

THE PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE AND HOW IT IS UTILIZED  
in  
THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT OF A SELECTED SCHOOL SYSTEM

AN ABSTRACT  
A THESIS  
PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
OF DANBURY STATE COLLEGE

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

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April 1963

The Parent-Teacher Conference is being more and more widely used by educators as a major method of reporting pupil progress. Current statistics show that many school systems throughout the nation use the conference in addition to the conventional report card. It can best be described as a meeting between the parent and the teacher for the express purpose of discussing the development of the child.

An effective conference must be carefully planned for by the teacher and the success or failure thereof is her responsibility. She must (1) prepare an attractive classroom atmosphere, (2) make the parent feel welcome, (3) have at her fingertips concrete evidence to substantiate her remarks in regard to the progress of the child, (4) be prepared to listen to the parent with a sympathetic ear, (5) have suggestions to offer if they are solicited and (6) leave the parent with the feeling that a sincere, working partnership has been formed and that the door is open to further pleasant meetings.

The Bethel, Connecticut, school system is unique in that the conference is the sole method of reporting in the primary grades. For those pupils progressing at a normal rate of growth two formal conferences are held during the school year, one in the Fall and the other in the Spring. Appointments for fifteen minute conferences are made with the parents. These can be arranged for in any one of several ways, the telephone call by the teacher being the most direct and simple. During the conference the teacher reports pupil progress to the parent. Each child is rated according to his individual

rate of growth. He is not compared with his peers. The pupil's emotional, physical and social growth is taken into consideration along with his academic progress. The teacher has samples of each pupil's work, test results and personal card files to substantiate her discussion.

Additional conferences, as many as necessary, are held for those pupils experiencing difficulties. Parents as well as teachers may initiate such conferences, which will very likely be attended by other concerned school personnel.

A questionnaire was given to the twenty-eight parents of a second grade classroom in one of the Bethel schools. The parents were asked to express their preferences as to methods of reporting pupil progress. Twenty-two parents, or seventy-nine per cent, completed the questionnaire. Of this number forty-eight per cent were completely satisfied with the twice-a-year conferences being held; nineteen per cent were satisfied with the conference but expressed a desire for more than two a year; twenty-nine per cent said they would like a combination of the oral conference and a report card and four per cent favored just the written report card.

The sixty-seven per cent of satisfied parents cited very similar reasons for their satisfaction with oral conferences. They liked the warm relationships resulting from such meetings and pleasure was expressed over the working partnership brought about, all of which was for the direct benefit of the child.

Parents favoring report cards expressed a desire for written, concrete evidence of their children's progress, wishing also to know just where their children stood in relation to the rest of the class.