that teachers and administrators, as professionals, have definite attitudes toward the use of grades. Authors, such as Ebel, who favor grades make statements which would lead to the belief that teachers and administrators favor the use of grades because grades help them to do a better job of teaching and administering of the schools. Kirschenbaum, Napier and Simon, in stating the negative case, would lead us to believe that teachers feel grades to be demeaning and essentially useless. For both sides to equally assume teacher support for their cases is both confusing and contradictory to logic. Other than personal opinion, there is a void in the literature when it comes to finding any hard data to support the contention that "educators" either like or dislike the use of grades. It is time for an inventory to be taken of teacher attitudes toward the use of grades in order that education, as a professional community, might better plan for the direction of future pupil progress reporting. If teachers are to be questioned on the grading debate, it only follows that administrative input should, also, be sought on the question since it is the administrative structure that so often is directly involved in policy decisions that dictate grading or reporting practices.

Purpose of the Study

The author's purpose in this study is to determine how elementary teachers and administrators feel about the use of grades

(or marks) as compared with other selected forms of pupil progress reporting techniques.

Significance of the Problem

Almost everyone connected with public education has been involved with grades, either as a student or as an instructor. Many have come to accept grades as a standard part of the educational world. Grades exist, they are with us in some form or another almost daily. Since the results of the Starch and Elliott studies were presented, however, a growing movement has been seen to either abolish or drastically modify the grading process. All of these attempts at change have been aimed at objectifying, standardizing or simplifying the grading and reporting process.

As education moved into the 1960's, the decade of student power, pressure to eliminate grades began to show marked effects, especially on the college campuses. The late 1960's saw Yale University, Michigan State University, Florida Presbyterian, Dartmouth, Brown, The University of Wisconsin, Columbia, Case Western Reserve, Haverford, The Ohio State University, University of Chicago, Penn State, Princeton and others move to a system of pass-fail or credit-no-credit reporting for several courses. The mastery or criterion referenced testing movement also contributed to the abolishment of grades in many public school districts.

Statewide assessment programs, such as that in the State of Michigan, have, also, contributed to the movement away from grades as

a reporting practice, but as the controversy of "to grade or not to grade" continued, teachers seemed to flow with the tide of administrative or board policy decisions on grading without much debate. To be sure, teachers often expressed concern about a new method of reporting if the alternative presented meant more teacher time or bother, but the central issue of which method was best for students and parents was often left to others for discussion. Also, no profession-wide attempt was made to determine whether or not teachers and administrators shared any common beliefs about the value of various grading or reporting practices.

The works of Hiner, Ebel, Mehrens and Lehmann, Bradfield and Moredock show support for the A B C D F method in varying degrees. Authors such as Kirschenbaum, Napier and Simon, Dressel, Robertson, Steel, Wrinkle and Dexter,[1] conversely, help to build the case against the A B C D F method. Both camps, however, often carry the assumption that teachers and administrators are on their side in the debate. No true inventory of professional opinion on the grading controversy has been yet presented, however. Teachers and administrators, as a professional group, have not put forth a collective voice in the grading debate.

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[1]Specific citations from authors mentioned in this chapter can be found in Chapter II.

Definition of Terms

Public Schools: Public schools refers to schools supported by public tax dollars and excludes schools supported wholly by private donations, tuitions or fees.

Elementary Teachers: Elementary teachers refers to any of those persons certificated to teach in grades Kindergarten through at least grade six and who are actively employed in a public school.

Elementary Administrators: Elementary administrators refers to any of those persons who serve in the capacity of directing the operation of an elementary school, and who possess the authority to hire, transfer, suspend, lay-off, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward or discipline other employees, or responsibility to direct them.

Grade: A judgemental value rating of rank or worth designed to describe, through the use of some alphabetical or numerical symbol, a measure of educational achievement. This rating is then used in making decisions concerning the student's future.

Pass - Fail Reporting: Awarding either a passing or failing mark in a given course or subject without the use of intermediate symbols, pluses or minuses.

Credit-No Credit Reporting: Assigning either a credit or no credit mark in a given course of study without the use of intermediate symbols, pluses or minuses.

Blanket Grade Reporting: The practice of giving a common letter grade to students in a given course, subject or grade level with no indication of failure and without the use of pluses or minuses.

Narrative Reporting: The use of a personal letter or computer assisted narrative which describes, in complete sentences, the student's progress in a given course, course objective, subject or grade level.

Parent Conference Reporting: The practice whereby a teacher meets on a one-to-one basis with each child's parent(s) to discuss the child's progress in a given course, subject or grade level and where grades, check lists, or other reports are discussed and explained.

Check List Reporting: The technique whereby the teacher is furnished a comprehensive set of evaluative comments, both positive and negative and both affective and cognitive which he or she then "checks off" as being appropriate for the individual student being evaluated. Such a check list is then either sent or given to parents or students.

Self Evaluation Reporting: The reporting practice wherein a studen is responsible for critically evaluting his or her own progress in a given course, subject or grade level. Such evaluation may or may not involve teacher input.

Attitude: A predisposition to experience a class of objects in certain ways; and to act with respect to these objects in a characteristic fashion; a predisposition to be motivated by, and to act toward, a class of objects in a predictable manner.

Possible Delimitations of the Study

The validity of the study may be affected by one or more of the following factors:

1. Only elementary (grades K - 6) teachers will be surveyed.

2. Only elementary school administrators will be surveyed.

3. The assumption is made that the individual teachers and administrators surveyed will respond to the questionnaire with their true attitudes in regard to reporting practices.

4. The study will not take into consideration community feeling about reporting procedures and/or the resultant pressure which might be felt by the respondents to "support" a particular reporting practice.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of the literature will include:

1. A definition and history of grades, grading and reporting.

2. The case for the use of grades (A B C D F).

3. The case against the use of grades.

4. Discussion and definition of the various alternative reporting practices selected for the study with comments from authors in the field as to the value and worth of the alternatives.

5. Review of the literature concerning the effect of teacher attitudes toward grades insofar as those attitudes may affect the grades given to students.

OBJECTIVES

Research Question 1: Do elementary teachers prefer the use of A B C D F reporting over the use of selected alternative forms of reporting?

Research Question 2: Do elementary administrators prefer the use of A B C D F reporting over the use of selected alternative forms of reporting?

Research Question 3: If elementary teachers do prefer the use of one of the selected alternatives over the use of A B C D F, why does this preference exist?

Research Question 4: If elementary administrators do prefer the use of one of the selected alternatives over the use of A B C D F, why does this preference exist?

Research Question 5: What correlation exists, significant at the .05 level of confidence, between a teacher's preference for a particular form of reporting and the teacher's: (1) Sex, (2) Years of experience, (3) Degree(s) held, (4) Grade level taught, (5) Geographical location.

Research Question 6: What correlation exists, significant at the .05 level of confidence, between an administrator's preference for a particular form of reporting and the administrator's: (1) Sex, (2) Years of experience, (3) Degree(s) held, (4) Geographical location?

Research Question 7: It shall be hypothesized that: A difference, significant at the .05 level of confidence, exists between teachers and administrators in preference for a particular form of progress reporting.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

A. Selection of Sample:

1. Elementary Teachers: Teachers selected for the sample were from the faculties of 30 randomly selected schools in four states. A total of 112 elementary schools were used in the survey.
2. Elementary Administrators: Administrators selected for the sample were from the 112 elementary schools selected for the survey.
3. The States: Were selected from the following list of northern, mid-eastern, and southern states which, by prior agreement or information already provided, had given access to schools for use in the survey.

   Northern States: Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania (one to be selected at random).

   Mid-Eastern States: Maryland, New Jersey, West Virginia (one to be selected at random).

   Southern States: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee (two of these to be selected at random).

Random selection from the above available states gives each available state equal opportunity to be selected. Random selection of 30 elementary schools within each state gives each elementary school in each state equal opportunity for selection.

4. Sample Size: Projecting on a basis of 2 teachers per grade level, per school for 120 schools, grades K-6, a sample size of approximately 1,680 teachers is anticipated and a sample size of 120 administrators is anticipated.

B. Distribution of the Survey: Each elementary school selected was to be contacted, through the principal, with a pre-survey letter of information and request for cooperation. In the event of a refusal to participate, another school in the state was randomly selected to replace the school dropped until such time as an appropriate sample size was reached of 30 schools per state. Of course, respondent confidentiality was maintained.

C. Length of the Survey: The survey instrument was designed so as to take approximately 20 mintues to complete. A modified Likert scale response system was used. Choices for responses ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". A four point scale was employed in order to force respondents to either agree or disagree with the statement given thus avoiding the chance for a repeated cluster on the man point of the scale. Follow up questions were used which asked for stated reasons for a particular responses. Written rationale for responses given were later codified for reporting of data.

D. Treatment of the Data: The data was to be programmed through the use of the SPSS statistical computer package available for use in the Michigan State University C.D.C. 6000 computer. Appropriate

F-tests, chi-square correlations and frequency distributions were used in the program to establish a statistical base for conclusions drawn. Essentially descriptive statistics were needed. Survey instruments and mailing packages, along with o-scan scoring for type to punch card conversion were done through the Michigan State University Testing Service.

Overview

This chapter has presented an introduction to the problem and has set forth the research questions to be answered by the author. An outline of the sampling procedure was given along with a brief description of the approach to data analysis. The following chapter presents a review of the literature pertinent to the problem.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

What are grades? How are they used effectively in reporting pupil progress? Are grades and the grading system sometimes misused by educators? Why do some educators (and many students) favor the abolishment of grades? All of these questions, and more like them, are often being asked within professional education circles today. In reviewing the literature surrounding the grading controversy, the focus will be on five major aspects of the topic:

1) A definition and history of grades, grading and reporting.
2) The case for the use of grades (A B C D F)
3) The case against the use of grades.
4) Discussion of the various alternative reporting practices.
5) Discussion of the effect of teacher attitudes toward grades given to students.

Grades, or marks, have been an element of discussion in educational circles for several decades. Many efforts at both the national and local levels have been mounted to abolish grades as a means of reporting pupil progress. Some of those efforts have met with such resistance as to have failed completely, while other efforts have seen some success in that they have moved the schools to institute alternative reporting systems which often supplant, or , more often, supplement the traditional grading process.

This chapter is not designed to come to definite conclusions about the value of grades. Any such conclusions will be drawn in chapter IV. This chapter will, rather, attempt to view systematically what is being said on both sides of the argument and will explore selected alternative forms of pupil progress reporting. The review will remain as objective as possible, although it is inevitable that certain biases will spring forth through the comments of authors in the field.

With respect to the grading question, American Education is in a quandary. Although the era of mass student demonstrations and militant displays of dissatisfaction with "the system" seems to have abated, we, in education, are still being faced daily with questions from students which challenge our traditions and our rules. Quite often, the grading system is one of the prime targets for student, parent and community criticism. Students from the elementary grades through graduate school often find that their lives revolve repeatedly around "grades". The recurring question of whether or not the grading system is the most useful and realistic form of evaluation reporting is also often debated amongst teachers, administrators, board members and departments of education. This chapter will attempt to bring together some of the best arguments on both sides of the issue, not with an eye toward resolving the problem, but, more simply, with the purpose of clearly outlining the thinking in both camps.

A Definition and History of Grades, Grading and Reporting

Since most educators have been involved with grades, both as students and as educators, we have come to accept "grades" as a

standard part of our educational world. They (grades) exist; they are with us and around us in some form or another on a daily basis. Grades have not always been a part of the American School scene, however. Their entrance into education is, actually, quite recent in terms of the overall history of education in America. Before reviewing the historical development of grading, however, it is necessary to establish a definition of the term "grades." Such a definition will then stand as a common ground from which the historical development of grading can be explored.

Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language defines "grade" thusly:

> GRADE (grād), n. (Fr.; L. gradus, a step, degree, rank. gradi, to step, walk), 2. a) degree in a scale classifying according to quality, rank, worth, etc. 6. a mark or rating on an examination, work in a school course, etc. Grading 1. to arrange or classify by distinct steps or stages; rate according to quality, rank, worth, etc.; sort. 2. to give a grade (sense 6)

Ebel offers the following definition:

"Marks, of course, are measures of educational achievement.:[2]

Brown defines grades in relation to their use when he says:.... "Grading practices, although differing widely both within schools and among many schools thoughout the country, attempt to provide data with which the student, his parents, teachers, and school administrators

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[2]Robert L. Ebel, Essentials of Educational Measurement (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1972), p. 308.

make important decisions affecting the student's current educational status and his future."[3]

Bradfield and Moredock carry the "use" definition a bit further by saying:....."School marks, on tests, papers, homework and the semester's work, are symbols of teacher's evaluations of pupil achievement. As such, they serve to facilitate instruction and guidance, motivate study, serve as a basis for future planning, for placement, promotion, and admission, and for prognosis of school and vocational success."[4]

In reviewing other authors in the evaluation field, similar definitional comments are found. Drawing from these various sources, a composite definition can be attained which, for the purposes of this study and this chapter will be as follows:

GRADE: A judgmental value rating of rank or woth designed to describe, through the use of some alphabetical or numerical symbol, a measure of educational achievement. This rating is then used in making decisions concerning the student's future.

With a composite definition at hand, a history of how "grades" came into being may now be set forth.

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[3]Donald J. Brown, Appraisal Procedures in the Secondary Schools (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 104.

[4]James M. Bradfield and H. Stewart Moredock, Measurement and Evaluation in Education (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1957), p. 213.

Historical Development of Grades and Grading

Very little was written about grades prior to the 1900's. This is not to say that grading practices did not exist in some form before then, but only that the issue was simply not an educational concern at the time. In the early civilizations, "grades" were nonexistant as such. Man was judged solely on his real performances. Either he could hunt game or he could not hunt game. He was either a good runner, an average runner or could not run at all well. Similarily, early American Education had little use for anything like A B C D F. Only the wealthy in America received a good education in early America and knowledge, although tested by examination, was transmitted to a select few who were destined to populate the famous colleges like Harvard, William and Mary, and Yale. Rank-in-Class, based upon grades, as we know it today, was unimportant. Social rank was more the determining factor for furthering one's education.

In the mid-19th century, progress evaluations became more evident, but were mostly descriptive. Kirshenbaum, Simon and Napier explain:... "The teacher would write down which skills the student could or couldn't do. This was done mostly for the student's benefit, since he would not move to his next subject area until he had mastered the previous one.[5]

It was not until the last quarter of the 19th century that pupil evaluation began to take on more meaning in American Education.

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[5]Howard Kirschenbaum, Sidney B. Simon and Rodney W. Napier Wad-Ja-Get (New York, Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1971), p. 50.

> The number of students entering public high schools increased rapidly with the passage of compulsory attendance laws at the elementary level. Between 1870 and 1910, the number of public high schools increased from 500 to 10,000; the total number of pupils in public elementary and high schools rose from 6,871,000 to 17,813,000. Subject areas in the high schools also became increasingly more specific.
>
> Even though the elementary schools continued to employ written descriptions when evaluating each student's skills, the high schools began using percentages or other similar marking to measure the student's abilities in the different subject areas. In a sense, this was the beginning of grading as we know it today.[6]

(See illustration 2.1)

As more and more students graduated from high schools, and more and more parents found financial resources available to send students to college, colleges found themselves in a position of having to develop some sort of criteria for entrance which was based upon high school performance. The criteria developed were, essentially, two-fold: First, the student's percentages were considered and, along with that, his rank-in-class-standing. College entrance requriements, then, were partially responsible for the ongoing development of grading systems in the secondary schools.

High schools and elementary schools began to internalize the "ranking" concept and grades or percentages began to be used as a means of sorting out students for different curriculum emphasis.

By the turn of the century, percentage grading was becoming increasingly popular at the secondary school level, but little

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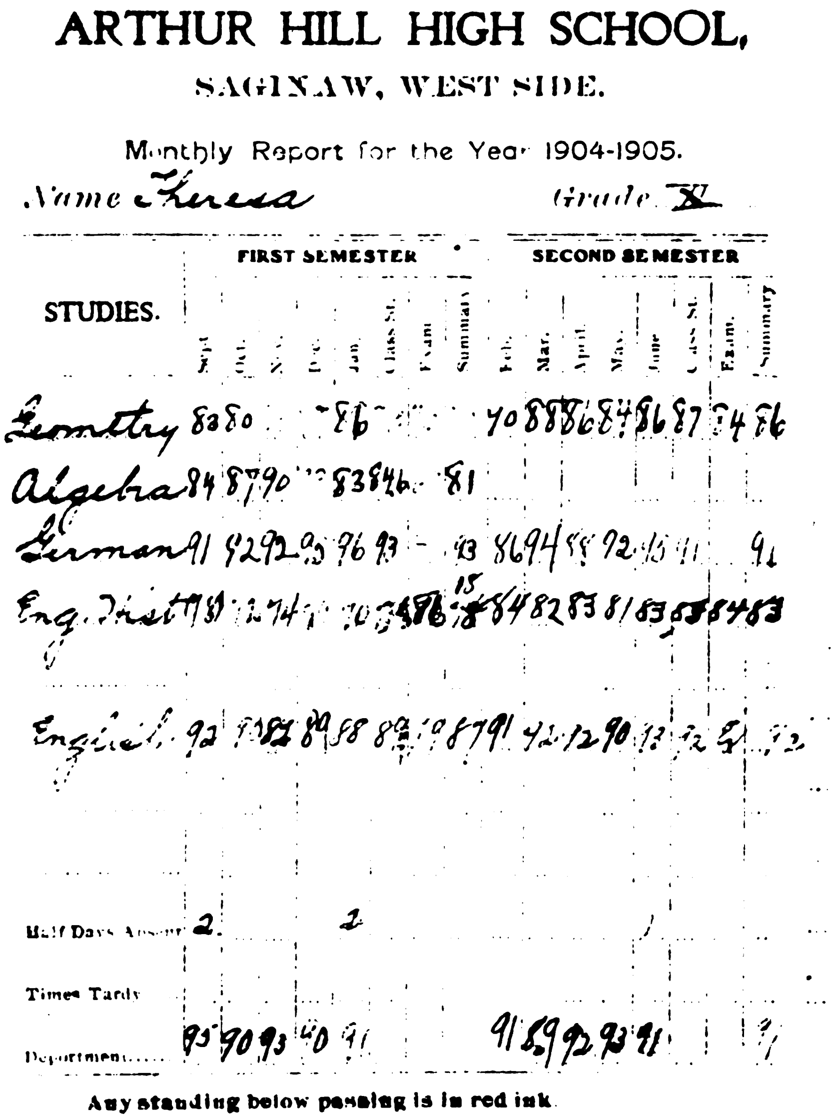
[6] Ibid., p. 51.

Illustration 2.1

A typical percentage marking report common in the late 1800's and into the early 1900's.


ARTHUR HILL HIGH SCHOOL,

SAGINAW, WEST SIDE.

Monthly Report for the Year 1904-1905.

Name Teresa Grade X

STUDIES.	FIRST SEMESTER	SECOND SEMESTER
Geometry		
Algebra		
German		
Eng. Hist.		
English		
Half Days Absent		
Times Tardy		
Department		

Any standing below passing is in red ink.

controversy about the method arose before the decade of 1910 to 1920. It was during those years, 1912 to be exact, that Daniel Starch and Edward Elliott published the findings of their studies in grading variances among teachers in the academic area of English. Starch and Elliott found:....."The recent studies of grades have emphatically directed our attention to the wide variation and the utter absence of standards in the assignment of values. Such wide differences are no doubt due in part to a difference in the students and in the nature of the work, but largely to a difference in the standards of marking."[7]

The result of Starch and Elliott's work, along with others of their time (Dearborn, Finkelstein) caused a movement in education away from the percentage marking system to scales of 3 or 5 points or letters which had the effect of broadening the categories for grading and thus reducing the span of grading variances among teachers. A natural spin-off of the 5 point (A B C D F) scale was the practice of "grading on the curve," a method which is still very much in use today. Also, during the 1920's, a movement was seen toward utilization of spearate "personality inventories" which, supposedly, took elements of personal appearance, attitude, etc., out of the grading process for student achievement. Recent research in the

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[7]Daniel Starch, Educational Measurements, (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1916), p. 3-4.

State of Michigan does show that when considering the correlations between the attitudinal factors in a teacher's decision to give a grade and certain student characteristics, such as attendance, appearance, effort, attitude, quiz marks and group reports or projects, a close relationship exists between the teachers' viewpoints regarding goals of education and the weighting applied to the above mentioned student variables.[8] A high weighting, for example, was found in a study by Bonnie J. Steller, for personal appearance and a high negative loading on the variable of "neatness of work." Steller's work does point out that characteristics not truly related to the goals of the educational program do have an influence on the mark a child receives. Steller's work will be discussed more fully later in the chapter.

During the 1930's and 1940's, the same two groups who held opposing views on grading continued to clash - one group wishing to eliminate grades, the other wishing to keep them, but make them more objective and scientific. Running hand-in-hand with thest two camps were two other forces; the testing movement, which emphasized the acquisition of knowledge and the methods of measuring that knowledge; and the progressives, who stressed the growth of the "total person" and downplayed the competitiveness associated with grading and testing of acquired knowledge. The arguments for and against the use of grades

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[8]Bonnie J. Steller, The Marking Procedures Used by Public School Teachers in the State of Michigan, (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 1974), p. 104.

were generally formulated during this era and have changed little since. The specific cases for and against grading will be explored later in this chapter.

As education moved into the decade of student power, the 1960's, pressure to eliminate grades was beginning to show some marked effects.

> The pressure against grading began to show results in the late 60's. Yale University, which had clung to the numerical scale, finally abandoned it and converted to a four-point scale -- Honors, High Pass, Pass, Fail, with no cumulative average computed. Many other colleges and universities shifted to three-point scales: Honors, Pass, Fail; or two two-point scales: Pass, Fail; Credit, No Credit; satisfactory, unsatisfactory. Some schools instituted these changes for the entire school, and some allowed students to take only some of their courses on a pass/fail basis.
>
> Institutions experimenting with such grading systems ranged from small, secular colleges such as Florida Presbyterian, to private, ivey-league colleges, like Dartmouth and Brown, to universities the size of Michigan State University and the University of Wisconsin. Other colleges and universities undertaking some form of pass/fail/ grading were: Columbia, Case Western Reserve, Harverford, Connecticut College, Tufts, Lake Forest, Carleton, Grinnell, Simmons, Bowdoin, Harvard, LaSalle, Princeton, Ohio State, University of Chicago, University of Washington, Washington State University, Penn State, California Institute of Technology, University of California at Berkeley, Temple University Medical College and Douglass College, to name just a few.[9]

It can be said that the student pressure of the 60's did produce some changes, but the overall effect was to simply broaden

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[9] Kirshenbaum, et. al., Op. Cit., pp. 69-70.

the scale even more and student quickly came to realize that the "new language" on their report cards could often easily be transalted into A B C D F.

Moving into the 1970's and 80's, the controversy still exists, still unresolved. Grades, although battered somewhat, still hold their own in many public schools and universities. The history of grading is filled with some turmoil, the future holds promise for more of the same, especially with the growing strength of the mastery movement and the demand for reporting in objective referenced terms to go along with teaching from specific objectives. In the next portion of this chapter the author will describe the controversy in more detail by looking closely at both the pro and con cases in the grading debate.

The Case for the Use of Grades (A B C D F)

The author's purpose in this chapter was to examine a controversy - a controversy which began in the year 1912 with the reporting of the Starch and Elliott studies. Since that year, the arguments for and against the use of grades has continued, sometimes reaching a very heated level of argument. This section of chapter II will be concerned with reporting the advocacy case for the use of grades and grading. The negative case will be similarily stated in the next section of the chapter.

Grading has sometimes been represented as a cultural function, a ritual if you will, in American Education. The question of grading

exists, for many, as both a problem and a social phenomenon. Hiner's position is that....."Grades are part of the basic social and cultural 'currency' of the school 'economy', and grading systems constitute the rules under which this currency - these rewards - are distributed to students."[10] Also, "regular attendance and a minimum amount of work will ordinarily entitle a student to a passing grade. It is considered 'fair', however, that the best grades go to those who achieve the highest marks. Therefore, when the student participates in the grading process, he is conditioned to accept level of achievement as the primary cirterion for the distribution of rewards."[11]

If grading can be considered a social and cultural tradition and ritual, we can assume that the advocates of grades and grading have maintained their case well over the years. Had the case been weak early in the controversy, there would be no controversy today for the opponents would have won out some years back. The author will now examine the advocacy position in some detail and attempt to bring the views of several authors on the subject into focus.

Many authors in the evaluation field become expert fence riders when the time comes to make judgments about grading and its value.

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[10]N. Ray Hiner, "Grading As A Cultural Function," The Clearing House Magazine, XLVII, (February, 1973), p. 356.

[11]Ibid., p. 357.

The do this, perhaps, so their works will not be arbitrarily classified into one camp or the other and, also, for ethical reasons of fairness in exploring a crucial issue. For this reason, references will be found in the case of advocacy which also will be used in the next section in explaining the case against grades. One current author, however, has made his advocacy stand quite public. That author is Dr. Robert Ebel of Michigan State University.

Ebel's well known text, Essentials of Educational Measurement, offers a wealth of material concerning the grading debate. Ebel states that the uses....."made of marks are numerous and crucial. They are used to report a student's educational status to him, to his parents, to his future teachers, and to his prospective employers. They provide a basis for important decisions concerning his educational plans and his occupational career."[12] "Marks also provide an important means for stimulating, directing, and rewarding the educational efforts of students. This use of marks has been attacked on the ground that it provides extrinsic, artificial, and hence undesirable stimuli and rewards. Indeed, marks are extrinsic, but so are most other tangible rewards of effort and achievement."[13] Ebel's rationale for the use of grades also includes the argument that....."Grading systems exist because most educators recognize that effective learning requires

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[12]Robert L. Ebel, Essentials of Educational Measurement, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p. 313.

[13]Ebel, op. cit., pp. 313-314.

the active participation of the learner, that this participation costs considerable effort, and that the necessary effort is most likely to be put forth when success in learning is recognized and rewarded. As most teachers know from their own experience, differential grading does tend to motivate and direct study, and to provide tangible and prompt rewards for the efforts expended. It has been said that pupils should learn for the sake of learning, not for the sake of grades. But this is a false antithesis. High grades and effective learning are not alternative goals. They are closely parallel, if not identical."[14]

Mehrens and Lehmann lend support for the use of grades as being necessary to provide summary information to students, parents, administrators, counselors, teachers, prospective employers and college admissions officers. "A criticism occasionally made of marking systems based on either a norm or a set standard is that such systems ignore individual differences. That is not true. Such systems explicitly report individual differences in achievement."[15]

Bradfield and Moredock summarized the need for grades in the following way: "So far we have identified five groups of persons who

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[14]Robert L. Ebel, "Shall We Get Rid of Grades?", The Interchange, Portland, Maine: Department of Research and Evaluation, Portland Public Schools, May, 1975. As reprinted from: NCME Measurement in Education, vol. 5, no. 4, Fall, 1974.

[15]William A. Mehrens and Irvin J. Lehmann, Measurement and Evaluation in Education and Psychology, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973).

are concerned about grades, namely: the teachers, the pupils, the parents, the school administrators, and the potential employers. The reasons for their interest are in effect the functions of school marks. In summary, these seem to be: 1) Indicate academic standing and competence. 2) Facilitate instruction and guidance. 3) Provide motivation for learning. 4) Serve as a basis for future planning. 5) Serve administratively for placement, promotion, certification, admission, and for peranent records. 6) Serve as predictors of school and vocational success."[16] Ebel gives further support by saying: "Most instructors, at all levels of education, seem to agree that marks are necessary.....as Masden has pointed out, the claim that...."abolition of marks would lead to better achievment is, by its very nature, impossible to demonstrate."[17] "To say that grading persists simply because teachers tend to follow tradition blindly is to do a grave injustice to hundreds of thousands of capable and dedicated teachers. They support grading because grades help them to teach well."[18]

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[16]James M. Bradfield and H. Stewart Moredock, op. cit., p. 206

[17]Ebel, Essentials of Educational Measurement, p. 313.

[18]Ebel, op. cit., "Shall We Get Rod of Grades?".

In 1938, Henry Daniel Rinsland took a rather strong stand against traditional grading practices. Even with his dissatisfaction about grades and grading practices, Rinsland admits....."Without grades, all efforts of educational and vocational guidance are eliminated and guesswork substituted in their place.....Grades are needed, but they must be valid, dependable and useful."[19]

Most any proponent of grading will admit that grades are sometimes misused by teachers and proponents of grading in no way support sloppy grading practices. Proponents do support the concept of grades and grading as opposed to no grades and successfully build a case for the retention of grades in the school. "A fairly recent nationwide survey by the National Education Association Research Division has shown the prominent role that the traditional marking system plays in reporting pupil progress. The results, (shown in Table 2.1), reveal that letter grades (A B C D F) were used more frequently than any other system. If the percentages for letter grades (A B C D F) and number grades (A B C D F) are combined, it can be seen that 82 percent of the elementary teachers and 92 percent of the secondary teachers used one of these traditional methods of marking pupil progress. Apparently the ease with which such marks can be assigned, averaged, and used for various school purposes

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19 Henry D. Rinsland, Constructing Tests and Grading, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1938).

contributes to their continued widespread use."[20] Such data clearly give grades the position of "status-quo."

In summarizing the proponent view, then, it can be said that those who favor the use of grades and grading do so for, generally, the following reasons:

1. Grades are necessary to report a student's status to him.
2. Grades are necessary to report a student's status to his parents (assuming he is not the legal age of majority).
3. Grades are necessary to report a student's status to his future teachers.
4. Grades are necessary to report a student's status to his future.
5. Grades are necessary as criterion for determining college admission.
6. Grades provide stimulus, direction and rewards for educational efforts.
7. High grades and effective learning are not alternative goals. They are closely parallel, if not identical.
8. Grades assist administrators in decisions for placement, certification, promotion and permanent records of student achievement.
9. Grades help teachers to teach better and to better report to the parties mentioned in itesm 1 - 5.

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[20]Norman E. Gronlund, Measurement and Evaluation in Teaching, 3rd edition (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1976), p. 517.

10. When students are involved in the process of being graded, they come to accept achievement level as the first and primary criterion for the distribution of rewards.
11. If no grades were to be given, opportunities for educational and/or vocational guidance would be haphazard at best.
12. Grades explicitly report individual differences in achievement.

Throughout this section of Chapter II, the author has referred back to Robert L. Ebel as being one of the more vocal advocates of grades and grading. It is fitting, therefore, to conclude this section with a statement from him.

> It is true that the mark a student receives is not in itself an important educational outcome - by the same token, neither is the degree toward which the student is working, nor the academic rank or scholarly reputation of the professors who teach him. But all of these symbols can be and should be valid indications of important educational attainments. It is desirable, and not impossibly difficult, to make the goal of maximum educational achievement compatible with the goal of highest possible marks. If these two goals are not closely related, the fault would seem to rest with those who teach the courses and who assign the marks. From the point of view of student, parent, teachers, and employers there is nothing 'mere' about the marking process and the marks it yields.[21]

The Case Against A B C D F

In the previous section of this chapter the advocacy argument for A B C D F was presented. It is a solid argument, backed by the fact that grades are still being widely used in the school of America.

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[21] Ebel, Essentials of Educational Measurement, p. 314.

The advocacy case has held its ground against a barrage of former and recent research showing the weaknesses inherent in the system. The opponents of grading have been quite vocal over the years and the sheer amount of research done in favor of the negative case will make the negative view seem stronger on the basis of weight alone. Scholars of the grading debate, however, are wise enough to know that the burden of proof rests with the negatives. The status-quo, i.e.; grades need not produce such a volume of research.

There are many in education who feel that A B C D F either should be eliminated altogether in favor of alternative systems or, at least, very carefully and completely reviewed with an eye toward substantial improvement in grading practices. The latter view brings little disagreement from the proponents of grades as they, too, feel that grades must be valid. The difference between the two positions centers around the proposal of doing away with grades entirely.

One of the most vocal opponents to grades is Sidney B. Simon of the University of Massachusetts. Simon's view is that grades have indeed been with us for some time although, according to Simon.... "there is literally not a shred of research evidence which supports the the present grading system."[22] Simon views the accuracy of grades as in the same category with inflated advertising and their objectivity

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[22]Sidney B. Simon, "Grades Must Go," School Review, 78: No. 3 (May, 1970), 398.

akin to an old maid telling her correct age when asked.[23] Simon's negative case, in summary, looks like this:

> 1. Grades separate students and professors into two warring camps. The grades keep student from teacher and teacher from student.
> 2. Grades overreward the wrong people and often punish students who need to be punished the least. Along with this, Simon contends, grades have been used systematically to screen out black students, to decide who to ship out to Vietman, and to firmly remind those who will not conform that they are failures.
> 3. Grades tend to destroy what learning is all about. Students tend to select courses which will give a better guarantee of a high grade with less work or, at best, they will strive to balance their classload to avoid a preponderance of tough courses, selecting, instead, what Simon terms the "snap and crap" courses.
> 4. Grades reinforce and archaic notion of competition which may well turn out to be deadly in the 1970's. Competition certainly does exist in the World, but, nevertheless, the skills of cooperation actually dominate a sane man's life much more than do the skills of competition. Competition for grades has made today's campuses lonely places.
> 5. Of all the destructive things grades do, probably the ugliest is that they contribute to debasing a student's estimation of his own worth. The emphasis and extreme focus upon grades, term after term, seem to squeeze a student's identity and self-image within the narrow confines of his transcript.[24]

Simon advocates a sweeping awareness among students alerting them to the fact that they may be being shortchanged at the edcational marketplace and, as consumers, have a right to demand a real education.[25]

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[23] Ibid., pp. 399-401.

[24] Ibid., pp. 398-401.

[25] Ibid., p. 401.

The entire concept of "accountability" rises its head here. If students are indeed consumers, and grades are indicators of the product they are buying, just who is accountable for the quality of the product? Mehrens and Lehmann comment that there is....."certainly no current agreement about who is presently being held accountable in education or who should be. Deterline (1971, p. 16) said that educators operate so that all failures and ineffective aspects of our instruction are slyly laid on the students, in the form of a grade or rating, (and) we never really have to face the facts of our own incompentence in the field of instruction. He suggests that students are held accountable if they do not learn - in spite of any failures, deficiencies, and incompetence in our teaching - and he welcomes educational accountability as a countervailing force."[26] Grades, then, the traditional means of reporting since the beginning of the century, are being questioned as to their role in the accountability structure.

Even early critics of A B C D F realized the problem presented by Deterline. Wrinkle (1947) commented that....."the evaluation problem is: How well does he (the student) do what he should do? And the reporting problem is: What kind of reports should we make to tell how well he has done the things that he should do? Sounds simple, doesn't it?"[27] Continuing in this vein, Wrinkle observed

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[26]Irving J. Lehmann and William A. Mehrens, Standardized Tests in Education, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2nd ed., 1975) pp. 302-303.

[27]William L. Wrinkle, Improving Marking and Reporting Practices, (New York, Rinehart and Company, 1947), p. 4.

....."Except in a very limited sense, A B C D F marks cannot convey significant information regarding the achievement, progress, failure, or success of the student. A mark, unless its meaning is restricted to one defined value, cannot be interpreted since it is usually a composite index representing the average of a variety of different values."[28] Much of the confusion about grades can be traced to the fact that these grades are used by teachers for many different reasons, and no one definition is able to cover all the factors involved. Teachers do not agree on a standard meaning and freely admit that they use different criteria in appraising student achievement. Among the more commonly used criteria are test scores, teacher-student relationship, deportment, sex, promptness, obedience, effort, and attitude. The one criterion common to all grades is the acutal achievement of students in the subject matter for which they are being graded. The other criteria are usually subjective appraisals. The degree to which these subjective appraisals help determine the grade a student receives is not completely known.[29] Steller's work supports this concept by showing that....."teachers, for the most part, were found to be incapable of defining precisely those tasks that are involved during the process of assigning marks. It, therefore, is apparent that not only do the resultant marks lack

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[28] Ibid., p. 33

[29] Donald J. Brown, Appraisal Procedures in the Secondary Schools, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970) p. 106.

reliability but also that teachers, for this reason, cannot defend or explain the assigned marks."[30]

W. L. Adams, in a 1932 study, showed that...."teachers responding to this investigation noted innumerable criteria ranging from such non-measurable points as 'student shows no interest' or 'not paying attention' to being absent too much of the time or not meeting certain specific academic standards. Specific criteria were rare, and the study revealed how arbitrary the factors underlying the failing grade really are. Yet, even though the criteria may be arbitrary and may change with time, the 'failure' remains permanently on the student's record."[31] Even the factor of physical fatigue on the part of the teacher has been found to affect the marks given a student. Dexter (1935) showed that some teachers, when fatigued, tend to become more lenient while others become increasingly particular. The problem, of course, is that the conditions for fair grading seldom exist and more often than not teachers grade under pressures of time or personal fatigue.[32]

The question of motivation often comes forth in the grading debate. That is: Do grades provide the incentive, the reward, the

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[30]Steller, op. cit., abstract.

[31]W. L. Adams, "Why Teachers Say They Fail Pupils", Educational Administration and Supervision, 1932, 18, pp. 594-600 cited by Kirshenbaum, et. al., Wad-Ja-Get?, p. 253.

[32]E. S. Dexter, "The Effect of Fatigue or Boredom on Teachers' Marks", Journal of Educational Research, 1935, 28, pp. 664-667 cited by Kirshenbaum, et al., Wad-Ja-Get?, p. 253.

gold at the end of the rainbow that all students need in order to be motivated in school? Proponents of grading feel that the incentive argument is one of the best in favor of grades. Ebel comments that marks provide an important means for stimulating, directing and rewarding the educational efforts of students[33] yet Evans indicates that research does not support this contention, and, in fact, a study by Chamberlain and others demonstrated that the reverse could be true.[34] Chamberlain's study, which has never been replicated, demonstrated that grading was not essential to motivate students. On the contrary, the results suggest that grading could be a hindrence to the development of intellectual and personal skills.[35] Similarily, Bradfield and Moredock comment that letter marks..... "are often construed as rewards and punishments for the pupils and as prestige symbols by their parents and the public. When thus construed, grades have become ends in themselves, something to be achieved for their own sake instead of serving to facilitate learning. We should not have to look far to find children who are going through 'motions' in the classroom just to achieve high marks and who are not concerned about learning anything. This is extrinsic motivation at its worst.[36]

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[33]Ebel, op. cit., p. 313.

[34]Francis B. Evans, "What Research Says About Grading" Degrading the Grading Myths: A Primer of Alternatives to Grades and Marks, Sidney B. Simon and James A. Bellanca, eds., (Washington, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1976), p. 41.

[35]Ibid., p. 42.

[36]Bradfield and Moredock, op. cit., pp. 207-208.

Opponents to grading, in arguing the idea that grades become extrinsic rewards, base much of their argument on the age old school problem of cheating. Do students cheat just to get a better grade? The research would seem to say "Yes". Students through the ages have cheated. They have cheated to avoid punishment, cheated to maintain academic standing, cheated to "up themselves" on the establishments staircase, and cheated to gain status.[37] Bowers, reporting on a nationwide survey of college students, found that at least 50 percent admitted they had cheated during college by plagarizing, using crib notes, copying on an examination, and by using other means. Bowers commented that all of these illegitmate actions were a consequence of the system of examinations and grade points, and that students engage in cheating because they believe they may be rewarded by a higher grade.[38] A similar situation was reported by Fala, who noted that at least half of the 5,000 college students interviewed during a study by the Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research admitted to cheating. He indicated that the incidence of cheating was highest among weak students, men, career-oriented majors, and students who were in school for such non-academic

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[37]Sidney B. Simon, "Wh Ever Cheats to Learn?" Degrading the Grading Myths, op. cit., p. 20.

[38]William Bowers, Student Dishonesty and its Control in College (New York: New York Bureau of Applied Behavioral Science, 1964), cited in Evans, op. cit., p. 43.

interests as sports and music.[39]

The proponents of grading suggest that, if done properly, grading is the best system of reporting. Research concerning the validity of grades, the incentive factor and the cheating problem, however, seems to weigh very heavily on the proponents' arguments. In summary, the arguments against grading would be:

1. Grades are Essentially Meaningless:
    a. There is a great diversity among institutions and teachers in grading practices.
    b. Many schools lack definite grading policies.
    c. A single symbol cannot possibly report adequately the complex details of an educational achievement.
    d. Teachers are often casual or even careless in grading.
    e. Grades are frequently used to punish or to enforce discipline rather than to report achievement accurately.
2. Grades are educationally unimportant:
    a. Grades are only symbols.
    b. The most important outcomes are intangible and hence cannot be assessed or graded.
    c. A teacher's grades are less important to a pupil than his own self evaluations.
    d. Grades do not predict later achievement correctly.

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[39]Michael A. Fala, Dunce Caps, Hickory Sticks, and Public Evaluations (Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1968), pp. 11-12, cited in Kirshenbaum, et. al., Wad-Ja-Get?, p. 268.

e. What should be evaluated is the total educational program, not the students.

3. Grades are Unnecessary:
   a. Grades are ineffective motivators of real achievement in education.
   b. When students learn mastery, as they should, no differential levels of achievement remain to be graded.
   c. Grades have persisted in schools mainly because teachers cling to traditional practices.
4. Grades are Harmful:
   a. Low grades may discourage the less able pupils from efforts to learn.
   b. Grading makes failure inevitable for some pupils.
   c. Parents sometimes punish pupils for low grades, and reward high grades inappropriately.
   d. Grades set universal standards for all pupils despite their great individual differences.
   e. Grading emphasizes common goals for all pupils and discourages individuality in learning.
   f. Grading rewards conformity and penalizes creativity.
   g. Grading fosters competition rather than cooperation.
   h. Pressure to get high grades leads some pupils to cheat.
   i. Grading is more compatible with subject-centered education than with humanistic, child centered education.[40]

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[40]Ebel, "Shall We", op. cit., pp. 1-2.

After reviewing the literature concerning the negative view of grades and grading, it is indeed difficult to determine why grades are still with us in so many educational institutions in America. Whipping boy that they have been, grades have endured. The literature clearly shows, however, that the case for abolishment of grades is indeed strong and it must be assumed that, eventually, something in the grading fortress must give. We turn to Wrinkle for some final comments:

> Whatever social philosophy you may have, whether it gives fundamental recognition to individual or social values, to competition or cooperation, it is obvious that the school by its marking practices is doing much to promote the development of antisocial attitudes and practices. A desire to win even at the expense of others cannot be countenanced as a desirable educational attitude. The competition of unequals does not provide a fair basis for determing penalties or the granting of honors. There is plenty of opportunity for the utilization of competitive motives in a legitimate manner. The competition of the student with his previous record and attempts to achieve in terms of his ability provide opportunities for the application of competitive interests. The encouragement of competition by individuals of unequal ability, however, is in violation of the principle of individual differences, is unfair, does not conform to mental health practices and is negative in many of its results.[41]

The next section of this chapter will deal with a discussion of various selected alternative forms of pupil progress reporting followed by consideration of the factors which enter into the teacher's decision process when determining a grade. Later discussion will deal with the validity of the various selected alternatives to grading selected for this study.

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[41]Wrinkle, op. cit., p. 48.

Discussion and Definition of Various Selected Alternatives to the Use of Grades

In the previous section of this chapter, the case against grading was presented. It is a strong case with a rather broad base of research data. As is the duty of any negative position in a debate, those who would favor the abolishment of the status-quo must present some sort of a plan. It is not enough to argue against the status-quo, a plan, and/or alternative method must be brought forth. The grading debate is no exception. This section of the chapter will define and discuss the grading alternatives which are selected for emphasis in the study. These alternatives represent the "plan" presented by the negative case. The alternatives selected do not represent all of the many variations in reporting practices available, but, rather, represent seven commonly used alternatives. Comments from authors in the field will include value statements arrived at through research as to the strengths and weaknesses of the various alternatives.

Although an analysis of educational literature would indicate that there is a popular movement underway for the improvement of marking and reporting practices, the truth is that although there is great interest and real concern for such improvement, not many schools have made significant departures from conventional practice.[42] Educational practices change slowly to the practice which is next easiest to do. The possible departures from conventional marking and

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[42] Ibid., p. 50.

reporting practice would be (1) to manipulate the symbols, (2) to supplement the symbols, and (3) to make a fundamental change involving a different approach. And these are the things that have happened.[43]

In reviewing alternative reporting practices, then, the author will turn first to one alternative which seemed easiest to do in the efforts to change. That is: The Pass-Fail grading system.

Pass-Fail

In spite of the higher reliability of a multicategory system of reporting, there has been a considerable move toward a more restrictive two-category (pass-fail) system. The pass-fail system has been adopted, at least for a few courses, by about two-thirds of the American colleges and universities. Many high schools are also adopting a modified form of the pass-fail system. There has been considerable discussion in the literature about whether this is good or bad.[44]

Pass-fail, of course, means just what the title implies. Students receive only one or the other mark. Either they do enough work to merit a "passing" mark, or they do so little they "fail". In the pure sense, there is no middle-ground in the pass fail system. Most often, however, the student receiving a "fail" does have the opportunity to take the work again, or make up specific deficiencies in order to earn a "pass" mark. Each school or school system offering courses on a

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Mehrens and Lehmann, op. cit., p. 597.

pass/fail basis, according to Educational Research Service Information, "usually set up regulations for students wishing to be graded in this manner. These rules vary from school to school. In some, pass-fail is limited to certain grade levels. For example, in the New Rochelle, New York, High School and in high schools in Yonkers, New York only seniors may take courses on a pass-fail basis."[45]

Bramlette offered five possible benefits to be derived from the use of a two category marking system: (1) increases emphasis on learning, (2) decreases emphasis on marking, (3) encourages the poorer student, (4) forces students to evaluate themselves, and (5) encourages better attitudes in parents who want a superior child but have instead an average child.[46] The effect of pass-fail on achievement level, however, seems to be in question. Some students use pass-fail marking as a means of carrying an extra course or two, but more often, they use it to redistribute academic effort, and in a good proportion of cases, student achievement in the pass-fail courses is adversly affected.[47] This contention is supported by Gold and others who analyzed complete pass-fail marking (that is all courses taken by the student that semester were pass-fail), partial pass-fail marking and

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[45]Educational Research Service, Pass-Fail Plans (Washington, D. C. American Association of School Administrators and National Education Association, November 1971), p. 2.

[46]Metle Bramlette, "Is the S and U Grading System Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory?," Texas Outlook, XXVI (April, 1941), 29-30 cited in Steller, op. cit., p. 53.

[47]Evans, op. cit., p. 46.

traditional grading. It was found: (a) that students preferred the idea of partial pass-fail marking to the other two methods, and (b) that pass-fail grading let to a decline in academic performance.[48]

It is probably safe to say that most of the systems offering pass-fail courses do so to relieve anxiety about grades and to enable students to take courses they would not ordinarily take for fear of low grades.[49]

Credit - No Credit

In the minds of many, educators and students alike, credit-no credit is synonomous with pass-fail. In practice, the two systems do function the same. The prime difference is, of course, that credit-no credit has no connotation of failure. There can be many reasons for a student's receiving a "no credit" mark. He may have, for example, elected the course on a no credit basis as an enrichment experience, or for the purpose of supplementing other course work. Advocates of the credit-no credit system say....."to use a system that doe not contain failure; students are encouraged to try hard courses. Education is then expanded. Even if the student does not pass, he can continue through the rest of the semester to assimilate a certain amount of

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[48] Ibid., p. 45.

[49] Educational Research Service, op. cit., p. 2.

knowledge, perhaps enough to allow him to pass a second time if he tries the course again."[50]

Glasser suggests that....."no student ever at any time be labeled a failure or led to believe he is a failure through the use of the grading system."[51] Hamachek supports the non-failure concept of reporting by saying that, eventually....."each person arrives at a more or less stable framework of beliefs about himself and proceeds to live in as consistent a manner as possible within that framework." [52] "The boy, for example, who conceives himself to be a 'failure-type student' can find all sorts of excuses to avoid studying, doing homework, or participating in class. Frequently, he ends up with the low grade he predicted he would get in the first place. His report card bears him out. Now he has 'proof' that he's less able."[53]

Critics of credit-no credit level the same arguments of achievement erosion at that system as at the pass-fail system. They contend that students, once....."freed from the pressures of traditional

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[50] Ibid.

[51] William Glasser, Schools Without Failure (New York: Haprer and Row, 1969), p. 95.

[52] Donald E. Hamachek, Encounters With the Self (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), p. 175.

[53] Ibid.

grading,....do less work than usual."[54]

Due to the prime difference between pass-fail and credit-no credit systems (lack of a failure connotation with credit-no credit) we cannot lump the two together as one system and they will be considered as separate alternatives for the purposes of the study even though they do have many similarities in strengths and weaknesses.

Blanket Grading

The practice of assessing each student with a common grade, (usually an A or a B) is referred to as "Blanket Grading". The teacher announces at the beginning of the year, or at the outset of a semester or term, that anyone in the class who does the required amount of work will receive the blanket grade.[55] This companion to the pass-fail and credit-no credit approach, is sometimes used when community pressure seems to dictate adherence to an A B C D F system. The blanket grading approach is often used in elementary schools under the guise of the S I U system. The student doing the minimal amount of work is given an S, although the students are not generally informed of the process in advance.

Use of blanket grading seems to be more in evidence in the colleges usually under the guise of pass-fail or credit-no credit. The

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[54]Kirshenbaum, et al., op. cit., p. 305.

[55]Ibid., p. 307.

rationale is that by the time a student gets to graduate school, or into college, or even into high school, he has proved his ability. He should not be called upon to prove it again and again in every course he takes.[56]

Along with being a close companion of pass-fail and credit-no credit, blanket grading is considered as one form of contract evaluation.[57] As such, an agreement is reached between teacher and student as to the minimum achievement required for the grade. The prime benefit of the blanket grading/contract approach is, according to its advocates, that the system permits students to work for whatever goal they desire while providing the broadest possible field of choice for each student. Along with this, the process eliminates as much as possible all sources of externally imposed threat.[58] Blanket grading carries with it the advantages and disadvantages of pass-fail, contract and credit-no credit, while still giving the flexibility of functioning within the confines of A B C D F.

Clark[59] compared graduate students enrolled in an advanced educational psychology course, in which a grade of B was guaranteed, with

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[56]Ebel, Essentials, op. cit., p. 335.

[57]Kirshenbaum, et. al., op. cit., p. 307.

[58]Arthur W. Combs, "A Contract Method of Evaluation," Degrading the Grading Myths, op. cit., p. 70.

[59]D. C. Clark, "Competition for Grades and Graduate Student Performance," Journal of Educational Research 62: 351-54, April 1969, cited in Evans, op. cit., p. 44.

graduate students taking a similar course on a regularly graded basis. Although he found that the students in the course that was graded competitively wrote much better research papers, and reported that they spent a greater number of hours studying, he discened no difference between the performance of each group on a final examination. The students in the course with a guaranteed grade claimed that pressure for grades in other courses caused them to let the psychology course slide, and that they found it difficult to muster motivation. Clark's study points up the argument against blanket grading which is based on the motivation platform and typifies the negative case against blanket or guaranteed grades.

Self Evaluation

Some in education might argue that self evaluation for reporting purposes is the most realistic form of reporting since each and every student should be taught to fairly assess his own efforts at getting a job done. It is true that many people are very good at assessing their own strengths and weaknesses, but the usual trend is for students to be overly harsh with themselves in their evaluations.

Is self-evaluation more important and useful than evaluation by others? Ebel replies by saying that ultimately...."the only really effective evaluation is a person's self-evaluation. But a person's assessment of his own achievements is likely to be based on highly subjective perceptions and on idiosyncratic values, and hence to be at

least somewhat biased."[60] Mehrens and Lehmann agree by saying that self-evaluation....."is obviously important if one is to be involved in self-directed learning. And self-directed learning is essential both in school and after the student leaves schools. Unfortunately, research does not indicate clearly how teachers can improve students' abilities in self-evaluation."[61]

It certainly can be argued that it is an important learning exterpience for students to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses yet there is some research to show that, over time, students' self-grades become less accurate.[62] Russell,[63] in reviewing the research up to 1953, found that studies tended to support the view that student self-evaluations are usually invalid measures of achievement and personality adjustment.

There seems, then, to be some agreement that self-evaluation is beneficial to a degree and does involve the student in his report more than other methods, yet the resultant grade or mark is suspect in its validity. If the goal of the learning structure is to help the student *be* realistic in assessing his own strengths and weaknesses, then self-evaluation is meaningful and a very worthwhile learning experience.

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[60]Ebel, Essentials, op. cit., p. 311.

[61]Mehrens and Lehmann, op. cit., p. 607.

[62]Kirshenbaum, et.al., op. cit., p. 296.

[63]David H. Russell, "What Does Research Say About Self Evaluation?" Journal of Educational Research 46: No. 8 561-573, April, 1953, cited in Kirshenbaum, et al., op. cit., p. 315.

Parent Conferences

Many educators believe that parent-teacher conferences are the ideal method of reporting to parents.[64] Limitations imposed by large class sizes in the secondary schools, however, often render the face-to-face meeting between teacher and parent unworkable. Parent-teacher conferences, therefore, are mainly the tool of the elementary teacher. This method is extremely popular and has a large following in the schools for a variety of reasons, the main one being the fact that teachers, who are aware of the effect parental attitudes may have on learning, feel they can do a better job of teaching the child after having met with the parent or parents.

Silberman,[65] in discussing the John H. Finley School in Harlme, noted the high degree of parental involvement which existed in that building's unique program while Johnson and Medinnus,[66] in discussing the findings of Winterbottom[67] pointed to the significant relationship

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[64]National Education Association, Evaluation and Reporting of Student Achievement (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1974), p. 19.

[65]Charles E. Silberman, Crisis In The Classroom (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), pp. 99-110.

[66]Ronald C. Johnson and Gene R. Medinnus, Child Psychology: Behavior and Development (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1969, 2nd. ed.), pp. 459-463

[67]M. Winterbottom in D. C. McClelland, J. W. Atkinson, R. A. Clark, and E. L. Lowell, The Achievement Motive (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953), pp. 297-306.

between maternal stress on early independence in the child and later high achievement in the early elementary grades. Similarily, lack of communication and agreement was found to be significant in the relationship between the low achieving boy and his mother.

Hart,[68] showed the differences between the information desired by parents and the teacher's feelings as to what the parents should receive. The results of Hart's study (shown in Tables 2.1 and 2.1) point to the fact that parents and teachers do indeed differ as to the perception of what information about the child is important. This difference of opinion makes the parent-teacher conference even more important because parent feelings can be relayed in a face-to-face discussion, an advantage that no other reporting technique has. The need for frequent discussions with the teacher about the kinds of behavior the child exhibits at home and at school, along with the need for the parents to be informed about the goals of the instructional program is emphasized by Anderson[69] who sees evaluation of pupil progress as....."a cooperative job among teachers, pupils, and parents."[70]

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[68]Lois B. Hart, "Dear Parents: What You Want to Know Isn't Necessarily What We Want To Tell You," Degrading the Grading Myths, op. cit., pp. 96-103.

[69]Vernon E. Anderson, Principles and Procedures of Curriculum Improvement (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1965, 1nd ed.), pp. 472-475.

[70]Ibid., p. 472.

Table 2.1

Rankings of Categories of Information
Parents and Teachers.[a]

Categories of Information	All Parents	All Teachers
Academic Progress	1	3
How the Child Learns	2	1
How the Home Can Help	3	4
How the Child Conforms to School Standards	4	6
Child's Social Adjustment with Classmates	5	2
School's Goals and Organization	6	5

(From Lois B. Hart, "Dear Parents: What You Want to Know Isn't Necessaryily What We Want to Tell You," in Degrading the Grading Myths, Sidney B. Simon and James A. Bellanca, eds. (Washington, D. C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1976.) (From a one-year pilot project on report cards using a written narrative in combination with parent-teacher conferences. A sample of 208 sets of parents and 60 elementary teachers was used in the Westhill School District, New York.)

[a]Louis B. Hart, "Dear Parents: What You Want To Know Isn't Necessarily What We Want To Tell You," In Degrading The Grading Myths, Sidney B. Simon and James A. Bellanca, eds. (Washington, D. C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1976), p. 101.

Table 2.2

Rankings of Specific Information Within Six Categories.[b]

General Category	Specific Information Most Desired by Parents	Specific Information Most Desired by Teachers
Academic Progress	What is my child's capacity and how does he/her work compare with his/her ability?	Same
How the Child Learns	Does my child apply what he/she has learned to situations beyond the immediate lesson?	Same
How the Home Can Help	How can I help my child with the problems that result from physical and emotional growth?	Same
How the Child Conforms to School Standards	Does my child pay attention in class and does he/she follow directions?	Same
School's goals and Organization	In what way is my child evaluated and how often does this happen?	What are the long- and short-term goals of the school?

(From Lois B. Hart, "Dear Parents", (see Table 2.1)

[b]Lois B. Hart, op. cit., p. 101.

The parent-teacher conference can become a bore for both parties, however, unless the teacher is properly prepared for the conference. Poor planning can result in a haphazard, rambling discussion of not much of anything unless the teacher has done the necessary "homework" and can keep in mind the admonishment of Maves who warned...."The parent-teacher conference, which can be used in any community, is a dynamic potentiality for continuous publicity, educational interpretation, and cooperative endeavor. The conference must, however, reach a high level of performance if it is to be of the most value."[71]

Narrative Reports

As an alternative to the A B C D F system, narrative reporting has experienced a "rebirth." The term "rebirth" is used because narrative reporting, the idea of a letter home to parents, has been often used in the history of American Education. In Wrinkle's view...."A blank sheet of paper in the hands of a teacher who is capable of writing so that parents can understand could, next to the conference plan, be the best means of reporting."[72] The concept, however, of writing out an individual report for even 20 or 30 students in an elementary classroom is abhorred by many teachers simply because of the time element involved. The task is certainly magnified in the case of the secondary school teacher who meets with 150 or more students daily.

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[71]Harold J. Maves, "Contrasting Levels of Performance in Parent-Teacher Conferences," Elementary Curriculum, Robert E. Chasnoff, ed., (New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1964), p. 518.

[72]Wrinkle, op. cit., p. 54.

The problem of the time element in producing narrative reports was recognized some time ago, and efforts were mounted to catagorize some of the more frequently used comments in order to assure a quality of uniformity and understanding. Early advocates of the narrative approach urged that...."even with a group of teachers who are capable of writing both understandably and correctly, the standardization of comments, especially at the beginning, is a desirable plan."[73] The standardization of comments led to a higher quality of understandability as well as saving time for the teacher writing the narrative, yet the narrative reporting practice followed for some years before it was reborn through the assistance of computer technology. The availability of computer assistance has given the narrative report new life.

In 1974, Giannangelo and Lee brought forward their version of computer assisted narratives called the CARP system (Computer Assisted Reporting to Parents).[74] The system, in a simplified explanation, gives the teacher the option of hundreds of comments, both affective and cognitive, which, when combined for a certain student, produce a totally individualized report which speaks directly to course objectives. Specific course objectives are written as anecdotal statements of academic performance at varying levels of proficiency. Each statement is number coded to facilitate teacher selection and reporting. A sample of the resulting report is found in Illustration 2.2. Parent reaction

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Duane M. Gainnangelo and Kwi Yoon Lee, "At Last: Meaningful Report Cards," Phi Delta Kappan, May, 1974, pp. 630-31.

Illustration 2.2

A typical computer assisted narrative report produced by the CARP system developed and reported by Duane M. Giannangelo and Kwi Yoon Lee, Memphis State University Laboratory School, 1975.[c]

414 THE EDUCATIONAL FORUM [May

JANUARY 15, 1975
TEACHER DR. GIANNANGELO
CAMPUS SCHOOL

PUPIL DAVIS, JOHN
GRADE 5

** THE FOLLOWING IS A REPORT OF YOUR **
** CHILD'S MATHEMATICS PROGRESS **

THE PUPIL'S MATHEMATICAL ACHIEVEMENT IS ON THE AVERAGE LEVEL WHEN COMPARED WITH OTHER PUPILS' WORK IN THE CLASS.

THE PUPIL NEEDS TO PARTICIPATE MORE IN THE CLASS DISCUSSIONS.

THE PUPIL DOES NOT CHECK THE WORK CAREFULLY.

AFTER REPEATED INSTRUCTION THE PUPIL NOW UNDERSTANDS ABOUT DECIMALS AS PART OF THE NUMERAL SYSTEM.

AFTER REPEATED INSTRUCTION THE PUPIL NOW HAS AN UNDERSTANDING OF TENTHS, HUNDREDTHS, AND THOUSANDTHS.

EXAMPLE: IN .728 = 8 MEANS .008 OR EIGHT THOUSANDTHS, 2 MEANS .02 OR TWO HUNDREDTHS, 7 MEANS .7 OR SEVEN TENTHS.

AFTER REPEATED INSTRUCTION THE PUPIL IS ABLE TO NAME NUMBERS WITH WORDS, DECIMALS, AND FRACTIONS.

EXAMPLE: SEVENTY-EIGHT THOUSANDTHS = .078 = 78/1000.

AFTER REPEATED INSTRUCTION THE PUPIL IS ABLE TO CHANGE DECIMALS TO FRACTIONS AND FRACTIONS TO DECIMALS.

EXAMPLE: 23/1000 = .023, .46 = 46/100.

PRAISE THE PUPIL FOR WHAT HE (SHE) DID WELL.

ENCOURAGE THE PUPIL TO ELIMINATE CARELESS MISTAKES.

CHECK EXAMPLE OF THE PUPIL'S WORK AT HOME.

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[c]Duane M. Giannangelo, "Make Report Cards Meaningful," The Educational Forum, May, 1975, p. 414.

to the CARP system has been favorable, and teachers have praised the system because they feel it lets the parent know more exactly what his child is doing in various subject areas, especially reading and mathematics. The system does, of course, require more record keeping on the part of the teacher and requires the teacher to take a closer look at the needs and achievement of each child.

The year 1972-73 also saw the copyrighting of a computer assisted means of reproting standardized test data. In prior years test data from the Psychological Corporation's Differential Aptitude Test had been printed in the form of numerical stanines and/or percentiles. These raw data reports were, then, interpreted to the student and parents through a student-counselor conference. Not only was the reporting practice time consuming, but, often, valuable information may have been misinterpreted or not delivered at all. By moving to a computer assisted narrative, the D.A.T. test results are now easily understood by all parties concerned. A sample of the D.A.T. narrative is hown in Illustration 2.3.

In summarizing the advantages of a narrative reporting system, and particularily a computer assisted narrative, the following can be said: 1) More specific analysis by the teacher of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses is possible; 2) teachers have the opportunity to report to parents more frequently and more precisely their child's academic progress; 3) the parents are indirectly educated regarding the ongoing academic program in the school; and 4) the parents will be

A sample of a Developmental Aptitude Test Computer Assisted Narrative Report.[d]

YOUR CAREER PLANNING REPORT

The report printed below is based on your answers to the *Career Planning Questionnaire* and on your aptitudes as measured by the *Differential Aptitude Tests*. Remember that this report tells you how things look at the present time, and that your interests and goals may change. To aid you in understanding the report, descriptions of the tests are printed on the reverse side of this form, followed by the groups of school subjects and activities, and the groups of jobs and occupations.

IN YOUR CAREER PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE YOU INDICATED THAT YOU ARE 14 YEARS OLD, A GIRL IN THE 9TH GRADE AND THAT YOU EXPECT TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND GO TO A TECHNICAL, TRADE, OR BUSINESS SCHOOL. FURTHERMORE YOU SAID THAT YOUR GRADES PUT YOU IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF YOUR CLASS. AMONG THE GROUPS OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES, YOU SAID YOU LIKED THE FOLLOWING: ART, DRAMA, MUSIC; SCHOOL ENTERTAINMENT; OFFICE SKILLS.

YOU INDICATED THAT YOUR FIRST CHOICE OF CAREER GOALS WAS IN THE GROUP CALLED: EDUCATION AND HUMAN WELFARE.

PEOPLE WHO GO INTO THIS KIND OF WORK USUALLY LIKE SCHOOL SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES DIFFERENT FROM THOSE YOU LIKE. THEY ALSO GET MORE EDUCATION THAN YOU PLAN TO GET. MOREOVER, THEIR APTITUDE TEST SCORES ARE GENERALLY HIGHER THAN YOURS. IT APPEARS THAT YOU MIGHT DO BETTER IN AN OCCUPATIONAL AREA CLOSER TO YOUR PATTERN OF APTITUDES, INTERESTS, AND EDUCATIONAL PLANS.

YOU INDICATED THAT YOUR SECOND CHOICE OF CAREER GOALS WAS IN THE GROUP CALLED: VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS.

THE SCHOOL SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES YOU PREFER ARE IN LINE WITH THE OCCUPATIONAL GROUP WHICH YOU HAVE INDICATED. THIS KIND OF WORK ALSO FITS YOUR PATTERN OF APTITUDES. YOUR EDUCATIONAL PLANS, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT PROVIDE YOU WITH AS MUCH FORMAL SCHOOLING AS IS USUALLY NEEDED IN THIS FIELD. YOU SHOULD CONSIDER GOING FURTHER WITH YOUR EDUCATION, OR YOU MIGHT CONSIDER OTHER OCCUPATIONAL AREAS MORE IN LINE WITH YOUR STATED EDUCATIONAL PLANS AS WELL AS WITH YOUR ABILITIES AND SCHOOL INTERESTS.

YOU INDICATED THAT YOUR THIRD CHOICE OF CAREER GOALS WAS IN THE GROUP CALLED: MEDICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES

THIS OCCUPATIONAL GROUP DOES NOT MATCH YOUR REPORTED LIKINGS AMONG SCHOOL SUBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES. IT REQUIRES MORE EDUCATION THAN YOU PLAN TO GET. HOWEVER, YOUR APTITUDE TEST SCORES ARE APPROPRIATE. BESIDES THE OCCUPATIONAL AREA YOU NAMED, YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER OTHER OCCUPATIONAL FIELDS MORE IN LINE WITH YOUR INTERESTS AND EDUCATIONAL PLANS.

CONSIDERING PRIMARILY YOUR TESTED APTITUDES, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT YOUR SCHOOL SUBJECT AND ACTIVITY PREFERENCES, YOU MAY WANT TO LOOK ALSO INTO THE FOLLOWING OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS: MEDICALLY RELATED; BUSINESS--ADMINISTRATION; BUSINESS--SALES AND PROMOTION. THIS IS ONLY A PARTIAL LIST OF THE OCCUPATIONAL AREAS WHICH COINCIDE WITH YOUR ABILITIES AND SCHOOL SUBJECT PREFERENCES. SINCE SOME OF THE OCCUPATIONS IN THESE AREAS REQUIRE MORE EDUCATION THAN YOU PLAN TO GET, YOU MAY WANT TO RECONSIDER YOUR EDUCATIONAL PLANS.

Any lack of agreement of your present occupational goals with the kinds of school subjects and activities you like, or with your tested aptitudes, suggests that you might reconsider your career plans. The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (published by the U.S. Department of Labor, and available in most public and school libraries), your school counselor, your parents, and other interested and informed adults may be useful sources of information and helpful to you in making decisions about what to try out and what to aim for.

Illustration 2.3

encouraged to increase communication between the home and the school.[75]

Disadvantages of the "letter home", either hand writtern or computer assisted, can be summarized as follows: 1) The reporting must be done by competent, conscientious teachers who are willing to devote a lot of time to reporting; 2) separate reporting for purposes of administrative record and transfer must, in many cases, be maintained; 3) some agreement must be reached within a system or a school as to the standardized comments which shll be made available through a computer assisted program; 4) parents must be willing to take the time to read the reports and to attend follow-up conferences with the teacher should misunderstanding of the narrative come up.

The question of financing a computer assisted program of reporting is bound to arise. Giannangelo and Lee, in their work with the CARP program found that...."This type of reporting technique is not financially prohibitive. It is estimated that for a cost of two dollars per child a parent could receive four reports per year in the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, and social studies. Surely this is not too much to pay to identify the specific academic strengths and weaknesses of our future adult population. Once this is done we can cpaitalize on the strengths and work to eliminate the weaknesses."[76]

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[75]Giannangelo and Les, op. cit., p. 631.

[76]Ibid.

Check List Reporting

Parent-teacher conferences and computer assisted narratives are two alternatives previously discussed which, by their structure, allow a more comprehensive report to parents. They are more specific, and impart more information, often in mastery terms, than A B C D F, pass-fail, credit-no credit, blanket grading or self evaluation. Not all school, however, can deliver, on a district wide basis, either the parent-teacher conference concept or the computer assisted narrative. The time involved in reporting to parents of secondary school students, for example, often must be limited to some sort of A B C D F mode or a system called the check list.

Check lists are just that; a list of comments printed on a sheet from which the teacher may choose and "check off" as being appropriate for the student in a given reporting period. Often, in elementary grades, an S or U may be inserted in the check space to indicate some specific degree of accomplishment.

Like many other alternatives to A B C D F, the chek list is hardly new. Wrinkle included the alternative in his work in 1947[77] as did Gronlund in 1976[78] so it is evident that check lists, of some form or another, have been available for some time as an alternative to A B C D F. A sample of an early check list report can be found

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[77]Wrinkle, op. cit., pp. 58-60.

[78]Gronlund, op. cit., pp. 515-516.

in Illustration 2.4. As is often the case with a check list report, the form in Illustration 2.4 is tied directly to a mastery level for specific objectives.

Variations on the check list are numerous. Often, the format is used as a part of a dual marking system that combines with check lists to produce a report format similar to that shown in Illustration 2.5. As can be gleaned from reviewing Illustrations 2.4 and 2.5, the checklist system is a shortcut to the writing of reports by teachers. Types of checklists range from 1) Vague descriptions of a few character traits and study habits supplementing conventional reports on academic subjects (_____gets along well with others), through; 2) Positive evaluations used to report what the student has achieved (_____reads with understanding), to; 3) Precise statements of behavioral objectives for all school subjects and goals: (Given a human skeleton, the student must be able to correctly identify by labeling at least 40 of the following bones: _____).[79]

Mehrens and Lehmann make the point that if....."rating scales are to be useful, it is absolutely mandatory that they accurately reflect the school's objectives and that teachers gather sufficient data (through observations, tests, and other means) so that ratings can be completed accurately."[80] Unfortunately, as Wrinkle points out,....."the tendency

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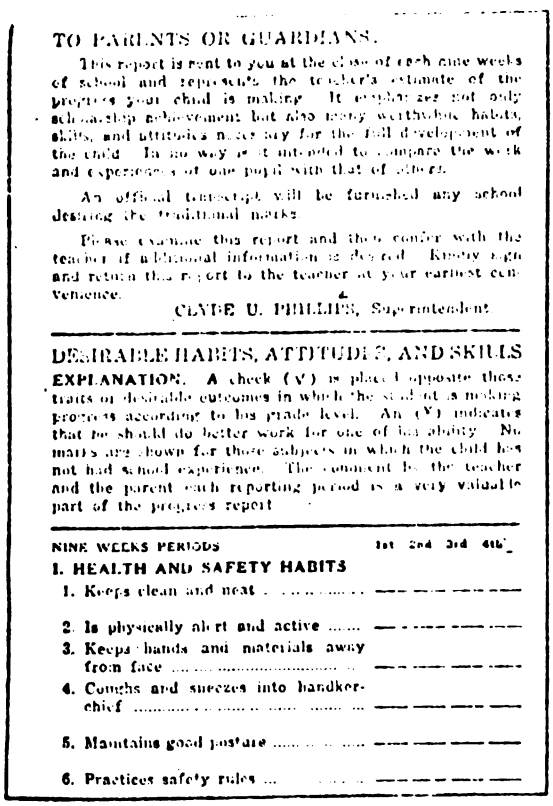
[79]National Education Association, Evaluation and Reporting, op. cit., p. 20.

[80]Mehrens and Lehmann, op. cit., p. 604.

Illustration 2.4

A typical check list report form.[e]



TO PARENTS OR GUARDIANS.

This report is sent to you at the close of each nine weeks of school and represents the teacher's estimate of the progress your child is making. It emphasizes not only scholastic achievement but also many worthwhile habits, skills, and attitudes necessary for the full development of the child. In no way is it intended to compare the work and experiences of one pupil with that of others.

An official transcript will be furnished any school desiring the traditional marks.

Please examine this report and then confer with the teacher if additional information is desired. Kindly sign and return this report to the teacher at your earliest convenience.

CLYDE U. PHILLIPS, Superintendent

DESIRABLE HABITS, ATTITUDES, AND SKILLS

EXPLANATION. A check (✓) is placed opposite those traits or desirable outcomes in which the student is making progress according to his grade level. An (X) indicates that he should do better work for one of his ability. No marks are shown for those subjects in which the child has not had school experience. The comment by the teacher and the parent each reporting period is a very valuable part of the progress report.

NINE WEEKS PERIODS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
I. HEALTH AND SAFETY HABITS				
1. Keeps clean and neat				
2. Is physically alert and active				
3. Keeps hands and materials away from face				
4. Coughs and sneezes into handkerchief				
5. Maintains good posture				
6. Practices safety rules				

NINE WEEKS PERIODS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
II. SOCIAL AND PERSONAL HABITS				
1. Responds quickly and willingly to directions of teachers				
2. Is reasonably quiet and orderly				
3. Keeps hands off other people				
4. Refrains from attracting undue attention				
5. Is dependable				
6. Takes care of personal possessions				
7. Takes proper care of school property				
8. Practices good manners				
9. Practices good sportsmanship				
III. WORK AND GENERAL STUDY HABITS				
1. Has materials at hand				
2. Uses time to good advantage				
3. Tries to improve his work				
4. Prepares all assignments on time				
IV. STUDY HABITS, ATTITUDES AND SKILLS BY SUBJECTS				
Spelling				
1. Observes how words are pronounced				
2. Knows meaning of words studied				
3. Generally spells correctly in written work				
4. Meets the desired standard in tests				

[e]William L. Wrinkle, Improving Marking and Reporting Practices, (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1947), p. 59.

Illustration 2.5

A comprehensive report form that combines dual marking and checklists of objectives.[f]

PROGRESS REPORT

University of Illinois High School
Urbana, Illinois

SOCIAL STUDIES

____ 1st quarter - November ____ 3rd quarter - April

____ Semester - February ____ Final Report - June

RATING SCALE: + Outstanding, S - Satisfactory, U - Unsatisfactory, O - Inadequate basis for judgement.

S	U	O	Respects rights, opinions and abilities of others	+S	U	O	Evidences independent thought and originality
S	U	O	Accepts responsibility for group's progress	+S	U	O	Seeks more than superficial knowledge
S	U	O	Is careful with property	+S	U	O	Evidences growth in orderly and constructive group discussion
S	U	O	Uses time to advantage	+S	U	O	Keeps informed on current affairs
S	U	O	Is attentive	+S	U	O	Discriminates in the selection and use of social studies materials
S	U	O	Follows directions	+S	U	O	Demonstrates growth in the skills of critical thinking
S	U	O	Makes regular preparations as directed	+S	U	O	Places people and events in their chronological and cultural setting
				+S	U	O	Demonstrates social responsibility
				+S	U	O	
				+S	U	O	
				+S	U	O	

ACHIEVEMENT	EFFORT
The grade is a measure of achievement with respect to what is expected of a pupil of this class in this school, and in relation to what is expected in the next higher course in this subject.	The grade below is an estimate, based on evidence available to the teacher, of the individual student's effort.
____ 5 excellent ____ 2 passing, but weak	____ 5 excellent ____ 2 weak
____ 4 very good ____ 1 failing	____ 4 very good ____ 1 very weak
____ 3 creditable ____ 0 inadequate basis for judgement	____ 3 creditable ____ 0 inadequate basis for judgement

COMMENTS:

Teacher: _____

[f]Norman E. Gronlund, Measurement and Evaluation in Teaching, (New York; MacMillan Publishing Co., 3rd ed., 1976), p. 519.

of the check form is to become detailed and lengthy"[81] thus often causing confusion on the part of students and parents as to just what the report means. Unlike the computer assisted narrative, the check list reveals all comment choices to the parent and student thus leaving the individual wondering as to why some of the other available comments were not checked.

Effect of Teacher Attitudes On Grades Given to Students

At the outset of this chapter, the question was asked: "What are Grades?" Subsequent sections of the chapter dealt with a definition of the term "Grade" and with an exploration of the pro and contra arguments surrounding the use of A B C D F. Alternatives to grading were then explored with comments from authors in the field as to the value, workability, and strengths of the various selected alternatives. One very important consideration has been missing, however, and that is: "How do teacher attitudes effect the grading process?" or, more specifically, "Do teachers let things, other than achievement, influence the mark they give?" The purpose of this section will be to explore some very recent research into that very question. The question is important to this study, for if we propose to determine teacher attitudes about reporting practices, we must, first, attempt to understand how their attitudes toward students might influence the grading/marking process.

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[81] Wrinkle, op. cit., p. 58.

As Ladas stated:

> We grade today as if each instructor used his own foot to eatablish the length of his own ruler. We also fail to specify what standard we are using, curve or compentency; it is as if we asked for six without specifying inches or centimeters. Clearly academic freedom should not be equated with his kind of sloppiness.[82]

Marshall echoed this sentiment when speaking of A B C D F:

> Too often, these symbols say nothing except how much the teacher happens personally to approve or disapprove. In them there is no advice, no guidance, no specific criticism. Students go to school for an education, not to please teachers. The object is guidance in understanding the subject, not approval. That the receptiveness on which the teacher's successes depend is adversely affected by the use of grades is generally overlooke. Grades offer easy ways to dispense plums or threats, which may lead to a simulated receptiveness, it is true; but the resemblance is deceptive.[83]

Kirshenbaum, Simon and Napier in Wad-Ja-Get?[84] cited Adams, Bass, Crawford, Dexter, Odell, Rosenthal, Thompson and others when pointing out not only the variances in grades given by teachers, but the various reasons for WHY the grades varied. Factors such as teacher boredom, fatigue, expectation, and....."an endless variety of factors"[85] enter into the grade a student might be given.

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[82]Harold Ladas, "Grades: Standardizing the Unstandardized Standard," Phi Delta Kappan, November, 1974, p. 185.

[83]Max Marshall, "Student Response to Criticism," Phi Delta Kappan, March, 1974, p. 488.

[84]Kirshenbaum, et. al., op. cit., pp. 251-263.

[85]Ibid., p. 253.

One recent major study was done by Bonnie J. Steller, Ph.D., Michigan State University, 1974, which supported the contentions of Kirshenbaum, et. al. That study deserves some discussion.

The intention of Steller's study was to....."define differences in the relationships between thirteen student characteristics and the teachers' personal characteristics, situational factors including subject area and grade level taught, the teachers' attitudes regarding the appropriate goals for education and the functions of marks, and other procedures that are associated with marking."[86] Steller took a total sample of 1022 teachers representing 140 school districts and 511 schools randomly selected to receive a mailed questionnaire. A summary of Steller's finding follows:

1) The majority of teachers reported that they base marks on a combination of subject matter mastery and the student's growth.
2) Male teachers more frequently reported that the marks they assigned are derived from objective information. (In this group were also more younger teachers and teachers of upper grade students and academic subject areas.)
3) The group of teachers including primarily older female

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86 Steller, op. cit., abstract.

teachers of either lower grade level students or secondary nonacademic areas reported that...."The function of education should be to socialize the children rather than to instill knowledge."[87]

4) Teachers, for the most part, were found to be...."incapable of defining precisely those tasks that are involved during the process of assigning marks."[88]

5) The sex of the teacher appears to be related closely to the importance allotted to neatness of work and the students' personal appearance.

6) The majority of teachers appear to favor frequent use of objective measurements.[89] [90]

If Steller's findings are placed against Ladas' model for the assignment of grades, we find conflict. Ladas suggests:

1) Grades shall not be awarded merely for classroom attendance.

2) Grades shll not be awarded merely for student effort.

3) Grades shall not be awarded for "professed need."

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[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid., pp. 151-155.

[90] Further findings are discussed on pages 151-155 of Steller's work which relate to reporting practices of districts and other similar data.

4) Grades shall not be used to bloster self-image (self-concept.)

5) A higher grade shall not be given merely to placate the student and avoid conflict.[91]

The literature shows that grades (A B C D F or any variation thereof) are still being used today for primarily two reasons: 1) They are easier to write down than almost any alternative form and, concurrently, take less time to record; and 2) They are traditional and most people understand the A B C D F report. The research going back as far as Starch and Elliott in 1912 seems to indicate that grades most often encompass many extraneous variables and can mean more than just a level of achievement. Teacher attitudes do appear to influence grades given. Teachers do indicate their use of objective criteria, however, as being a major consideration in giving a grade even though various subjective factors, such as attendance and personal appearance do enter into marks given to students.

Summary

Educators and students have come to accept grades as a standard part of the educational world, even though their emergence is relatively recent. They, grades (A B C D F), can be defined as: A judgmental value rating of rank or worth designed to describe, through the use of some alphabetical or numerical symbol, a measure of educational achievement. This rating is then used in making decisions concerning the student's future.

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[91]Ladas, op. cit., pp. 185-186.

Early evaluation of a person's ability was based upon actual performance, but as school enrollments boomed into the 1900's more concise means were needed to report pupil progress. This need first produced the percentage marking system which was closely followed by the move to A B C D F, a system which made administrative decisions for college palcement, class ranking, and the like much easier.

Grades first came under scrutiny in the Starch and Elliott studies published in 1912. The question of the validity of A B C D F has continued into the present day. The question of grade validity produced two camps; one wishing to see the elimination of grades, the other wishing to see them retained but made more valid through tightened criteria. During the 1960's, the era of student power, several learning institutions, both public schools and colleges, bent to the pressure and instituted alternative grading practices, primarily the pass-fail or credit-no credit method. Even with such changes, however, grades still hold their own in terms of educational use today.

The advocacy case for grading reveals a strong body of belief that grades are useful, serve a sound purpose and have not been bettered. Grading, in becoming a cultural ritual, has been translated as being the currency in the school economy and students have become conditioned to accept grades as a suitable reward for their work in the classroom. Grading advocates contend that grades are a valuable stimulus to learning and that they (grades) reward success in the educational arena. Persons concerned about grades are 1) The teachers; 2) the pupils; 3) the parents; 4) the school administrators, and

5) the potential employers. Teachers, according to the advocates, support grades because grades help them to do a better job of teaching. It was shown that 72% of elementary and 83% of secondary teachers use the A B C D F system of marking.

Those in opposition to the use of grades build their case around research evidence, beginning with Starch and Elliott, showing the lack of consistency and validity in the grading process. The argument is also made that grades may tend to reinforce a students negative self-image and that low grades possibly promote ongoing failure. Opponents also contend that competition for grades may cause a misdirection of purpose in the learner so that the object of school becomes the grade received rather than the knowledge gained. Further, the argument is advanced that grades simply may not tell the consumer (student, parent, employer) enough about what the student has learned or accomplished. Evidence was presented that variants such as the student's sex, deportment, promptiness, obedience and attitude often enter into the grade he receives thus possibly tainting the true meaning of the symbol. It was pointed out that the conditions for fair grading may seldom exist and that teachers, more often than not, grade under conditions of time, pressure and personal fatigue.

Seven selected alternatives to the use of A B C D F were presented. They are: Pass-fail, Credit-No Credit, Blanket Grading, Self-Evaluation, Parent Conferences, Narrative Reports, and Check Lists. It was noted that, with the exception of recent computer application to narratives, most of these alternatives have been available for some

time and are not new on the educational market. The prime advantages to the use of each alternative, along with possible drawbacks, were discussed. It was shown that possible departures from conventional marking practices are to 1) Manipulate the symbols; 2) Supplement the symbols, and 3) Make a fundamental change involving a different approach. The seven selected alternatives fit into these catagories. The contrary argument to the use of alternatives showed support for the concept that once students are not bound by a traditional marking system they do less work than usual. The proponents of the alternatives argue that alternatives may allow a wider field of choice for the student and remove sources of externally imposed threat.

The case was presented for a high degree of parental involvement in the reporting practice and evidence was presented to show a correlation between independence in the child and later high achievement in the early elementary grades. Parents perceptions of what they desire from the grading process were presented and it was shown that parents do indeed differ in their perceptions as to what is important information about the child.

Examples were shown of various forms of narrative and checklist reporting along with support for the use of specific mastery objectives in the reporting scheme. It was shown that, often, alternative forms of reporting, such as the chekc-list or narrative, become too lengthy for sound comprehension by students and parents, and confusion can result.

Evidence was presented regarding the effect of teacher attitudes on grades given. It was shown that teachers: 1) Base marks on a combination of subject matter mastery and the students' growth; 2) Frequently report that marks assigned are derived from objective, rather than subjective, information: 3) Often feel that the function of education should be to socialize students rather than impart or instill knowledge; 4) Are incapable of precisely defining the tasks involved in the process of giving marks; 5) Place different importance on neatness of work and student personal appearance according to the teacher's sex and 6) Show a majority in favoring frequent use of objective measurements in determining a student's grade.

A model for grading criteria was presented which would exclude such variables as attendance, effort, professed need, self-image, and potential conflict between student and teacher, form the grading decision. Support was shown that these variables to exist in varying degrees when a teacher makes a grading decision thus diminishing greatly the validity of the grade given.

It was determined from the review of the literature that grades have remained as a part of education in America because of two primary reasons: 1) They are easier to cope with in the classroom and in the administrative function than almost any other form of reporting and; 2) They have become a traditional form of reporting which is generally understood by most who would view them as an evaluative tool.

Chapter III

DESIGN METHODOLOGY AND HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The researcher's purpose in this chapter will be to describe the artget population and procadure for sampling, the design of the survey instrument and the statistical methods used in data analysis.

Population and Sample

The target population for the study was elementary schools in four states: Georgia, Michigan, Tennessee and West Virginia. INcluded in the population were all regularily contracted teachers grades pre-Kindergarten through six along with building administrators in the buildings selected. The states used were selected at ramdom from three larger groupings of states. Group one was labeled Northern States and consisted of Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Group two was labeled Mid-Eastern States and consisted of Maryland, New Jersey and West Virginia. Groupthree was labeled Southern States and consisted of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Initial groupings of states were determined by a pre-survey letter of inquiry to each of the State Departments of Education in the 48 continental United States. Those states willing to furnish school listings were included in the original groupings. Since the southern grouping included five states, as opposed to three from the northern and mid-eastern groups, two southern states were randomly selected.

Special education teachers, itinerant staff and substitute teachers were excluded from the study as were teachers of any grade higher than grade 6.

After random selection of one state each from the northern and mid-eastern grouping and two states from the southern grouping, a random selection of thirty elementary schools from each of the states was made utilizing the directories made available: The Georgia Educational Directory, 1976 edition; the 1975-76 Directory of Public Schools, Approved Private and Special Schools for 1974-75 and The State Department of Education, State of Tennessee; and the West Virginia Education Directory, 1975-76 edition. Projecting on a basis of 2 teachers per grade level, per school for 120 schools, grades K-6, a possible sample size of 1,680 teachers and 120 administrators was projected. By using a random selection method, and by assigning the states into geographical groupsings, each state in each of the three groups was given an equal chance for selection. Random selection of 30 school from each of the randomly selected states gave each school in each state an equal chance of being selected.

A wide range of number of teachers employed was found within the schools selected, ranging from 4 teachers and one building administrator in the Mackinac Island, Michigan; Devonia, Tennessee; Letart, West Virginia; and Summersville, West Virginia elementaries to 41 teachers and one administrator in the Conyers, Georgia, Honey Creek Elementary School.

After the initial random selection of 30 schools in each state was made, a letter was sent to the building principal seeking a commitment for cooperation in the study with a return pre-paid postcard seeking a statement of staff size and present reporting system most frequently used in the school.

It was not expected that the initial 30 schools selected would all respond in the affirmative, if at all, and, therefore, back-up schools were selected to replace those which chose not to participate. Table 3.1 illustrates the use of randomly selected back-up schools to meet the criteria of at least 30 schools per state. Since a strong commitment on the part of the building principal was needed, reminder letters were not sent until after the back-up schools had been included. Selection of schools was limited to those buildings with at least three grade levels, counting Kindergarten as a grade level. Schools with grade levels higher than grade 6 were used only when the school encompassed at least grade 4 or lower along with the grade(s) higher than 6. Directions to the building administrator specifically excluded teachers of grades higher than grade 6.

Development of the Survey Instrument

Since review of the literature produced no available instrument for the study, it was necessary to design an instrument specifically intended to elicit teacher and administrator attitudes toward A B C D F and the seven selected alternatives.

The first step in developing the instrument was to randomly select 23 elementary teachers and 17 elementary principals in the

Saginaw, Michigan Public Schools for the purpose of a personal interview. The personal interview, which took an average of 15 minutes to complete, consisted of a series of open ended questions designed to elicit reactional responses. A copy of the interview form used by the researcher can be found in the appendices.

After completing the total of 40 personal interviews, all responses were reviewed for similarity. Those like responses were then used as the basis for design of the Likert Sacle response items

Table 3.1

Number of Schools Selected and Committing by State

State	Number Selected	Number Committing	Percent Committing
Georgia	49	31	63.3
Michigan	60	34	56.6
Tennessee	47	33	70.2
West Virginia	43	32	74.4

(items 1-40) in the questionnaire. The interview responses were grouped into three categories: 1) Generalized evaluation of the reporting method - Example: (Item 14) "Parent Conferences are a farce." 2) Student oriented comments - Example: (Item 21) "Kids lose their incentive to learn when blanket grading is used." 3) Direct method comparison comments - Example: (Item 6) "Credit - No Credit reporting is much better than any form of A B C D F."

Prevailing patterns of attitudes about the various reporting methods, then gave rise to the items used in the questionnaire. It should be mentioned that the teachers and administrators used in the random selection for interviewing came from a wide range of school sizes and encompassed both integrated and partially integrated schools thus giving more assurance that the people being interviewed would be classified as being continguous to the proposed sample population. A complete listing of the comments received and the number of like responses is shown in the appendices.

In reviewing the interview statements, it became apparent the respondents saw three parties to the reporting process; parents, students and the teacher. These general inferences were later used in the codifying of the eight open response items in the questionnaire. The codifying process will be discussed more fully in chapter four, "Analysis of the Data."

Because of the possible projected sample size totalling 1,680 teachers and 120 administrators, it was necessary to design the questionnaire in such a way as to make scoring as rapid and easy as possible. A four section format was employed which allowed for double-density, op-scan scoring layout. Section I (page 1), gives general directions followed by composite definitions of the eight reporting methods under consideration. Section II gave directions on response meaning ranging from SA (strongly agree) to A (agree) to D (disagree) to SD (strongly disagree.) Forty were listed on the page and the desired response was indicated by filling the appropriate bubble using a soft lead pencil.

Section III gave instructions, followed by eight open response items which sought a reason for agreement or disagreement with particular items on the preceeding page, one item dealing with each one of the seven alternatives and one with A B C D F.

Page 4 consisted of one item from section III (the "ranking" item, item 49) and sought data on sex, degree held, years of paid experience, grade level taught and geographical location. Page 4 was designed to be completely op-scan scorable. Also included was a boxed coding frame which was completed by the research upon return of the questionnaire which served to link the responses with the variable data. This coding then was matched on the op-scan sheet used to codify the open response items. Therefore, when the pages were sent through the scanner separately, the data was linked by the code used on the three sheets.

After receiving an initial commitment from a school, the questionnaires, along with a letter of instruction to the principal, were forwarded. A pre-paid, addressed return envelope was also included for the principal's use in returning the questionnaires. Two weeks were allowed for the return of materials. After two weeks, the first reminder letter was sent. Another two weeks was allowed before a second reminder letter was forwarded. In early April, 1977, any non-responding schools were contacted by phone with a final reminder and appeal for return of the questionnaires. Those schools which indicated they had "misplaced" the questionnaires, but were still interested in participating, were sent a second set

of questionnaires and another return envelope, pre-paid. Final returns, along with number of teachers and administrators responding from each state are shown in Table 3.2

Table 3.2

Number of Responding Schools, Teachers and Administrators by State

State	Schools Responding	Number of Teachers	Number of Administrators
Georgia	26	258	25
Michigan	28	273	26
Tennessee	30	238	30
West Virginia	28	249	26
Total	112	1,018	107

The projected sample size of 1,680 teachers and 120 administrators fell short by 662 teachers and 13 administrators, in terms of response received. Actually, the total number of teachers available in the schools which responded was 1,728 and available administrators 129. Table 3.3 shows the percentage of response from the available teachers and administrators in the responding schools.

Table 3.3

Numbers of Teachers and Administrators Actually Available in each State in the Responding Schools and the Percentage of Response by State.

State	Available Teachers	Reachers Responding	%	Available Administrators	Admin. Respon.	%
Gerogia	444	258	58.10	30	25	83.3
Michigan	422	273	64.69	34	26	76.47
Tennessee	452	238	52.65	34	34	88.23
West Virginia	410	249	60.73	31	26	83.87
Total	1,728	1,018	58.27	129	107	75.96

Validation of the Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was designed in a four section, 54 item format. Section I of the instrument carried general instructions to the respondent followed by a listing of eight definitions of the reporting practices to be considered in the questionnaire. Respondents were instructed to refer back to the definitions, if necessary, as they completed the questionnaire.

Forty attitudinal statements with a four point Likert Scale forced choice response mode were used. Three areas of concern were involved in arranging the 40 items. First, a general evaluation of a particular reporting method was sought. Two opposing items were

used. Example: Parent Conferences - Item number 14 reads: "Parent Conferences are a farce", while item 40 reads: "Parent Conferences are extremely valuable for the parents, the teacher and the student." Table 3.4 shows the opposing "general evaluation" items for the reporting methods.

Table 3.4

Opposing Items of a General Evaluation Nature for the Eight Reporting Practices Selected.

Reporting Method	Item	Opposing Item
Blanket Grading	2	33
Check List Reporting	12	36
Credit - No Credit	13	28
*A B C D F (Grades)	(See explanation below)	
Narrative Reporting	7	39
Parent Conferences	14	40
Pass - Fail	11	3
Self Evaluation	9	26

*Since the purpose of the study was to compare A B C D F with the selected alternatives, a different reatement was needed for the A B C D F method. Items 8, 16 and 38 all gave A B C D F a positive treatment. Legitimate responses to these items would be expected to be uniform, i.e. agreement/disagreement with one, agreement/disagreement will all. The opposing items were numbers 1, 6, 10, 15, 24, 30 & 32. These items directly compared the seven alternatives with the A B C D F method. If, then, a respondent disliked A B C D F, he would respond in disagreement to items 8, 16 and 38 while agreeing with one or more of the items opposing.

The second area of concern spoke directly to student welfare connected with the reporting methods. Again using Parent Conferences as an example, item 23 and 5 were designed as opposing items. Item 23 reads: "Parent Conferences are absolutely necessary at all levels, K-6," while item 5 reads: "Parent Conferences are not necessarily of any value to students except, perhaps, in the early grades." Table 3.5 shows the opposing "student concern" items for all methods, including A B C D F.

Table 3.5

Opposing Items of Student Concern for the Eight Reporting Practices Selected.

Reporting Method	Item	Opposing Item
Blanket Grading	21	25
Check List Reporting	4	17
Credit - No Credit	19	37
A B C D F (grades)	22	31
Narrative Reporting	18	27
Parent Conferences	23	5
Pass - Fail	29	35
Self Evaluation	20	34

As mentioned in Table 3.4, a comparison of A B C D F with the selected alternatives was a central purpose of the study and,

accordingly, is treated as a separate and third concern. As mentioned, items 8, 16, and 38 were stated positively in support of A B C D F. These were then compared with items 1, 6, 10, 15, 24, 30 and 32 which, while not speaking in a direct negative to A B C D F, set the alternative methods as being "better than" or "Preferable to" A B C D F.

Section III of the instrument set forth eight open response items which asked for some specific rationale from the respondent as to why he agreed/disagreed with given items covering all eight reporting methods. The purpose was to dig deeper into the attitudes expressed in the responses on the Likert Scale. Item number 49, the last item in Section III, asked for a "ranking" of all eight methods, with "1" being the respondent's favorite method and "8" being the least favorite. Besides serving as a composite "face value" evaluation of A B C D F in direct comparison with the seven alternatives, this item gave the latitude of further checking the vlidity of responses in items 1 - 40 in section II.

Section IV of the instrument asked for personal respondent data including: 1) Sex, 2) Number of years of paid experience in education, 3) Highest college degree held, 4) Grade level assignment or designation as an administrator and 5) State where teaching.

As most authors in the field of attitudinal survey will attest, there is no real way to truly "validate" an attitudinal questionnaire. Peoples' attitudes do not fall into neat little right or wrong niches as do responses on a multiple choice history test or a standardized mathematics examination. The best methods

to approach validation seem to be: 1) Seek knowledgeable opinion on the design and language of the instrument, 2) Pilot the instrument to determine internal consistency of the items. Both of these methods were used with the questionnaire in this study.

Dr. Donald Hamachek, Department of Educational Psychology, Michigan State University, and Dr. Louis Romano, Department of Educational Administration and Higher Education, Michigan State University, were both asked to review the questionnaire. Both parties returned the questionnaire with revisions which were incorporated along with suggestions from the personnel in the Office of Research Consultation, College of Education, Michigan State University. After revisions were incorporated, the instrument was piloted in two elementary schools in the Swan Valley Public Schools, Shield, Michigan. Haven and Shields Elementaries are both suburban schools with a range of economic levels in the attendance areas. In all, two elementary administrators were involved in the pilot, and 32 teachers, grades K-6 and ungraded. Table 3.6 shows the range of grade levels covered and number of teachers and administrators surveyed.

Items 1-40 were arranged to deal with three major areas of concern: 1) A general evaluation of the reporting practices, 2) Direct effect of the practice on students, and 3) A comparison of the practice with A B C D F reporting. The first two areas carried two items each which were worded as opposing items and one item which set the alternative reporting practices directly against A B C D F.

Table 3.6

Range of Grade Levels Covered and Number of Respondents at Each Level - Including Administrators - In the Pilot Study

Grade Level	Number of Respondents
Kindergarten	2
1st	4
2nd	2
3rd	4
4th	5
5th	6
6th	7
Ungraded	2
Administrators	2
Total	34

Total number of questionnaires thrown out for obvious attempt to foil the questionnaire = 1. Questionnaires used in the pilot study data = 33.

(See Tables 3.4 and 3.5) This, then, produced five items for each method (eight methods including A B C D F) for a total of 40 items. Table 3.7 shows the number of correct (opposing) responses and the percentage of correct opposition (percent of match) for the general evaluation items in the pilot.

Table 3.7

Opposing Responses and Percent of Match for General Evaluation Items.

Method	Item	Opposing Item	Number of Opposing Responses	% of Match
Blanket Grading	2	33	30	90.9
Check List	12	36	13	39.4
Credit-No Credit	13	28	27	81.8
Narratives	7	39	20	60.6
Parent Conferences	14	40	30	90.9
Pass Fail	11	3	9	27.3
Self Evaluation	9	26	22	66.7

Prior to the pilot study, the decision had been made to use a cut off of 60% as the minimum percentage of time the items must work in opposition in order to be considered valid. The Check List items, 12 and 36 and the Pass-Fail items, 11 and 3, were found to be in need of revision in order to make them more directly opposite.

In comparing the "positive" items on A B C D F (items 8, 16 and 38) with items 1, 6, 10, 15, 24, 30 and 32 which spoke in favor of the alternatives to grades, several factors were taken into consideration in the pilot study. First, items 8 and 38 were designed to agree, as they were worded almost exactly alike. Item 16, while also a positive statement in support of A B C D F, carried much stronger

wording and, actually, was the prime item used to compare with items 1, 6, 10, 15, 24, 30 and 32. Item 16 read: "A B C D F is a darn good grading system which hasn't been bettered."

Again checking internal consistency of the items, items 8 and 38 were compared to determine match of responses and it was found the items showed consistent responses 28 times for a percentage of match of 84.8%.

Item 16, the more strongly worded item in favor of A B C D F was then compared with items 1, 6, 10, 15, 24, 30 and 32 for opposite match responses. It was decided that if item 16 were working correctly, the respondent should have shown an opposite response on those items which set forth the alternatives against A B C D F. In doing so it was found that: 1) Of the 13 respondents who agreed with item 16, 11 of them (84.6%) showed opposing statements on at least 6 out of 7 out of the possible 7 opposing items, 2) Of the 20 respondents who disagreed with item 16, 17 of them (85%) showed agreement with at least one of the opposing items which supported an alternative to A B C D F. Only 3 of the 20 (15%) failed, in effect, to select one of the 7 alternatives as being "better than" A B C D F.

Along with a "general evaluation" and "comparison with A B C D F," the third area of concern in the arrangement of items 1-40 was that of "student concerns" or, as stated earlier, "direct effect on students." Again, opposing items were used (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.8 shows the result of the pilot in the area of student concerns.

Table 3.8

Opposing Responses and Percent of Match for Student Concern Items.

Method	Item	Opposing Item	Number of Opposing Responses	% of Match
Blanket Grading	21	25	25	75.7
Check List	4	17	21	63.6
Credit-No Credit	19	37	17	*51.5
A B C D F	22	31	18	*54.5
Narratives	18	27	20	60.6
Parent Conference	23	5	28	84.8
Pass - Fail	29	35	17	*51.5
Self Evaluation	20	34	25	75.7

*Less than 60% opposition - revision was required to make items more directly opposite.

When asked to rank the various methods of reporting, the pilot study respondents produced the following results shown in Table 3.9.

By using the grid shown in Table 3.9, a further check of item response consistency was made. It was assumed that a person ranking A B C D F, for example, as his number 1 choice, would show a positive response to item 16 (used earlier to compare A B C D F to the seven

alternatives.) Similarily, it was assumed that a respondent giving a low ranking (perhaps a 7 or 8) to a given reporting practice would show a reverse response on a positively worded item for the particular reporting method.

Table 3.9

Pilot Study Responses to the "Ranking Item", Item Number 49.

Method	Times Ranked 1-8								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Blanket Grading	0	0	0	1	3	6	7	16	33
Check List	5	12	9	7	0	0	0	0	33
Credit-No Credit	0	0	2	1	9	9	9	3	33
A B C D F	16	5	5	3	1	2	1	0	33
Narratives	4	5	6	12	3	1	1	1	33
Parent Conference	7	9	10	6	0	1	0	0	33
Pass-Fail	0	0	1	1	3	11	8	9	33
Self Evaluation	1	2	0	2	14	3	7	4	33
	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	

Selected items were used to determine the numerical relationship between rankings and item responses. It was found that those respondents selecting A B C D F, Parent Conference, Check List and Narratives as their first choices agreed with corresponding items

numbers 8, 23, 36 and 39 respectively on the average of 94.86% with those choosing check lists and narratives argeeing with corresponding items 36 and 39 100% of the time.

The same pattern emerged with those choosing Blanket Grading, Pass-Fail, Credit-No Credit, and Self Evalaution as their last (8th) or next-to-last choices. The match of responses averaged 96.16% on the appropriate opposing items. The rankings given to the various reporting practices matched the responses given on the Likert Scale items on the average of 95.51% of the time.

In reviewing the data from the pilot study, it was found that items 12 and 36, dealing with Check List, and items 11 and 3, dealing with Pass-Fail were in need of revision in the "general evaluation" items. In both cases, one item in each pair was reworded to allow the respondent to totally reject the method where, before, some degree of acceptance was implied in both of the items of the set.

Under the items of "student concern", item pairs 19 and 37, 22 and 31, and 29 and 35 were revised to be more directly opposing, again allowing the respondent to totally reject the method in question as it applied to direct effect on students. The items which pitted the alternatives against the A B C D F method were found to be working with a great degree of consistency and there was no need of revision. After adjustments in the language were made, as a result of the findings in the pilot study, the questionnaire was prepared for printing and distrubtion in the op-scan scoreable format referred to earlier in the chapter.

Statistical Methods Used in Data Analysis

Various statistical and descriptive techniques were used in answering the questions and hypotheses set forth as the objectives of the study. Questions number 1 and 2 were analyzed by multivariate analysis of variance of repeated measurements. Seven research hypotheses were formulated as a means of answering these questions.

Question 1: Do elementary teachers prefer the use of A B C D F reporting over the use of selected alternative forms of reporting?

Question 2: Do elementary administrators prefer the use of A B C D F reporting over the use of selected alternative forms of reporting?

1) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward blanket grading is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

2) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward check list reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

3) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward credit-no credit reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

4) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward narrative reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

5) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward parent conference reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

6) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward pass-fail reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

7) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward self evaluation reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

Frequency counting was used to answer research questions 3 and 4.

> Question 3: If elementary teachers do prefer the use of one of the selected alternatives over the use of A B C D F, why does this preference exist?
>
> Question 4: If elementary administrators do prefer the use of one of the selected alternatives over the use of A B C D F, why does this preference exist?

In approaching questions 3 and 4, those teachers, and administrators ranking a reporting method as either 1 or 2, or, 7 or 8 on the ranking item (item 49) were then compared across with their codified responses to the open ended questions (numbers 41-48 in Section III.) Open ended responses were codified into four responses modes: 1) Student oriented response; Example: "Students benefit form the check list because they can see exactly where they stand," 2) Teacher oriented response; Example: "Narratives are too time consuming for the teacher," 3) Parent oriented response; Example: "Parents expect grades, they don't read other reports," and 4) Other responses; Example: "Because that's the way I feel."

The codifying technique also allowed for scoring of any comments which included any combination of the code areas. Example: "Students, teachers and parents all can benefit from parent conferences."

The frequency counting technique included the following steps with the data cards:

1. The master card deck was first sorted by teachers and administrators.

2. Each deck was then sorted on response to item 49 of either a 1 or 1, or, 7 or 8.

3. Frequency counting was then done on the basis of the codified responses to the open ended questions - Student, Teacher, Parent, Other - or any combination of student, teacher and parent oriented comments.

Chi square analyses of correlations were used for the ranking item, item 49, as a means of answering research questions 5 and 6:

> Question 5: What correlation exists, significant at the .05 level of confidence, between a teacher's preference for a particular form of reporting and the teacher's: 1) Sex, 2) Years of experience, 3) Degree(s) held, 4) Grade level taught, 5) Geographical location (state)?
>
> Question 6: What correlation exists, significant at the .05 leve of confidence, between an administrator's preference for a particular form of reporting and the administrator's: 1) Sex, 2(Years of experience, 3) Degrees(s) held, 4) Georgaphical location (state)?

Correlations were drawn for all eight reporting methods and each demographic variable. The Ø statistic was then used to determine the magnitude of association on each variable.

Question number 7 was analysed by use of average rankings given for each reporting practice by teachers and administrators on item 49. In cases where respondents failed to complete item 49, uniform rankings of "8" were given to all methods. The average rankings were then charted descriptively and standard deviation of ranking determined.

Question 7: It shall be hypothesized that: A difference, significant at the .05 level of confidence, exists between teachers and administrators in preference for a particular form of progress reporting.

Due to the wide range in numbers between teachers ~~(1,018)~~ and administrators (~~107~~) sampled, the research decision was made not to attempt a statistical application seeking a significant (.05) level of difference. Any such significance would be subject to such great error that descriptive techniques emerged as the most suitable and realistic form of analysis for question 7.

In addition to the direct analyses of the research questions, item analyses were run to the 40 items from Section II.

In seeking answers to the research questions, which were the objectives of the study, all ~~1,018~~ elementary teachers and ~~107~~ elementary administrators were used.

Summary

This chapter has described the target population, procedure for sampling, the design of the survey instrument, the piloting of the survey instrument, and the statistical methods used in data analysis.

The sampling involved four states: Georgia, Michigan, Tennessee and West Virginia for a total of 112 schools, 1,007 teachers, grades pre-Kindergarten through 6, and 98 administrators.

Instrumentation used was a four section, op-scan sorable questionnaire developed for the study. The instrument also included

eight open ended response items which were designed to elicit explanations for the responses given on selected items in the instrument. An explanation of the pilot study is given, along with expert review used to validate the instrument.

Statistical methodology was detailed for the 7 research questions and included: Multivariate analysis of variance of repeated measurements for questions 1 and 2; Frequency counting for questions 3 and 4; Chi square analysis of correlations for questions 5 and 6 and Descriptively charted average rankings and standard deviation of average rankings of item 49 for question 7. Item analyses were, also, compiled for selected items from Section II in order to determine average response from teachers and administrators. All 1,018 teachers and 107 administrators were used in the statistical analyses.

Chapter IV

ANALYSES OF DATA AND FINDING OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, the author presents an explanation of the data analyses used and the findings of the study. A brief explanation of the statistical techniques used will be followed by the statistical findings of each data analyses and a related interpretation.

Statistical Methods

Multivariate analysis of variance of repeated measurements was used to analyze Research Questions 1 and 2. Seven hypotheses were tested which placed A B C D F in direct comparison with the seven selected alternatives. The repeated measurements analysis of variance was then employed. The 1,125 subjects were treated as a group of observations while each individual was considered one unit of analysis.

A cross tabulation technique was used in answering Research Questions 3 and 4.

Since nominal or categorical data are required for the use of the Chi square test, and since much of the data in the study were of that nature, Chi square was utilized as a means of determining if two variables were independent. The Chi square statistic was applied to research questions 5 and 6 wherein the 5 demographic

variables, (sex, years of experience, degree(s) held, grade level taught or administrative position, and geographical location,) were applied to the 8 possible rankings of reporting methods in item 49. Correlations were drawn for all eight reporting methods and each demographic variable. Cramer's Ø was then used to determine the overall magnitude of association on each variable.

Frequency counting was used to determine possible relationships between teacher and administrative reporting preferences and their responses to the open ended questions. Frequency correlations were then drawn to determine possible correlations significant at the .05 leve or below. The frequency counting technigue was applied directly to Research Question 7.

Frequency distributions were used in describing the range of respondents over the demographic variables.

Statistical Findings

Findings presented below are organized in order of the Research Questions presented by the author. Where appropriate, significance level was set at the alpha .05 level of confidence. In other cases where Chi square was not applicable, standard deviation was used as a significance indicator, supported by the use of Cramer's Ø to indicate the magnitude of association.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance of Repeated Measurements

Question 1: Do elementary teachers prefer the use of A B C D F reporting over the use of selected alternative forms of reporting?

Question 2: Do elementary administrators prefer the use of A B C D F reporting over the use of selected alternative forms of reporting?

To answer the above questions, seven hypotheses were tested.

1) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward blanket grading is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

2) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward check list reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

3) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward credit-no credit reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

4) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward narrative reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

5) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward parent conference reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

6) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward pass-fail reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

7) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and amdinistrators toward self evaluation reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

To analyze the seven hypotheses, a repeated measure analysis of variance was employed. The design treated the 1,125 subjects as a combined group of observation while each individual subject was considered as one unit of analysis. The group's attitude toward the 8 reporting methods was the repeated factor which had 8 levels.

Table 4.1 below, shows the design matrix for the analysis.

Table 4.1

Design Matrix for Repeated Measurements Analysis of Variance.

	Measurement								
	M_1	M_2	M_3	M_4	M_5	M_6	M_7	M_8	
S_1									
S_2									
S_3									
Subjects									
S_{1125}									

S_1 = The ith subject (i = 1, 2, 3, ...1125)

M_1 = Blanket Grading

M_2 = Check List

M_3 = Credit-No Credit

M_4 = Grades (A B C D F)

M_5 = Narratives

M_6 = Parent Conferences

M_7 = Pass-Fail

M_8 = Self Evaluation

The ANOVA table, Table 4.2 illustrates the results of the analysis by repeated measurements. The statistic test is signivicant at alpha = .005 level. This significance was used because, in performing 9 sepearte F Tests to control alpha = .05 each test was tested at alpha = .001 to produce a conservative test. The degree of freedom for each error term in 1,124.

Table 4.2

Results of the Repeated Measurements Analysis

Source of Variation	df	Hypothesis Mean Square	F	Significance Less Than
$u_{M_1} - u_{M_4}$	1	6188.275	1727.401	.0001*
$u_{M_2} - u_{M_4}$	1	0.860	.2519	.6159
$u_{M_3} - u_{M_4}$	1	2370.884	670.206	.0001*
$u_{M_5} - u_{M_4}$	1	260.021	57.921	.0001*
$u_{M_6} - u_{M_4}$	1	480.566	231.868	.0001*
$u_{M_7} - u_{M_4}$	1	1978.114	488.776	.0001*
$u_{M_8} - u_{M_4}$	1	2151.417	592.070	.0001*

*Significant at alpha = .005

As can be seen by reviewing Table 4.2, the original test displayed difference in attitudes toward 6 reporting methods and A B C D F. Only Measurement 2, Check List reporting, showed no significant difference. If the original test were to be accepted,

all but Ho_2 would be rejected. A further test was needed to determine the magnitude of differences. Table 4.3 illustrates the magnitude of differences found in Table 4.2

Table 4.3

Magnitude of Differences Found in Repeated Measurements Analysis

Contrast	Mean	Standard Error
$u_{M_1} - u_{M_4}$	2.345	5.663025 E-02
$u_{M_2} - u_{M_4}$	-.0276	5.509243 E-02
$u_{M_3} - u_{M_4}$	1.452	5.607569 E-02
$u_{M_5} - u_{M_4}$	-.481	6.316971 E-02
$u_{M_6} - u_{M_4}$	-.654	4.292199 E-02
$u_{M_7} - u_{M_4}$	1.326	5.997835 E-02
$u_{M_8} - u_{M_4}$	1.383	5.684605 E-02

By reviewing Table 4.3, it becomes evident that some of the differences which appeared in Table 4.2 are not truly as pronounced as they may have originally seemed.

Findings: 1) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward blanket grading is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

The Hypothesis is not retained. Teachers and administrators clearly chosse A B C D F over blanket grading. Their attitudes

toward blanket grading are significantly different from their attitudes twoard A B C D F.

2) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward check list reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

The hypothesis is retained. Teacher and administrator attitudes about Check List do not vary significantly from their attitudes toward A B C D F. Attitudes toward both methods are very close.

3) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward credit-no credit reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

The hypothesis is not retained. A significant difference in attitude exists. Teachers and Administrators favor A B C D F over credit-no credit.

4) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward narrative reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

The hypothesis is retained. There is not a significant difference between teacher and administrator feeling toward narratives and A B C D F. The two methods are about equal in teacher and administrator attitude toward them.

5) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward parent conference reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

The hypothesis is retained. No significant difference exists in the attitudes of teachers and administrators between parent conferences and A B C D F. They are about equal in choice.

6) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward pass-fail reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B C D F.

The hypothesis is not retained. A B C D F stands out as the choice of teachers and administrators and they do not hold the same attitudes toward pass-fail reporting.

7) Ho: The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward self evaluation reporting is the same as their attitude toward A B D C F.

The hypothesis is not retained. There is a difference in attitude toward self evaluation reporting. A B C D F is the choice over this method and the attitudes are not the same.

Cross Tabualtion Technique

Question 3: If elementary teachers do prefer the use of one of the selected alternatives over the use of A B C D F, why does this preference exist?

Question 4: If elementary administrators do prefer the use of one of the selected alternatives over the use of A B C D F, why does this preference exist?

To arrive at an analysis of the above questions, the questions were combined as in the case with questions 1 and 2 and 5 and 6. As described in Chapter III, open ended responses to the questions in Section III of the instrument were coded as being either student, teacher, parent or "other" in their emphasis. For the purposes of cross tabulation, responses to item 49, the ranking item, were grouped into either a favorable or non-favorable response with the "high" group being those respondents who rated the various methods as either 1 or 2 on item 49 and the "low" group being those who

rated the reporting method as either 7 or 8. The high and low groups were then cross tabluated with their responses to the open ended questions in section III. Due to the fact that some respondents did not reply to section III, 1,122 cases were used in the analysis rather than the 1,125 cases used elsewhere. The difference of three cases, however, in so large a sample was not significant. Combination responses, involving students, teachers and parents in some combination were also recorded in the coding process. Table 4.4 illustrates the results of the cross tabulation process.

Findings: Review of Table 4.4 reveals the following:

1) The 187 respondents ranking Pass-Fail as either 1 or 2, on question 49 indicated student interests as the predominant reason for their choice.
2) The 167 respondents ranking Pass-Fail as either 7 or 8 on question 49 indicated student interests as the predominant reason for their choice.
3) Of the 862 respondents ranking Parent Conferences as either 1 or 2, the interests of the parents ranked as the primary reason for that choice, followed closely by the combination of student-teacher - parent interests. Student interests and teacher-parent followed. A wide range of reasoning was found.
4) Only 44 respondents ranked Parent Conferences as either 7 or 8 on item 49 with teacher, student - parent, and student-teacher - parent rationale being equally predominant as the rationale for the choice.

Table 4.4

Cross Tabluation Showing Rationale for Responses to Questions 41 - 48 of the Survey Instrument Based Upon High or Low Rankings of Reporting Methods in Item 49 of the Instrument.

Open Ended Question			N.R.	0	P	T	T & P	S	S & P	S & T	S & T & P	Row Total
41-Pass-Fail	H	T	14	14	11	19	2	107	11	8	1	187
		%	4.0	4.0	3.1	5.4	.6	30.2	3.1	2.3	.3	52.8
	L	T	18	11	10	15	3	102	6	2	0	167
		%	5.1	3.1	2.8	4.2	.8	18.8	1.7	.6	0	47.2
42-Parent Conference	H	T	59	70	142	95	118	119	92	46	121	862
		%	6.5	7.7	15.7	10.5	13.0	13.1	10.2	5.1	13.4	95.1
	L	T	5	3	6	7	3	6	7	0	7	44
		%	.6	.3	.7	.8	.3	.7	.8	0	.8	4.9
43-Check List	H	T	46	73	113	101	43	137	49	36	27	626
		%	6.7	10.7	16.6	14.8	6.3	20.1	7.2	5.3	4.0	91.8
	L	T	10	6	10	8	2	10	6	2	2	56
		%	1.5	.9	1.5	1.2	.3	1.5	.9	.3	.3	8.2

Table 4.4 Con't

Open Ended Question		N.R.	O	P	T	T & P	S	S & P	S & T	S & T & P	Row Total
44-Narratives	T H	44	50	183	138	67	66	48	20	18	634
	% H	6.2	7.1	25.8	19.5	9.5	9.3	4.8	2.8	2.5	89.5
	T L	9	8	19	19	6	6	4	3	0	74
	% L	1.3	1.1	2.7	.8	.8	.6	.4	.4	0	10.5
45- A B C D F	T H	43	104	124	167	24	171	57	25	41	756
	% H	5.1	12.4	14.8	20.0	2.9	20.4	6.8	3.0	4.9	90.3
	T L	11	12	8	12	2	25	8	0	3	81
	% L	1.3	1.4	1.0	1.4	.2	3.0	1.0	0	.4	9.7
46- Credit-No Credit	T H	15	22	1	6	0	93	0	9	1	147
	% H	5.1	7.5	.3	2.0	0	31.7	0	3.1	.3	50.2
	T L	15	12	3	6	0	106	2	1	1	146
	% L	5.1	4.1	1.0	2.0	0	36.2	.7	.3	.3	49.8

Table 4.4 Con't

Open Ended Question		N.R.	O	P	T	T & P	S	S & P	S & T	S & T & P	Row Total
47-Blanket Grading	T	7	5	0	7	0	39	1	8	0	68
	H %	1.0	.7	0	1.0	0	5.6	.1	1.1	0	9.7
	T	56	40	10	51	1	424	8	38	4	632
	L %	8.0	5.7	1.4	7.3	.1	60.6	1.1	5.4	.6	90.3
48-Self Evaluation	T	14	8	0	17	0	117	0	24	1	181
	H %	3.6	2.0	9	4.3	0	29.8	0	6.1	.2	46.1
	T	20	9	1	20	1	134	2	25	0	212
	L %	5.1	2.3	.3	5.1	.3	34.1	.5	6.4	0	53.9
Total	H	242	346	574	550	254	849	258	176	210	
	L	144	101	67	138	18	813	43	71	17	

H = Number Ranking the Reporting Practice Either 1 or 2 on Question 49.
L - Number Ranking the Reporting Practice Either 7 or 8 on Question 59.
N.R. = No Response
O = Other Response
P = Parent Oriented Response
T = Teacher Oriented Response
T & P = Teacher and Parent Oriented Response - Combined
S = Student Oriented Response
S & P = Student and Parent Oriented Response - Combined
S & T = Student and Teacher Oriented Response - Combined
S&T&P = Student, Teacher and Parent Oriented Response - Combined

5) 626 respondents ranked Check List and 1 or 2 with student interests as the primary rationale. Interests of the parents and interests of the teacher followed respectively.

6) Of the 56 respondents ranking Check List as 7 or 8 student interests and parent interests were the prime factors affecting their choice.

7) 634 respondents showed Narratives as their first or second choice and indicated parent interests as the prime reason. Interests of the teacher ranked as the next most frequent rationale.

8) 74 respondents ranked Narratives as 7 or 8 with parent interests and teacher interests ranking equally as the predominant rationale.

9) The 756 respondents ranking A B C D F as either 1 or 2 showed a wide range of reasons with student interests and teacher interests being the most predominant.

10) The 81 subjects ranking A B C D F as either 7 or 8 did so because of the interests of the students.

11) Student interests emerged as the rationale for the 147 respondents who ranked Credit-No Credit as 7 or 8.

12) Student interests emerged as the rationale for the 146 respondents who ranked Credit-No Credit as 7 or 8.

13) The 68 respondents who ranked Blanket Grading as their first or second choice did so for reasons of student interests.

14) The 632 respondents ranking Blanket Grading as 7 or 8 cited the interests of the students as their prime reason for rejecting Blanket Granding.

15) Self Evaluation was ranked 1 or 2 by 181 subjects. They cited student interests as the main rationale for their choice.

16) The 212 respondents rejecting Self Evaluation with a 7 or 8 ranking did so because of student interests.

Findings: Overall, elementary teachers and administrators listed the interests of the students as being the most important element in their choices of reporting methods.

Student interests was followed, at some distance, by the interests of the teacher, the interests of the parents, and the interests of the students - parents combined.

Chi Square Analyses

Question 5: What correlation exists, significant at the .05 level of confidence, between a teacher's preference for a particular form of reporting and the teacher's: 1) Sex, 2) Years of experience, 3) Degree(s) held, 4) Grade level taught, 5) Geographical location (state)?

Question 6: What correlation exists, significant at the .05 level of confidence, between and administrator's preference for a particular form of reporting and the administrator's 1) Sex, 2) Years of experience, 3) Degree(s) held, 4) Geographical location (state)?

Findings: The Chi square correlation table, Table 4.5, reports the degree of relationship between the five demographic variables and the eight reporting methods used in the study. In

addition to the use of the Chi square, Cramer's Ø was used as an indicator of magnitude of association.

The significant Chi square tests show that a teacher's and administrator's sex is a significant factor in their expressed attitude toward blanket grading, credit-no credit, narratives, pass-fail and self evaluation.

Years of experience is a significant factor in teacher and administrative attitudes toward blanket grading, pass-fail and self evaluation.

Degree(s) held showed a significant relationship only with attitudes toward the check list method.

Grand level taught/administrative post held was a significant factor in attitudes toward check list, grades, and pass-fail methods.

Geographic location (state) showed the most overall influence as it was significant with all but credit-no credit and self evaluation.

Geographic location (state), although appearing to have significant influence, is not a constant demographic variable and much of the influence shown may be subject to a substantial amount of type II error.

Findings: Cramer's Ø, indicating the magnitude of the associations illustrated by significant Chi square, shows that the association between sex and attitudes toward Credit-No Credit is of the most magnitude followed by grade level/administrative post and Grades and geographic location and Parent Conferences. Geographic

Table 4.5

Effect of Demographic Variables on Attitudes Toward Reporting Methods.
Teachers and Administrators Combined for a Total of 1,125 Responses.

Demographic Variable		Blanket Grades	Check List	Credit-No Credit	Grades	Narra-tives	Parent Conf.	Pass-Fail	Self Evaluation
Sex	X^2	26.082*	17.0123	38.960*	16.0429	24.349*	18.664	26.472*	27.9683*
	Ø	.10767	.08695	.13159	.08444	.10187	.09103	.10847	.11149
Years	X^2	86.061*	55.136	53.1748	47.9928	49.725	58.7474	78.9867*	81.74559*
	Ø	.10454	.08367	.08217	.07807	.07946	.08637	.10015	.10188
Degree(s)	X^2	50.78116	69.962*	65.7509	31.5151	34.852	51.6901	42.2297	60.4336
	Ø	.08030	.09426	.09137	.06326	.06653	.08102	.07323	.08760
Grade or Admin. Post	X^2	64.2427	89.8873*	74.537	134.332*	84.805	78.6145	102.325*	80.5912
	Ø	.09032	.10684	.09729	.13061	.10377	.09991	.11399	.10116
State	X^2	55.558*	53.975*	29.7195	44.272*	61.744*	70.0968*	47.3364*	27.1337
	Ø	.11111	.10952	.08127	.09919	.11714	.12481	.10256	.07765

Sex -- X^2 With 14 Degrees of Freedom
Years -- X^2 With 49 Degrees of Freedom
Degree(s) -- X^2 With 49 Degrees of Freedom
Grade -- X^2 With 70 Degrees of Freedom
State -- X^2 With 28 Degrees of Freedom

*Significant

location and attitudes toward Narratives ranks fourth in magnitude.

Other associations, by magnitude, are, in order: Sex and Self Evaluation, Grade/Administrative Post and Parent Conferences, Geographic Location and Blanket Grading, Geographic Location and Check List, Sex and Parent Conferences, Sex and Blanket Grading, Grade/Administrative Post and Check List, Year of Experience and Blanket Grading, Geographic Location and Pass-Fail, Years of Experience and Self Evaluation, Sex and Narratives, Years of Experience and Pass-Fail, Georgraphic Location and Grades, Degree(s) Held and Check List.

Findings: The most significant variables in a teacher's or administrator's attitudes toward reporting practices are, in order, Geographic Location (state), Sex, Grade/Administrative Post, Years of Experience, and Degree(s) held.

Frequency Counting

> Question 7: It shall be hypothesized that: A difference, significant at the .05 level of confidence, exists between teachers and administrators in preference for a particular form of progress reporting.

Findings: Table 4.6 reports the results of frequency counting on item 49 giving the mean, standard deviation and ranking for each selected reporting method by teachers and administrators. Mean rankings are interpreted on the basis of the lowest mean being the most favorable reporting method since the ranking item asked for a 1-8 ranking with 1 being the most preferable to the respondent and 8 being the least preferable.

Table 4.6

Teacher and Administrator Ranking of Eight Reporting Methods Showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Ranking

		Reporting Method							
		Blanket Grades	Check List	Credit-No Credit	Grades	Narratives	Parent Conference	Pass-Fail	Self Evaluation
Teachers	$\bar{x}$	5.874	2.524	4.618	1.855	2.577	1.661	4.437	4.540
	S.D.	1.738	1.932	1.876	2.214	2.020	1.792	1.940	1.980
Ranking		8	3	7	2	4	1	5	6
Administrators	$\bar{x}$	5.879	2.467	4.542	2.093	2.374	1.364	4.393	4.262
	S.D.	1.564	1.723	1.787	2.424	1.657	1.335	1.790	2.011
Ranking		8	4	7	2	3	1	6	5

1,018 Teachers

107 Administrators

Review of Table 4.6 shows teachers ranking Parent Conferences as the most preferable reporting method, with Grades, Check List, Narratives, Pass-Fail, Self Evaluation, Credit-No Credit and Blanket Grading following in order.

Administrators expressed the same choices for number one and two; Parent Conferences and Grades. Administrators also concurred with the teacher choices in ranking Credit-No Credit seventh and Blanket Grading as eighth. Differences appear in the Rankings of Check List, Narratives, Pass-Fail and Self Evaluation. Table 4.7 illustrates the ranking differences between the two groups.

Table 4.7

Differences in Teacher and Administrator Ranking of Eight Reporting Methods.

Reporting Method	Teacher Ranking	Administrator Ranking
Blanket Grading	8	8
Check List	3	4
Credit-No Credit	7	7
Grades	2	2
Narratives	4	3
Parent Conference	1	1
Pass-Fail	5	6
Self Evaluation	6	5

1,018 Teachers
107 Administrators

Findings: Standard deviation in the ranking by teachers of Grades as the second most preferable reporting practice shows a great deal of disagreemtn within the group - a wide range of feeling.

Standard deviation in the ranking by administrators of Grades as the second most preferable reporting practice shows a great deal of disagreement within the group - a wide range of feeling.

Findings: While ranking Narratives as fourth, teachers show disagreement within their group - a significant range of feeling.

Administrators show a significant range of feeling in ranking Self Evaluation as the fifth choice of their group.

Due to the wide range between the sample sizes for administrators and teachers, an attempt to draw a significance level and apply a .05 level of confidence would be frought with error. The mean rankings do, however, serve as a valid indicator of overall preferences expressed by both groups. As can be seen in Table 4.3, the groups agreed on the rankings for four of the eight reporting methods and were within one ranking number of agreement on the remaining four methods.

As a further analysis of question seven, a summary table, Table 4.8, was prepared showing the raw score and percentage of rankings by the combined administrative and teacher groups. As would be expected, the rankings from the combined group. When combining the two groups, the almost ten to one dominance by the teacher respondents sways the overall total mean toward the teacher rankings. Had the differences between the groups been greater, perhaps the administrative rankings might have had some effect.

Table 4.8

Combined Raw Totals, Percentages and Ranking of Eight Reporting Methods by Teachers and Administrators

Reporting Method	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean	Rank
Blanket Grading	35 3.1	8 .7	27 2.4	36 3.2	96 8.5	116 10.3	174 15.5	633 56.3	5.875	8
Check List	160 14.2	225 20.0	242 21.5	220 19.6	99 8.8	61 5.4	63 5.6	55 4.9	2.518	3
Credit-No Credit	70 6.2	30 2.7	51 4.5	94 8.4	181 16.1	289 25.7	266 23.6	144 12.8	4.611	7
Grades	486 43.2	146 13.0	124 11.0	135 12.0	66 5.9	42 3.7	43 3.8	83 7.4	1.877	2
Narratives	152 13.5	255 22.7	228 20.3	196 17.4	93 8.3	73 6.5	55 4.9	73 6.5	2.557	4
Parent Conference	346 30.8	311 17.6	208 18.5	120 10.7	51 4.5	31 2.8	15 1.3	43 3.8	1.633	1
Pass-Fail	62 5.5	48 4.3	78 6.9	110 9.8	209 18.6	257 22.8	195 17.3	166 14.8	4.433	5
Self Evaluation	60 5.3	45 4.0	78 6.9	115 10.2	244 21.7	154 13.7	217 19.3	212 18.8	4.514	6

1,018 Teachers
107 Administrators

XXX = Raw Score
YYY = Percent

Frequency Distribution of Respondents

Findings: As was expected, females in the study outnumbered males by almost six to one.

Administrators were overshadowed by teacher responses by almost a ten to one margin.

Third grade teachers outnumbered all others in responding, followed closely by first, second, fourth, fifth and sixth grade respectively.

Respondents with 6 - 10 years of experience were the mode with first year teachers ranking third from the bottom in frequency of response and pre-school ranking last.

Over one half of the respondents held at least a bachelor's degree, followed closely by those with the Master's. Holders of the Ed.D. and Ph.D. were few in number, six, as was expected. Only twelve respondents indicated a degree less than the Bachelor's.

Michigan produced the greatest number of individual responses, followed by Tennessee, West Virginia and Georgia respectively.

Specific figures for all demographic variables are given in Appendix C.

Frequency Distribution of Selected Items

The general purpose of this study was to directly compare A B C D F with seven selected alternative forms of pupil progress reporting. Items 1, 6, 10, 15, 24, 30, and 32 of Section II of the questionnaire were designed to set the alternatives directly against

A B C D F. The responses to all 40 items of Section II are displayed in Appendix C. Specific review of the above items, however, produced the following:

Findings: 68.8% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that Self Evaluation is better than A B C D F.

81.4% did not agree that Credit-No Credit was better than A B C D F.

91.2% disagreed that Blanket Grading was preferable to A B C D F.

52% of the respondents agreed that Narratives are a much better, more informative method than A B C D F.

81.7% felt that Pass-Fail was not preferable to A B C D F.

60.3% disagreed that Check List is better than A B C D F.

52.4% of the respondents did not agree that Parent Conferences are "far and away better than A B C D F."

50.6% of the respondents to item 16 which read "A B C D F is a darn good grading system which hasn't been bettered," disagreed with the item.

Findings: Parent Conferences which, in the overall analysis, emerged as the first choice of teachers and administrators, drew the following responses on items 5, 14, 23, 32 and 40:

Item 5: Parent Conferences are not necessarily of any value to students except, perhaps, in the early grades.

451 disagreed
599 strongly disagreed =93.3%

Item 14: Parent Conferences are a farce.

495 disagreed
555 strongly disagreed = 93.3%

Item 23: Parent Conferences are absolutely necessary at all levels, K-6.

506 strongly agreed
445 agreed = 84.6%

Item 32: Parent Conferences are far and away better than A B C D F grading.

200 strongly agreed
332 agreed = 47.3%

533 disagreed
56 strongly disagreed = 52.4%

no response = .3%

Item 40: Parent Conferences are extremely valuable for the parents, the teacher and the student.

587 strongly agree
460 agreed = 93.1%

Findings: Further analysis of the responses to items 1 - 40 in section II showed that respondents had mixed feelings as to whether or not "any" student does not benefit from Credit-No Credit. Respondents rejected the concept that Narratives are "inadequate or inaccurate," and agreed that Narratives are useful when used with mastery level reporting.

There is agreement that Self Evaluation has little place in the elementary grades and disagreement that Self Evaluation helps to eliminate cheating.

Respondents felt that Pass-Fail reporting was not necessarily cruel to children, but failed to agree that the Pass-Fail method was the "least Cruel."

Blanket Grading found no favor whatsoever as respondents disagrred with the concept that Blanket Grading is challenging to kids because it puts them "on their honor," while also disagreeing that they liked Blanket Grading because it "takes pressure off kids."

Disagreement was found with the concept that Check List has "little meaning for kids" and also with the idea that Check List "is of little use to anyone." This followed with agreement that Check List can stand on "its own merits" as a reporting practice.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study were compiled into the following 22 statements:

1. The sex of a teacher or administrator is a significant factor in their expressed attitudes toward Blanket Grading, Credit-No Credit, Narratives, Pass-Fail, and Self Evaluation reporting methods.
2. Years of experience is a significant factor in teacher and administrator attitudes toward Blanket Grading, Pass-Fail and Self Evaluation reporting methods.
3. The degree(s) held by a teacher or administrator show a significant relationship with their attitudes toward the Check List method of reporting.

4. The grade level taught or the administrative post held is a significant factor in teacher and administrator attitudes toward Check List, A B C D F, and Pass-Fail reporting methods.
5. Geographic location (state) appears to have the most overall significant influence on teacher and administrator attitudes toward pupil progress reporting, but the possibility of type II error is great.
6. On the basis of overall mean ranking, the Parent Conference method of reporting is preferred by teachers as a group, administrators as a group and by the two groups combined.
7. A B C D F is the second choice of teachers as a group, administrators as a group and of the two groups combined, as the most desirable reporting method.
8. Teachers and administrators do not differ substantially in their views on reporting methods.
9. The attitude of elementary teachers and administrators toward blanket grading is not the same as their attitude toward A B C D F. A B C D F is favored.
10. In selected Parent Conferences, A B C D F, Check List and Narrative Reporting methods as the four most favored methods, teachers and administrators expressed similar rationales for their choice of these methods over other methods.

11. Elementary teacher and administrator attitudes toward Credit-No Credit, Pass-Fail and Self Evaluation reporting is not the same as their attitude toward A B C D F. A B C D F is significantly favored.
12. The interests of the students was the most important consideration of elementary teachers and administrators when making their choice of preferable reporting practices.
13. The interests of the teacher/administrator was the second most important factor considered when reporting practices were selected.
14. Parent interests were the third most important consideration to teachers and administrators when ranking the various reporting methods.
15. Elementary teachers and administrators did not agree that "A B C D F is a darn good grading system which hasn't been bettered."
16. Respondents heavily agreed that Parent Conferences are "absolutely necessary at all levels, K-6."
17. Attitudes were split as to whether or not Parent Conferences are "far and away better than A B C D E."
18. The attitude was expressed that some students can benefit from Credit-no Credit in the elementary grades, but the feeling was mixed.

19. Narrative reporting was judged as adequate and accurate and especially useful with mastery level reporting.
20. Elementary teachers and administrators agreed that Self Evaluation has little place in the elementary grades and that use of the method does not necessarily help to eliminate cheating.
21. Blanket Grading was not perceived to be beneficial to students in the elementary grades.
22. Blanket Grading, Credit-No Credit, Pass-Fail and Self Evaluation were rejected by respondents in favor of Parent Conferences, A B C D F, Check Lists, and Narratives.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The researcher's purpose in this chapter was to provide a brief summary of the research study followed by conclusions that were derived through statistical analysis. The final section provides recommendations for further examination of the question.

Summary of Rationale for the Study

Since early in the 20th century, arguments both for and against the use of A B C D F and percentage grading which preceded A B C D F have occupied the attention of educators. A review of the literature shows that both the opponents and proponents of A B C D F have laid claim to degrees of teacher and administrator support for their cases. For both sides in the grading debate to claim professional support for their arguments is contradictory to logic for, other than personal opinion, no comprehensive study has ever compared A B C D F with alternative forms of pupil progress reporting.

Parents often have expressed their preference for A B D C F as have educators in varying degrees, but any decision as to which reporting system is the most desirable for students, teachers and parents alike has lacked a sufficient research base. Studies showing certain deficiencies of the A B C D F method have been presented, and

an alternative case has been built, but an inventory of professional educator perceptions has not before been taken. Any decision on reporting practices must be a mutual effort involving parents, students, teachers and administrators. The author's purpose was to attempt to determine elementary teacher and administrator perceptions about reporting practices as compared with A B C D F in the hope that such data could be put to use in the mutual decision making process needed for the selection of reporting practices which best serve the primary parties of interest - students, parents and educators.

Summary of Methodology

The author's intent in this tudy, therefore, was to seek, by means of a survey, the perceptions of selected elementary teachers and administrators toward the use of A B C D F reporting practices compared with selected alternative forms of pupil progress reporting. Seven selected alternative forms of pupil progress reporting were directly compared with A B C D F. They were: 1) Blanket Grading, 2) Check List Reporting, 3) Credit-No Credit, 4) Narrative Reports, 5) Parent Conferences, 6) Pass-Fail Reporting and 7) Self Evaluation. Demographic variables considered included: 1) Sex, 2) Degree(s) held, 3) Grade level taught or administrative post held, 4) Years of paid experience in education, 5) Geographic location (state).

Objectives

The primary objective of the researcher was to determine how elementary teachers and administrators use grades (or marks) as

Are the attitudes of elementary teachers and administrators toward check list reporting the same as their attitudes toward A B C D F?

Are the attitudes of elementary teachers and administrators toward credit-no credit reporting the same as their attitudes toward A B C D F?

Are the attitudes of elementary teachers and administrators toward narrative reporting the same as their attitudes toward A B C D F?

Are the attitudes of elementary teachers and administrators toward parent conference reporting the same as their attitudes toward A B C D F?

Are the attitudes of elementary teachers and administrators toward pass-fail reporting the same as their attitudes toward A B C D F?

Are the attitudes of elementary teachers and administrators toward self evaluation reporting the same as their attitudes toward A B C D F?

Sample

In order to answer the questions stated, a sample of 1,018 teachers and 107 elementary administrators was taken using a random selection of four states, followed by the random selection of 30 schools in each state, Georgia, Michigan, Tennessee and West Virginig. The four states were chosen from larger original groupsing of 3 northern, 3 mid-eastern and 5 southern states. Initial groupings of states were determined by a pre-survey letter of inquiry to each of the State Departments of Education in the 48 continental United States asking for access to teachers and administrators in the states.

Of the 1,728 available teachers, 1,018 responses were received for a return rate of 58.91% and of the 129 available

administrators, 107 returns were received for a response rate of 82.94%. Of the 130 schools originally committed to the study, 112 actually returned usuable data for a response rate of 86.15%. Due to the random selection of the 4 states from the original selected groupings and the random selection of schools within each state, the sample was considered to be unbiased and the respondents representative of the selected geographical areas from which they were drawn.

Data Collection

The source of information was a survey statement which included a total of 54 items, 8 of which required an open ended response with 40 items requiring a selection from a four point, forced choice Likert scale. One item required a choice of preference on an 8 point ranking scale, with the remainder of the items being normative information about the respondents. It was estimated that the questionnaire would require between 18 to 20 minutes of the teacher's and/or administrator's time to complete. The instrument was piloted and reviewed by experts prior to its preparation in the op-scan scorable format.

Data Anlaysis

Data were programmed and processed through the use of the SPSS statistical computer package available for use in the Michigan State University C.D.C. 6000 computer. Chi square correlations augmented by the use of Cramer's Ø were employed for the analysis

of research questions dealing with the relationship between demographic variables and rankings of reporting methods. Frequency counting was employed to determine relationships between teacher and administrative reporting preferences and responses to the 8 open ended questions in the instrument.

A multivariate analysis of variance of repeated measurements was used to answer questions regarding teacher and administrative preference for A B C D F as compared with the seven alternative methods while cross tabulation techniques were employed to determine why teachers and administrators preferred given reporting methods.

Descriptive frequency distribution was used to evaluate the responses to items 1-40, the forced choice Likert scale, and to describe the frequency of respondents as spread cross the 5 demographic variables.

Limitations

A limitation of this study was the use of an instrument which did not allow for respondents to choose combinations of reporting practices. Although Parent Conferences prevailed as the overall favorite, many respondents, through their written responses to the open ended items, expressed some frustration at not being able to express a choice of a dual marking system. Since the author's purpose in the study was to compare A B C D F with the seven selected alternatives, however, the choice of a dual marking system would have been contrary to the purpose of the effort. The expressed frustration

at the idea of having to make a clear cut choice, however, may have biased the responses in some manner not detectable through analysis.

Another limitation of the study was its focus on entirely an elementary audience. Elementary schools, as shown in Chapter II, however, use reporting practices in more varieties than do secondary schools and, thus, serve as a better testing ground for perceptions on those methods.

Conclusions

The Parent Conference method of reporting emerged as the choice of teachers and administrators who participated in the study. This led the researcher to conclude that this method of parent-teacher-student contact is deemed to be valuable by the selected respondents and gives support for Parent Conference usage regardless of the type of written report which might be offered by the school. Parent Conferences of an by themselves are seldom used as the only means of reporting but the process of a personal discussion, often directly involving the student, seems desirable to teachers and administrators alike.

Grades, A B C D F, or marks, whichever term is used, maintained second place as the choice of elementary teachers and administrators. It can be concluded that the A B C D F method is held in high esteem as a reporting practice by the respondents although it cannot be concluded, due to the design of the study, that any particular combination of reporting methods is necessarily favored.

Check List Reporting and Narrative Reporting, while not preferred over Parent Conferences or Grades, emerged as the third and fourth choices of teachers and the fourth and third choices, respectively, of administrators. The conclusion is reached that these methods, like Parent Conferences and Grades, are held in some esteem and can be considered as useful means of reporting in the elementary schools surveyed.

It was found that teachers and administrators in the elementary schools surveyed did not differ significantly in their views toward reporting practices either in their choices of preferable or non-preferable methods or in their stated rationale and attitudes toward the methods. It can be concluded that there was unanimity of perceptions toward reporting practices between classroom teachers and principals.

The finding that an elementary teacher's or administrator's sex, years of experience and teaching or administrative assignment has a significant influence on expressed attitudes toward reporting practices leads to the conclusion that these factors should possibly be taken into account when plans are being made for revision or modification of a school's reporting system. The degree(s) held by a teacher or administrator, in having the least influence on attitudes toward reporting need be taken into account, it seems, only when the Check List method is being used or considered.

The methods of Blanket Grading, Pass-Fail, Credit-No Credit and Self Evaluation are found to be held in low esteem by teachers

and administrators alike. It can be concluded that these methods would find little support in the schools surveyed and cannot be considered as viable alternatives to Parent Conferences, Grades, Check Lists or Narratives. The conclusion that can be reached is that possible efforts to institute these reporting practices in the schools surveyed would be met with some degree of resistance from teachers and administrators alike.

The finding that student interests are the primary rationale for teacher and administrator selections of reporting practices, followed by teacher/administrator interests and parent interests, leads to the conclusion that those surveyed see reporting practices at the elementary level as being more in-school than parent oriented.

The finding that respondents did not agree that A B C D F was "a darn good grading system which hasn't been bettered," leads to the conclusion that the respondents are open to alternatives, but not necessarily the alternatives of Blanket Grading, Pass-Fail, Credit-No Credit or Self Evaluation.

From the data, it can be generally concluded that the elementary teachers and administrators surveyed from the states of Georgia, Michigan Tennessee and West Vi ginia, feel quite strongly that Parent Conferences are a necessary element in the reporting process and that A B C D F, Check List Reporting and Narrative Reporting are acceptable as long as Parent Conferences are continued.

Recommendations for Further Study

Several aspects of the grading question could not be answered by the author in this study. If a more complete understanding of teacher and administrator attitudes toward A B C D F and various alternatives is to be achieved, additional studies should be carried out seeking answers to the following questions:

What are the attitudes held by middle school educators regarding the use of A B C D F as compared with selected alternatives?

To what degree do parents and others outside of the school doors directly influence the reporting practices used in the elementary and or middle schools?

If allowed to choose a combination of reporting methods, what would educators suggest and why?

What are the attitudes of central office personnel toward various reporting practices, ie: are the attitudes expressed in the school buildings the same as those found in central supervisory personnel?

How do elementary teachers of different grade levels differ in their attitudes toward A B C D F? Does the number of years in a particular grade level assignment have any bearing on attitudes toward reporting?

Do teachers and administrators in the area of the United States west of the Mississippi carry the same or similar attitudes toward A B C D F and the selected alternatives?

Does the size of a school or school district have a relationship with the attitudes toward A B C D F and selected alternatives held by teachers and administrators?

Does a teacher's or administrator's personal experience with the A B C D F system as a student have a significant relationship with his attitudes toward A B C D F?

Although some important insights into teacher and administrator attitudes toward A B C D F and the selected alternatives have been

compared with the use of other selected forms of progress reporting. Further, it was the researcher's desire to attempt to determine the rationale behind the perceptions expressed.

As a means to arrive at the above objectives, the following questions were answered and hypotheses tested:

Do elementary teachers prefer the use of A B C D F reporting over the use of selected alternative forms of reporting?

Do elementary administrators prefer the use of A B C D F reporting over the use of selected alternative forms of reporting?

If elementary teachers do prefer the use of one of the selected alternatives over the use of A B C D F, why does this preference exist?

If elementary administrators do prefer the use of one of the selected alternatives over the use of A B C D F, why does this preference exist?

What correlation exists, significant at the .05 level of confidence, between a teacher's preference for a particular form of reporting and the teacher's 1) Sex, 2) Years of experience, 3) Degree(s) held, 4) Grade level taught, 5) Geographical location?

What correlation exists, significant at the .05 level of confidence, between an administrator's preference for a particular form of reporting and the administrator's 1) Sex, 2) Years of experience, 3) Degree(s) held, 4) Geographical location?

Does a difference, significant at the .05 level of confidence, exist between teachers and administrators in their preference for a particular form of progress reporting?

Are the attitudes of elementary teachers and administrators toward blanket grading the same as their attitudes toward A B C D F?

discovered by the author in this study, more effort should be spent in seeking a more complete understanding of professional attitudes toward reporting practices. The report that parents and students receive has been shown in other studies to have a profound effect, either positive or negative, on the student's future view of education and education's future view of him. The decisions regarding reporting practices in schools must be made in a manner which is consistent with parent, student and teacher interests and feelings and are too important to be left to chance development or implementation. As much knowledge as possible about the feeling and attitudes of all parties of interest in the reporting process is necessary in order that sound decisions might be made based upon student, teacher and parent concerns and feelings with the goal in mind of meeting the needs of all parties as completely as possible. Until such time as those needs, interests and attitudes are known in some detail, efforts to implement change or effect improvements in the reporting process will, often, meet with unanticipated negative reaction which could damage seriously the relationship between students, teachers and parents.

Reflections

The data presented by the researcher in this tudy has led to several conclusions stated in chapter V. Those conclusions are based upon the analysis of the data through statistical means and conclusions reflect the data rather than personal observations. It is felt by the author, however, that some personal observations may

be in order which, perhaps, go beyond the boundaries of the data to the realm of personal feelings.

The first of those observations is that the elementary teachers and administrators responding in the study seemed to express a preference for those types of reporting practices which, by their nature, induce varying degrees of pressure upon students in the classroom. To say it another way, the respondents rejected those reporting practices which do not lend themselves to use as a lever, a motivational tool. The rejection of Blanket Grading, Pass-Fail, Credit-No Credit and Self Evaluation leads to the observation that these methods may be unacceptable because they do not lend themselves to use as incentives as do Parent Conferences, A B C D F, Check Lists or Narratives.

It is not realistic to quote every response to the open ended questions in the survey, but if others could review those comments it would be evident that a rather strong element of pressure, through the use of reporting practices, exists in the schools surveyed. It can be understood why students view marks as the currency of their school world, for they are introduced early in their student careers to the idea that they had better perform and adhere to school rules or they may be reprimanded through a parent conference, a grade, a mark on the check list or a comment on a narrative. Reporting practices which do not give the teacher the latitude of some degree of direct pressure simply are seen as undesirable.

Another distressing observation comes to light as a result of looking at the data, and that is, that the interests of the parents generally ranks low as the stated rationale for teacher and administrator feelings about the value of reporting practices. This points to two possible problems: 1) Either teachers truly do see the reporting practices as theirs to use as a lever or punitive tool or, 2) Parent involvement in the schools surveyed has been minimized to the point where teachers and administrators are not taking parent feelings and needs into account when planning the reporting process. Either situation, in the authro's view, may well be one of the reasons why students often feel threatened by reporting practices and parents feel alienated from the schools' decision making process. It is any wonder why parents often echo the cry that they are ignored by the schools except at times of millage elections? Further, it is any wonder why kids cheat in the grading game?

One final observation is in order. It would seem, from the comments found and responses gathered by the author in this study, that respondents see the goal of the elementary school as being a goal of preparation for the competetive society in which we live rather than being a goal of subject mastery. Perhaps, in fairness to the respondents, and in light of the fact that the study did not seek specific input on this question, it can be said that, at least, the two goals are seen as equals. It would be unfair to say that socialization is not a very important goal of the elementary school. Socialization and learning about how our society works is very

important, but it seems to the author that the elementary school years should be devoted more to the basic skills mastery approach than to exposure to puressure for marks on a piece of paper or comments in a parent conference. Since the sample by the author in this study was a selected sample and not a numberically representative sample of all elementary teachers and administrators east of the Mississippi, a gross generalization to all elementary teachers and administrators is not fair or represented by the data, but the feeling persists from review of the data that the pressure for marsk, regardless of how they are reported, seems to be the overriding concern of the respondents. It is felt by the author that this possible attitude is not necessarily beneficial to elementary students and may, in fact, hinder the pursuit of a sound basic skills development in grades Kindergarten through six.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE, PILOT FORM

APPENDIX A

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
AND HIGHER EDUCATION

PUPIL PROGRESS REPORTING QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: This questionnaire will take about 18 minutes to complete. Questions deal with various ways of reporting pupil progress. Respond to all questions. Necessary definitions are given in Section One. Please read the definitions before proceeding to the statements in Section Two.

SECTION ONE

BLANKET GRADING: Giving a common mark to all students. Usually, students are informed in advance of the work as to what the common mark will be for all.

CHECK LIST REPORTING: Use of a prepared listing of comments from which certain ones are chosen for use by the teacher and "checked off" as being appropriate for the child.

CREDIT-NO CREDIT: The student receives either credit for the class or he doesn't. There is no middle ground. A "No Credit" mark, however, does not always mean "failure".

GRADES: A B C D F, S I U, or some numbering system such as 1 2 3 4 5. Often, plus (+) or minus (-) symbols are used to help clarify the grade.

NARRATIVE REPORTS: A "letter home" to the parents either written by hand or with the aid of a computer.

PARENT CONFERENCE REPORTING: A face-to-face meeting with parents for the specific purpose of discussing the student's academic and social progress in school.

PASS-FAIL REPORTING: The student either "passes" the class or he "fails" the class. There is no middle ground.

SELF EVALUATION REPORTING: The student decides what his grade or mark will be. Usually, the teacher confers with the student along the way, but the decision remains the student's.

NOTE: After reading the definitions, please proceed to Section Two of the questionnaire. Refer back to the definitions if necessary.

PROCEED TO SECTION TWO ON THE NEXT PAGE

In responding to the following statements about pupil progress reporting, your responses will mean the following:

1 - STRONG AGREEMENT - really in tune with your own personal feelings.

2 - AGREEMENT - perhaps with some reservations. You agree more than you disagree.

3 - DISAGREEMENT - with some reservations. You disagree more than you agree.

4 - STRONG DISAGREEMENT - almost totally out of tune with your own personal feelings.

1.	Self Evaluation reporting is better than giving a "grade".	1	2	3	4
2.	The blanket grading method is something I really don't care for.	1	2	3	4
3.	Pass - Fail reporting is valuable at any grade level.	1	2	3	4
4.	Check list reporting is a method which has little meaning for kids.	1	2	3	4
5.	Parent conferences are not necessarily of any value to students except, perhaps, in the early grades.	1	2	3	4
6.	Credit - No Credit reporting is much better than any form of A B C D F.	1	2	3	4
7.	Narrative reports are inadequate and inaccurate.	1	2	3	4
8.	A B C D F grading is a good system which gives a good idea of how students are doing.	1	2	3	4
9.	Self Evaluation reporting is really unfair because the honest kids are hurt.	1	2	3	4
10.	Blanket grading is a better way of reporting than using A B C D F.	1	2	3	4
11.	Pass-Fail reporting is fine for the higher grades, but not for grades K - 6.	1	2	3	4
12.	Check List reports are fine if they're accompanied by a parent conference.	1	2	3	4
13.	Credit - No Credit reporting is of no use for lower elementary grades.	1	2	3	4
14.	Parent Conferences are a farce.	1	2	3	4
15.	Narrative reports are a much better, more informative method than A B C D F.	1	2	3	4

16.	A B C D F is a darn good grading system which hasn't been bettered.	1	2	3	4
17.	Check List reporting is good for kids and means more to them than other methods.	1	2	3	4
18.	Narrative reporting is very helpful to kids, especially when it's used with mastery level reporting.	1	2	3	4
19.	Only highly motivated students can benefit from Credit - No Credit reporting.	1	2	3	4
20.	Self Evaluation reporting is of little or no use for the lower elementary grades.	1	2	3	4
21.	Kids lose their incentive to learn when blanket grading is used.	1	2	3	4
22.	A B C D F grading is totally unfair to students.	1	2	3	4
23.	Parent Conferences are absolutely necessary at all levels, K - 6.	1	2	3	4
24.	I prefer the use of Pass-Fail reporting over the use of A B C D F.	1	2	3	4
25.	Blanket Grading is challenging to kids because it puts them "on their honor".	1	2	3	4
26.	Self- Evaluation is a system which would help to eliminate cheating.	1	2	3	4
27.	Narrative Reports are inhuman, because the system assumes that all kids fit the same mold.	1	2	3	4
28.	Credit - No Credit reporting is a valuable method for the lower elementary grades.	1	2	3	4
29.	Pass-Fail reporting is cruel to children.	1	2	3	4
30.	Check-List reporting is certainly better than A B C D F.	1	2	3	4
31.	In terms of "fairness", A B C D F is about as fair as you can get.	1	2	3	4
32.	Parent Conferences are far and away better than A B C D F grading.	1	2	3	4
33.	I like blanket grading because it takes pressure off kids.	1	2	3	4
34.	Self Evaluation reporting is a very valuable teaching tool for any grade, K - 6.	1	2	3	4
35.	Pass-Fail reporting is more humane for children than most other methods.	1	2	3	4
36.	Check List reporting is a very effective method which can stand on its own merits.	1	2	3	4
37.	The slower student receives the most benefit from a Credit-No Credit marking system.	1	2	3	4

38.	A B C D F gives a pretty good idea of how students are doing.	1	2	3	4
39.	Narrative reports come closer to accuracy than most any other form of reporting.	1	2	3	4
40.	Parent Conferences are extremely valuable for the parents, the teacher and the student.	1	2	3	4

THIS CONCLUDES SECTION TWO

PLEASE PROCEED TO SECTION THREE ON THE NEXT PAGE

SECTION THREE

When responding to these questions, please keep your statements as concise as possible while still making the point clear. Respond to each question. Do not leave blanks. If your answer is longer than the space alloted, please use the back of this sheet and number the comments to correspond to the question.

---

1. Refer back to statement number three in Section Two about Pass - Fail reporting. Why did you respond the way you did?

2. Look at statement number five in Section Two about Parent Conferences. Why did you agree or disagree with the statement?

3. Refer to statement number twelve on Check List reporting. Why did you respond the way you did?

4. Review statement number fifteen on narratives. Why did you agree/disagree?

5. Refer back to statement number sixteen about A B C D F. Why did you agree/disagree there?

6. Look at statement number nineteen about Credit - No Credit. Why did you respond the way you did?

7. In responding to statement number thirty-three on blanket grading, why did you agree/disagree?

_____

_____

_____

8. Looking at statement number thirty-four on Self Evaluation reporting, why did you agree/disagree?

_____

_____

_____

9 We have considered eight different ways of reporting pupil progress in this questionnaire. The eight methods are listed below in alphabetical order. Please rank the methods in order of your preference for them as an educator. Use a scale of one (1) through eight (8) with the number one (1) indicating your favorite method and so on through number eight indicating the method you least favor.

METHOD	RANK
BLANKET GRADING	_____
CHECK LISTS	_____
CREDIT - NO CREDIT	_____
GRADES (A B C D F)	_____
NARRATIVES	_____
PARENT CONFERENCES	_____
PASS-FAIL	_____
SELF EVALUATION	_____

PLEASE GO ON TO SECTION FOUR

SECTION FOUR

Please circle the correct response to the items below.

1. SEX
   a.) Male
   b.) Female

2. Number of years of paid experience in education. Include this year as year one if a first year teacher, and as a full year if an experienced educator.
   a.) 1
   b.) 2 - 5
   c.) 6 - 10
   d.) 11 - 20
   e.) 21 - 30
   f.) 30 - 40
   g.) 40 or more

3. What is the highest college degree you hold?
   a.) No degree
   b.) Associate's Degree
   c.) Bachelor's Degree
   d.) Master's Degree
   e.) Educational Specialist
   f.) Ed. D.
   g.) Ph. D.

4. What grade level are you now teaching? (Circle only one. In the case of a combination assignment, circle the higher of the grade levels. Administrators are to circle letter J even if teaching a part of the day.)
   a.) Pre-school
   b.) Kindergarten
   c.) 1st
   d.) 2nd
   e.) 3rd
   f.) 4th
   g.) 5th
   h.) 6th
   i.) Ungraded room
   j.) Administrator

In which state are you now employed?
a.) Georgia
b.) Michigan
c.) Tennessee
d.) West Virginia

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE, PRINTED FORM

APPENDIX B

Michigan State University
Department of Educational Administration

PUPIL PROGRESS REPORTING QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: This questionnaire will take about 18 minutes to complete. Questions deal with various ways of reporting pupil progress. Respond to all questions. Necessary definitions are given in Section One. Please read the definitions before proceeding to the statements in Section Two. A **soft lead pencil only** should be used in sections two and four — do **not** use pens, magic markers or other such instruments.

SECTION ONE

BLANKET GRADING: Giving a common mark to all students. Usually, students are informed in advance of the work as to what the common mark will be for all.

CHECK LIST REPORTING: Use of a prepared listing of comments from which certain ones are chosen for use by the teacher and "checked off" as being appropriate for the child.

CREDIT - NO CREDIT: The student receives either credit for the class or he doesn't. There is no middle ground. A "No Credit" mark, however, does **not** always mean "failure."

GRADES: A B C D F, S I U, or some numbering system such as 1 2 3 4 5. Often, plus (+) or minus ( ) symbols are used to help clarify the grade.

NARRATIVE REPORTS: A "letter home" to the parents either written by hand or with the aid of a computer.

PARENT CONFERENCE REPORTING: A face-to-face meeting with parents for the specific purpose of discussing the student's academic and social progress in school.

PASS - FAIL REPORTING: The student either "passes" the class or he "fails" the class. There is no middle ground.

SELF EVALUATION REPORTING: The student decides what his grade or mark will be. Usually, the teacher confers with the student along the way, but the decision remains the student's.

NOTE: After reading the definitions, please proceed to Section Two of the questionnaire. Refer back to the definitions if necessary.

PROCEED TO SECTION TWO ON THE NEXT PAGE

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE	G	M	T	W						
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	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
Pupil Progress Reporting Questionnaire

SECTION TWO

Please do **not** omit any items on this page. If you have questions about the meaning of a certain type of reporting practice, please refer back to the definitions given on page 1. With a **pencil** respond to the items using the KEY.

SA—Strong Agreement — really in tune with your own personal feelings.

A —Agreement — perhaps with some reservations. You agree more than you disagree.

D —Disagreement — with some reservations. You disagree more than you agree.

SD—Strong Disagreement — almost totally out of tune with your own personal feelings.

KEY →		SA	A	D	SD
1. Self Evaluation reporting is better than giving a "grade"	1.	SA	A	D	SD
2. The blanket grading method is something I really don't care for	2.	SA	A	D	SD
3. Pass - Fail reporting is valuable at any grade level	3.	SA	A	D	SD
4. Check List reporting is a method which has little meaning for kids	4.	SA	A	D	SD
5. Parent conferences are not necessarily of any value to students except, perhaps, in the early grades	5.	SA	A	D	SD
6. Credit - No Credit reporting is much better than any form of A B C D F	6.	SA	A	D	SD
7. Narrative reports are inadequate and inaccurate	7.	SA	A	D	SD
8. A B C D F grading is a good system which gives a good idea of how students are doing	8.	SA	A	D	SD
9. Self Evaluation reporting is really unfair because the honest kids are hurt	9.	SA	A	D	SD
10. Blanket grading is a better way of reporting than using A B C D F	10.	SA	A	D	SD
11. I really don't believe that Pass - Fail reporting has value for kids at any age level	11.	SA	A	D	SD
12. Check List reporting is, really, of little use to anyone	12.	SA	A	D	SD
13. Credit - No Credit reporting is of no use for lower elementary grades	13.	SA	A	D	SD
14. Parent Conferences are a farce	14.	SA	A	D	SD
15. Narrative reports are a much better, more informative method than A B C D F	15.	SA	A	D	SD
16. A B C D F is a darn good grading system which hasn't been bettered	16.	SA	A	D	SD
17. Check List reporting is good for kids and means more to them than other methods	17.	SA	A	D	SD
18. Narrative reporting is very helpful to kids, especially when it's used with mastery level reporting	18.	SA	A	D	SD
19. Only highly motivated students can benefit from Credit - No Credit reporting	19.	SA	A	D	SD
20. Self Evaluation reporting is of little or no use for the lower elementary grades	20.	SA	A	D	SD
21. Kids lose their incentive to learn when blanket grading is used	21.	SA	A	D	SD
22. A B C D F grading is unfair to students	22.	SA	A	D	SD
23. Parent Conferences are absolutely necessary at all levels, K - 6	23.	SA	A	D	SD
24. I prefer the use of Pass - Fail reporting over the use of A B C D F	24.	SA	A	D	SD
25. Blanket Grading is challenging to kids because it puts them "on their honor"	25.	SA	A	D	SD
26. Self Evaluation is a system which would help to eliminate cheating	26.	SA	A	D	SD
27. Narrative Reports are inhuman, because the system assumes that all kids fit the same mold.	27.	SA	A	D	SD
28. Credit - No Credit reporting is a valuable method for the lower elementary grades	28.	SA	A	D	SD
29. Pass - Fail reporting is cruel to children	29.	SA	A	D	SD
30. Check List reporting is certainly better than A B C D F	30.	SA	A	D	SD
31. In terms of fairness to students, the A B C D F reporting method is about as fair as you can get	31.	SA	A	D	SD
32. Parent Conferences are far and away better than A B C D F grading	32.	SA	A	D	SD
33. I like blanket grading because it takes pressure off kids	33.	SA	A	D	SD
34. Self Evaluation reporting is a very valuable teaching tool for any grade, K - 6	34.	SA	A	D	SD
35. For kids, the Pass - Fail method is probably the least cruel method we can use	35.	SA	A	D	SD
36. Check List reporting is a very effective method which can stand on its own merits	36.	SA	A	D	SD
37. No student really ever benefits from the Credit - No Credit marking system	37.	SA	A	D	SD
38. A B C D F gives a pretty good idea of how students are doing	38.	SA	A	D	SD
39. Narrative reports come closer to accuracy than most any other form of reporting	39.	SA	A	D	SD
40. Parent Conferences are extremely valuable for the parents, the teacher and the student	40.	SA	A	D	SD

THIS CONCLUDES SECTION TWO PLEASE PROCEED TO SECTION THREE ON THE NEXT PAGE

SECTION THREE

When responding to these questions, please keep your statements as concise as possible while still making the point clear. Respond to each question. Do not leave blanks. Feel free to abbreviate.

41. Refer back to statement number **three** in Section Two about Pass - Fail reporting. Why did you respond the way you did?

42. Look at statement number **five** in Section Two about Parent Conferences. Why did you agree or disagree with the statement?

43. Refer to statement number **twelve** on Check List reporting. Why did you respond the way you did?

44. Review statement number **fifteen** on narratives. Why did you agree/disagree?

45. Refer back to statement number **sixteen** about A B C D F. Why did you agree/disagree there?

46. Look at statement number **nineteen** about Credit - No Credit. Why did you respond the way you did?

47. In responding to statement number **thirty-three** on blanket grading, why did you agree/disagree?

48. Looking at statement number **thirty-four** on Self Evaluation reporting, why did you agree/disagree?

49. We have considered eight different ways of reporting pupil progress in this questionnaire. The eight methods are listed below in alphabetical order. Please rank the methods in order of your preference for them as an educator. Use a scale of one (1) through eight (8) with the number one (1) indicating your favorite method and so on through number eight indicating the method you least favor.

METHOD	RANK
BLANKET GRADING	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
CHECK LISTS	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
CREDIT - NO CREDIT	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
GRADES (A B C D F)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
NARRATIVES	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
PARENT CONFERENCES	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
PASS - FAIL	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
SELF EVALUATION	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

PLEASE GO ON TO SECTION FOUR

SECTION FOUR

Please fill in the correct response to the items below.

50. SEX
- Male
- Female

51. Number of years of paid experience in education. Include this year as year one if a first year teacher, and as a full year if an experienced educator.
- 1
- 1 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 20
- 21 - 30
- 30 - 40
- 40 or more

52. What is the highest college degree you hold?
- No degree
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Masters Degree
- Educational Specialist
- Ed.D.
- Ph.D.

53. What grade level are you now teaching? (Fill in only **one**. In the case of a combination assignment, indicate the **higher** of the grade levels. Administrators are to indicate **administrator** even if teaching a part of the day.)
- Pre-school
- Kindergarten
- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- 5th
- 6th
- Ungraded room
- Administrator

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE	G M T W
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	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

APPENDIX C

TABLE--FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION FOR RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

APPENDIX C

TABLE Appendix C.--Frequency Distribution for Responses to Questionnaire Items With the Exception of Open Ended Items and Item 49.

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Relative Frequency (percent)
1. Self Evaluation better than Grade					
SA	65				5.8
A		283			25.2
D			562		50.0
SD				212	18.8
2. Blanket Grading don't care for					
SA	442				39.3
A		415			36.9
D			159		14.1
SD				104	9.2
3. Pass-Fail Valuable any grade level					
SA	73				6.5
A		236			21.0
D			576		51.2
SD				239	21.2
4. Check List little meaning for kids					
SA	97				8.6
A		379			33.7
D			514		45.7
SD				132	11.7
5. Parent Conferences no value to students except early grades					
SA	19				1.7
A		55			4.9
D			451		40.1
SD				599	53.2
6. Credit-No Credit better than A B C					
SA	40				3.6
A		167			14.8
D			562		50.0
SD				353	31.4
7. Narratives inadequate, inaccurate					
SA	59				5.2
A		221			19.6
D			592		52.6
SD				253	22.5

Table Appendix C Continued.

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Relative Frequency (percent)
8. A B C gives good idea how students are doing					
SA	198				17.6
A		588			52.3
D			266		23.6
SD				68	6.0
9. Self Evaluation unfair to honest kids					
SA	130				11.6
A		474			42.1
D			455		40.4
SD				65	5.8
10. Blanket Grading better than A B C					
SA	29				2.6
A		66			5.9
D			560		49.8
SD				466	41.4
11. Pass-Fail no value for kids any age					
SA	122				10.8
A		343			30.5
D			547		48.6
SD				112	10.0
12. Check List little use to anyone					
SA	38				3.4
A		207			18.4
D			683		60.7
SD				195	17.3
13. Credit-No Credit no use for lower elementary					
SA	287				25.5
A		519			46.1
D			253		22.5
SD				62	5.5
14. Parent Conferences a farce					
SA	28				2.5
A		46			4.1
D			495		44.0
SD				555	49.3

Table Appendix C Continued.

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Relative Frequency (percent)
15. Narratives better than A B C					
SA	156				13.9
A		429			38.1
D			449		39.9
SD				90	8.0
16. A B C darn good hasn't been bettered					
SA	127				11.3
A		427			38.0
D			448		39.8
SD				122	10.8
17. Check List good for kids and means more					
SA	62				5.5
A		355			31.6
D			616		54.8
SD				91	8.1
18. Narratives helpful to kids used with mastery					
SA	130				11.6
A		657			58.4
D			296		26.3
SD				40	3.6
19. Only highly motivated benefit Credit-No Credit					
SA	122				10.8
A		520			46.2
D			419		37.2
SD				62	5.5
20. Self Evaluation little use for lower elementary					
SA	248				22.0
A		531			47.2
D			304		27.0
SD				39	3.5
21. Kids lose incentive when Blanket Grading used					
SA	287				25.5
A		636			56.5
D			183		16.3
SD				18	1.6

Table Appendix C Continued.

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Relative Frequency (percent)
22. A B C unfair to students					
SA	59				5.2
A		186			16.5
D			671		59.6
SD				206	18.3
23. Parent Conference necessary K - 6					
SA	506				45.0
A		445			39.6
D			147		13.1
SD				25	2.2
24. Prefer Pass-Fail over A B C					
SA	34				3.0
A		170			15.1
D			584		51.9
SD				335	29.8
25. Blanket Grading challenging to kids because puts them on "honor"					
SA	21				1.9
A		82			7.3
D			744		66.1
SD				278	24.7
26. Self Evaluation helps eliminate cheating					
SA	34				3.0
A		217			19.3
D			675		60.0
SD				199	17.7
27. Narratives in-human					
SA	32				2.8
A		166			14.8
D			703		62.5
SD				223	19.8
28. Credit-No Credit valuable for lower elementary					
SA	37				3.3
A		174			15.5
D			610		54.2
SD				302	26.8

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Relative Frequency (percent)
29. Pass-Fail cruel to children					
SA	92				8.2
A		324			28.8
D			616		54.8
SD				92	8.2
30. Check List Better than A B C					
SA	87				7.7
A		355			31.6
D			566		50.3
SD				113	10.0
31. A B C about as fair as can get					
SA	163				14.5
A		542			48.2
D			366		32.5
SD				53	4.7
32. Parent Conferences better than A B C					
SA	200				17.8
A		332			29.5
D			533		47.4
SD				56	5.0
33. Like Blanket Grading, takes pressure off kids					
SA	28				2.5
A		97			8.6
D			703		62.5
SD				295	26.2
34. Self Evaluation valuable K - 6					
SA	56				5.0
A		329			29.2
D			553		49.2
SD				184	16.4
35. Pass-Fail least cruel for kids					
SA	45				4.0
A		258			22.9
D			673		59.8
SD				145	12.9

Table Appendix C Continued.

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Relative Frequency (percent)
36. Check List can stand on own merits					
SA	87				7.7
A		520			46.2
D			461		41.0
SD				54	4.8
37. No student benefits from Credit-No Credit					
SA	73				6.5
A		370			32.9
D			640		56.9
SD				40	3.6
38. A B C gives good idea of how students are doing					
SA	189				16.8
A		688			61.2
D			206		18.3
SD				38	3.4
39. Narratives closer to accuracy than other forms					
SA	127				11.3
A		443			39.4
D			505		44.9
SD				49	4.4
40. Parent Conferences valuable for parents, teachers, students					
SA	587				52.2
A		460			40.9
D			66		5.9
SD				5	.4

(Items 41 - 48 -- Open Ended Responses)
(Item 49 -- ranking item treated separately, Chapter Four)

50. Sex	
Male	171
Female	947
51. Years	
1	59
1 - 5	297
6 - 10	304
11- 20	235
21- 30	175
30- 40	47
40- +	8

Table Appendix C Continued.

52.	Degree(s) Held	
	None	4
	Associate's	8
	Bachelor's	645
	Master's	432
	Ed.S.	30
	Ed.D.	4
	Ph.D.	2
53.	Grade Level	
	Pre-School	4
	Kindergarten	74
	1st	146
	2nd	150
	3rd	156
	4th	134
	5th	151
	6th	145
	Ungraded	58
	Administrator	107
54.	State	
	Georgia	275
	Michigan	292
	Tennessee	282
	West Virginia	276

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO BUILDING PRINCIPALS AND RETURN POSTCARD SHOWING COMMITMENT TO THE STUDY

APPENDIX D

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

Under the auspices of the Department of Administration and Higher Education, College of Education, Michigan State University, a study is being conducted concerning elementary educators' attitudes toward selected pupil progress reporting techniques. Your building is one of thirty schools in your state randomly selected to take part in the study. In all, one hundred twenty schools (thirty each in Georgia, Michigan, Tennessee and West Virginia) will be included.

In the near future, sufficient questionnaires will be sent for you, as principal, and your teaching staff to complete. Average time for completion of the questionnaire is eighteen minutes. Of course, individual respondent confidentiality will be maintained. Responses will be compared on the basis of geographical location, grade level taught, years of teaching experience and other similar factors. Names of individual schools or specific locations will not be revealed in the study.

Please return the enclosed confirmation card at your very earliest convenience in order that your packet of materials might be prepared. We sincerely appreciate your interest and willingness to assist in this project.

Sincerely,

Dr. Louis Romano
Professor
Department of Administration

William G. Scharffe
Doctoral Candidate in Administration

Confirmation Card

SCHOOL_____ CONTACT PERSON_____

ADDRESS_____ SCHOOL PHONE( )_____

_____

_____

_____

ZIP_____ K-6

NUMBER OF TEACHERS, GRADES K-~~8~~ INCLUSIVE_____

NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS IN YOUR BLDG._____

~~REPORTING SYSTEM MOST COMMONLY USED IN YOUR SCHOOL:~~

~~(EXAMPLE: S I U; A B C D F; PARENT CONFERENCES ETC.)~~

Thanks for your participation

Prof Lou Romano

Your prompt return of this card is deeply appreciated.

☐ Check here if you would like a summary of the results.

APPENDIX E

FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO SCHOOLS ORIGNIALLY CONTACTED

APPENDIX E

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

Just in case our first letter did not reach you, we are writing again to ask your cooperation in a study concerning elementary teacher and administrator attitudes toward the use of A B C D F grading compared with selected alternative forms of pupil progress reporting.

As mentioned in our first correspondence, dated October 29, 1976, your building is one of thirty schools selected in your state, at random, to take part in the study. In all, one hundred twenty schools (thirty each in Georgia, Michigan, Tennessee and West Virginia) were selected. Responses from you, as principal, and your teachers will be compared on the basis of geographical location, grade level taught, years of teaching experience and other similar factors, with the responses of schools in the other three states. Naturally, respondent confidentiality will be maintained.

We are counting heavily upon the cooperation of the building principals in the study, for without their assistance and support, the attempts to gather data will be fruitless. Please help us in this important effort by returning the enclosed post card today. Your responses on the questionnaire which will be sent, and the responses of your teaching staff, will help in answering many questions surrounding the "grading" controversy.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Louis Romano
Professor
Department of Administration

William G. Scharffe
Doctoral Candidate in Administration

APPENDIX F

LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS TO PRINCIPALS

APPENDIX F

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING · MICHIGAN · 48824

Dear Building Principal:

The willingness of you and your staff to participate in this study on teacher attitudes toward reporting practices is deeply appreciated. Enclosed, you will find a sufficient number of attitudinal questionnaires for your building as indicated in your reply to our original inquiry. Please help us by following these general directions:

1. Only yourself and any regularly contracted teaching personnel, grades pre-school through grade ~~6~~ 5 inclusive, are asked to respond. Teachers of ungraded classrooms may be included if the students taught would fall in the pre-school through grade 6 grade span. Please do not include substitute teachers, teachers of special education, or paraprofessional support staff.
2. Please ask that all questionnaires be returned to you not more than 3 calendar days after distribution. Upon collection of the questionnaires, please use the return envelope provided. Any unused or partially completed questionnaires should also be returned. Questionnaires should not be folded, nor the pages separated.
3. No names should be listed on the questionnaires.
4. Please ask that respondents follow all directions carefully when completing the questionnaire.

Upon completion of the study, you will be furnished with a summary of the results if you indicated a desire for this in your original reply.

Once again, our sincere thanks is extended for all of your assistance and prompt cooperation in this project.

Sincerely,

Dr. Louis Romano
Professor -
Department of Administration

William G. Scharffe
Doctoral Candidate in Administration

LR/WGS/ch

APPENDIX G

FOLLOW-UP LETTERS TO PRINCIPALS

APPENDIX G

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

Please do not think that we are impatient, but we have not yet received the completed questionnaires on pupil progress reporting from your building. Having been building administrators ourselves, we fully understand the day-to-day problems which occur and can appreciate the limits of time in a school day. The data from your building is, however, very crucial to our study.

We can only ask that you do what you can to have the questionnaires completed and returned as soon as possible. Due to the nature of the sampling in this study, we are depending totally upon your help as a building principal and have no other means of securing the necessary responses.

Won't you and your staff members please complete the questionnaires as soon as possible? Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Louis Romano
Professor of Administration

William G. Scharffe
Doctoral Candidate in Administration

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

Dear Principal

We are still anxiously awaiting the return of questionnaires from your building. Since we have so few schools in each of the states who have not yet returned their completed questionnaires, we are making yet another appeal to you, the educational leader of your building, to do everything possible to have the questionnaires on pupil progress reporting returned.

As mentioned in our last letter, we are totally dependent upon the building principals for our data. Without your help and leadership we cannot collect the data necessary.

Won't you please help by seeing to it that the materials are returned as soon as possible?

Thank you for your time and cooperation. Incidentally, some building administrators have neglected to fill out a questionnaire. We need your response as well as those from your teachers, so please be sure to include yourself when collecting the questionnaires.

Sincerely,

Dr. Louis Romano
Professor of Administration

William G. Scharffe
Doctoral Candidate in Administration
3115 Mackinaw St.
Saginaw, Michigan 48602
(Return address for questionnaires)

APPENDIX H

LETTERS TO TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS USED IN THE INITIAL INTERVIEWS FOR INSTRUMENT DESIGN, INSTRUMENT DESIGN INTERVIEW FORM AND ATTITUDINAL COMMENT POOL FROM INITIAL INTERVIEWS

APPENDIX H

WILLIAM G. SCHARFFE
2812 ADAMS BLVD.
SAGINAW, MI 48602

As an elementary teacher in the Saginaw Public Schools, your name has been selected at random to assist, if you so choose, in a study on the use of A B C D F grade reporting as compared with other selected means of reporting pupil progress.

We are attempting to gather preliminary data on the attitudes held by elementary teachers about grades and grading. Such preliminary data will then be used to design a survey instrument which will ultimately be sent to approximately 1,600 teachers in four different states.

Your input, should you choose to assist, would be gathered via a personal interview of not more than 20 minutes in length. The interview can be conducted in your home, or, if you prefer, by telephone. Confidentiality would, of course, be maintained and any opinions or feelings you express would not be carried beyond the interview other than for the purpose of designing attitudinal questions to be used in the final survey instrument.

If you feel you could spare 20 minutes, and would like to assist in this study, please complete the information on the tear sheet below and return it to the address listed on the letterhead (a 13¢ stamp is enclosed) or contact me at 793-7079 between the hours of 12:00 to 2:00p.m. or 6:00 to 10:00 p.m.

Hopefully, you will choose to assist, but if you do not, please feel free to keep the stamp!

Sincerely,

William G. Scharffe
Doctoral Candidate
Michigan State University

___ Yes, I will assist. I prefer to be interviewed ___ By phone.

___ At home.

___ No, I cannot assist.

(If you can assist, please list your name _____
and your current phone number _____.)

WILLIAM G. SCHARFFE
2812 ADAMS BLVD.
SAGINAW, MI 48602

As an elementary administrator in the Saginaw Public Schools, I know you are often called upon to do things which cut into your personal time. The request I am about to make would entail about 20 minutes of that time. Hopefully, you can be of some assistance.

I am in the process of compiling preliminary data for the design of an attitudinal survey dealing with elementary teacher and administrator feelings about the use of A B C D F grade reporting compared with other available means of pupil progress reporting. The survey instrument, when designed, will be sent to approximately 1,600 teachers and 120 administrators in four different states. In order to gain some insight into attitudes held, it is necessary that some personal interviews be conducted. I am asking if you would be willing to give me 20 minutes,either in person or by phone, in order that I might ask you some very general questions about pupil progress reporting.

If you feel you could possibly assist, please complete the tear sheet below, and return it to me at the address shown above (a 13¢ stamp is enclosed). If you feel you cannot assist, please feel free to keep the stamp! I do hope, however, that you will be able to find 20 minutes.

My personal thanks.

Sincerely,

William G. Scharffe
Doctoral Candidate
Michigan State University

___ Yes, I will assist. I prefer to be interviewed ___ By phone.

___ At home.

___ No, I cannot assist.

(If you can assist, please list your name _____
and your current phone number _____.)

INSTRUMENT DESIGN
INTERVIEW FORM

Interview Number _____

Background Data: Sex M F ; Years of Paid Teaching Experience_____

Degree(s) Held _____ _____ _____ _____

Grade Level Now Teaching: K 1 2 3 4 5 6 Pre-School Admin.

Geographic Area of U.S. Where Educated_____

STATEMENTS

1. When I think of "Grades" I .....
2. A B C D F Grading is .....
3. A way of reporting pupil progress which I like is .....
4. Blanket grading is ..... (give definition before asking for a response to this item)
5. Narrative reporting is ..... (give definition before asking for a response to this item)
6. Parent Conferences are .....
7. Check List Reporting is ..... (give definition before asking for a response to this item)
8. Self Evaluation Reporting is ..... (give definition before asking for a response to this item)
9. Pass-Fail reporting is .....
10. Credit - No Credit Reporting is .....
11. If I had my way about pupil progress reporting I would .....

ATTITUDINAL COMMENT POOL: 40 INTERVIEWS - 17 ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS
23 ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

1. "WHEN I THINK OF 'GRADES' I":
   A. Think of a basis for evaluating students. (10 like responses)
   B. Think of A B C D F because that's the way I was graded. (8 l.r.)
   C. Shudder. (2 like responses)
   D. Think of pupil progress and evaluation.
   E. Get puzzled because of the confusion they create on records.
   F. Think of "judgement."
   G. How you did against other people. (4 like responses)
   H. Think of passing my students.
   I. Think of frustration.
   J. Think of the child and how grades will affect his self-concept.
   K. Think of artificial separations of people.
   L. Think of something that's inconsequential.
   M. Think of something grossly unfair.
   N. Think of happy and sad faces.
   O. Begin to worry.
   P. Think about how they (grades) limit me in talking about a student's progress.
   Q. I don't like thinking about grades.
   R. Cringe.
   S. Think of report cards.
2. "A B C D F GRADING IS":
   A. Preferable to S. I. U. marks.
   B. More definitive than many other systems.
   C. Totally unfair. (2 like responses)
   D. Very difficult for me, to do.
   E. Very hard on children.
   F. Just another way of describing pupil progress.
   G. No more accurate, and just as biased, as numbers or check lists.
   H. Insufficient.
   I. Not a true indicator of student progress. (3 like responses)
   J. Really unrelated to use in lower elementary grades. (6 l.r.)
   K. Obsolete. (3 like responses)
   L. Good only for grades 6 and up.
   M. Good.

2. (continued)
   N. Not uniform.
   O. The most common way to evaluate students.
   P. Poor.
   Q. Too inconclusive.
   R. A darn good grading system which hasn't been bettered. (2 l.r.)
   S. Something that discourages some students while others work harder because of it.
   T. O.K. if based on something other than the teacher's personal opinion.
   U. Useless.
   V. Meaningless.
   W. Terrible
   X. Phony.
   Y. Accepted and popular with parents. (3 like responses)
   Z. About as fair as you can get.
3. "A WAY OF REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS WHICH I LIKE IS":
   A. Parent conferences. (20 like responses)
   B. The A B C D F method along with parent conferences.
   C. Objective referenced reporting. (4 like responses)
   D. Written anecdotal comments to the parents. (3 like responses)
   E. Parent-teacher conferences at the home of the parent. (2 l.r.)
   F. Parent conferences along with a written report. (2 l.r.)
   G. Person-to-person conferences with the student and the parent present. (2 like responses)
   H. Parent conferences along with a check list. (2 like responses)
   I. Computer assisted narrative reports.
   J. Percentage marks along with A B C D F.
   K. Parent conferences grades K-4 with letter grades thereafter.
   L. A B C D F. (2 like responses)
4. "BLANKET GRADING IS":
   A. Good for students who are below average and not too good for high achievers.
   B. Ridiculous - cannot be justified.
   C. Acceptable at the college level but not for elementary. (5 l.r.)
   D. Not enough of a challenge for children in their developmental stages.
   E. Not acceptable to me.

F. Something I really don't care for. (2 like responses)

G. Easy on the malingerers.

H. Something I like because it takes pressure off kids. (2 like r.)

I. A cop-out for teachers who have a low opinion of themselves.

J. Insufficient because it doesn't make allowances for individual differences. (4 like responses)

K. A practice which makes people lose incentive. (8 like res.)

L. Great from the student's viewpoint.

M. A system which makes students lose respect for the teacher.

N. Favorable, providing each student is responsible for producing something.

O. Not any more fair than A B C D F.

P. Really unfair and ineffective. (2 like responses)

Q. Nonsense.

R. A method which encourages students to work up to their potential.

S. Challenging because it puts you on your honor. (5 like responses)

T. Good for music, art and physical education. (2 like responses)

5. "NARRATIVE REPORTING IS":

A. The best system. (3 like responses)

B. Time consuming. (12 like responses)

C. Wonderful.

D. Good if done on a truly individual basis.

E. Fine if the comments are made in a positive way.

F. A system that comes closer to accuracy than any other.

G. Great - the teacher can be more subjective.

H. Best when used for lower elementary.

I. A good idea because it gives parents more to hold onto.

J. Really good if combined with parent conferences.

K. Too impersonal if done by computer. (4 like responses)

L. Is of questionable value for inner-city parents.

M. Good only if you have dedicated teachers. (5 like responses)

N. Inadequate. (3 like responses)

O. Useful only when grades are given too.

P. Inhuman because it assumes that all kids fit the same mold.

Q. Very helpful, especially when used for mastery level reporting.

R. Too time consuming for the parents.

6. "PARENT CONFERENCES ARE":
   A. Great if you can get parents to come in. (5 like responses)
   B. Excellent, the best method. (16 like responses)
   C. Very worthwhile.
   D. Enlightening for the parents. (6 like responses)
   E. The way to go, but more should be held. (4 like responses)
   F. In a way, a farce.
   G. Absolutely necessary at all levels. (3 like responses)
   H. Totally dependent for success on the basis of the teacher who is conducting the conference.
   I. One way to really learn more about the child. (4 like responses)
   J. Best for low achievers.
   K. A waste of time.
   L. Good if a check list is used along with them.
   M. Very productive.
   N. A good way of explaining the grade.
   O. Good only if the teacher has materials to show the parents.
7. "CHECK LIST REPORTING IS":
   A. Terribly time consuming. (5 like responses)
   B. Fine, if you have a conference to go along with it. (4 like r.)
   C. Too hard to sort out.
   D. Not too satisfactory.
   E. Something which hasn't too much meaning.
   F. Better than A B C D F but not as good as narratives.
   G. Valuable.
   H. In and of itself, not sufficient. (3 like responses)
   I. Something that never should be used as a final evaluation.
   J. A method that has no meaning for kids. (3 like responses)
   K. Vague.
   L. Not preferable to grades. (3 like responses)
   M. A cop-out.
   N. Good for kids. (4 like responses)
   O. Used too much like A B C D F.
   P. More limited than face-to-face conferences.
   Q. Useless for parents who don't read well. (2 like responses)
   R. The worst method of reporting.

S. Ambiguous.

T. Just another version of a narrative.

U. Fine, as long as the list is objective referenced.

V. A waster of time for the teacher. (3 like responses)

8. "SELF EVALUATION REPORTING IS":

A. Not for the lower elementary grades. (13 like responses)

B. Something which the kids in upper grades would cheat on.

C. Not too good because kids either rate themselves too high or too low. (4 like responses)

D. Something I don't agree with. (5 like responses)

E. Not too satisfactory.

F. Is valuable.

G. Too soon with us.

H. Really unfair - the honest kids are hurt. (4 like responses)

I. One of the best tools a teacher can use.

J. Totally dependent for success on the maturity of the students.

K. Good only if used as a part of the total evaluation process.

L. O.K. only if the criteria for grading is clearly spelled out.

M. Is better than giving a grade.

N. Possibly, very valuable.

O. A system which eliminates fear and concern on the part of the child.

P. Excellent for all grade levels.

Q. Valid only when there is direct teacher input.

R. Only valid in the lower elementary grades where the kids are truthful.

S. Excellent for interim progress reports.

T. A lousy cop-out on the teacher's part.

9. "PASS - FAIL REPORTING IS":

A. Good only for industrial arts, or some subject like that. (10)

B. Not valuable unless explained to student in detail as to just what a "P" or an "F" means.

C. Fine for higher grades, but not for elementary. (6 like res.)

D. Fine for me.

E. Unrealistic.

F. A report that doesn't tell parents anything.

G. Cruel.

H. Something I don't like because I don't like to fail a child.
I. Something I'd really like to use.
J. More negative than positive.
K. Nothing - I don't like it.
L. O.K. for independent studies.
M. Vague.
N. Discouraging to children.
O. Something which tells absolutely nothing. (5 like responses)
P. Just a poor substitute for A B C D F.
Q. Worthless without a specific set of course objectives.
R. Not enough to create an incentive in pupils.
S. Too cut and dried.
T. Insufficient rating.
U. Not preferable to a grade.
V. Something that has few advantages.
W. Better than giving a grade.

10. "CREDIT - NO CREDIT REPORTING IS":
A. Great for graduate level courses.
B. No different than pass-fail. (11 like responses)
C. O.K., I guess - if I were a poor student I'd like it.
D. Best for physical activity classes, or maybe choir and music.
E. Better than pass-fail because there is no connotation of failure. (10 like responses)
F. O.K. for self evaluation situations.
G. Good only for college level.
H. Definitely not for academic courses.
I. Of no use to lower elementary grades.
J. Only good for highly motivated students. (8 like responses)
K. Worthwhile for special education kids only.
L. Vague.
M. Unrealistic.
N. Good for use in curbing absenteeism.
O. Something I don't agree with.

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