

**THE REPORTING OF PUPIL PROGRESS
IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

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The writer has chosen to study the area of reporting pupil progress in the elementary school for her own improvement and for the benefit of the interested reader.

In the early days both the evaluation and the reporting of pupil progress were done orally by the teacher or by a visiting examiner. The advent of psychology at the dawn of this century started a trend toward more exact and scientific procedures in educational measurement. An outgrowth of this trend was a striving on the part of those involved with the process of reporting pupil progress to communicate as much meaning as possible in their reporting methods. We have come a long way since the days when the oral method was the chief one used. The methods which may be used now are many and, for the most part, have become more complex than they were in the early days, in keeping with the greater complexity of the entire educational program nowadays.

The factors which may affect a pupil's progress in the elementary school include physical factors, mental factors, emotional factors and curricula and other school policies.

The bases for the evaluation of a pupil's progress cover, first, tests. Tests may be oral or written, standardized or teacher-made, subjective or objective. Some tests measure what a child has learned in his various subjects. Other tests measure his intelligence or his capacity to learn. Still others measure his interests and aptitudes and his adjustment to his social environment. A second basis for pupil progress evaluation is what the pupil himself has produced. This area may include work samples which were done individually or in cooperation with part or all of the rest of the class. The work samples may be from creative projects as well as the traditional classroom subjects. A

third basis is the anecdotal record, a short written account of an incident in a child's behavior which will shed some light on the child himself. A fourth basis is the case study. The case study is a scientific device prepared and used by specially trained guidance people to understand and try to help children with extreme learning difficulties. A fifth basis is the questionnaire which is usually filled out at the beginning of the school year. The questionnaire asks for a great many personal facts and should be carefully prepared so as to be as tactful as possible. A sixth basis is the peer rating which shows the opinions of other members of a class about a child. Seventh and last comes self-evaluation as a basis for measurement. The child can evaluate his own progress after he has been taught to set standards.

The elementary school teacher today has several methods of reporting pupil progress at his disposal. He may use the traditional report card and grades, including the per cent or a series of letters of the alphabet. On the traditional report card he may report pupil progress by rank order; he may mark on a curve, which means that a certain per cent of the class (usually 4%) will fail regardless of how they try or improve; he may use the dual marking system, which provides two sets of marks -- a letter series to indicate the actual achievement of the child and a number series to indicate the child's ability and effort; and, finally, the teacher may report pupil progress on the traditional report card by means of a descriptive report in either essay form or by check list. Although the traditional report card is most widely used today, the teacher may choose to report by means of a letter to the parents of the children in his class. Another choice available to the teacher is the conference method of reporting. The conference is usually between the teacher

and the parents of the child but conferences are sometimes held between the pupil and the teacher or the pupil, his parents and the teacher. Sometimes a member of the administrative staff or a special teacher or guidance person may be present. There are other ways of reporting pupil progress in the elementary school in addition to the foregoing methods. Cumulative records report to the administration, to the child's present and future teachers, higher schools and future employers. Open school day or week communicates information to anyone interested. Parents may obtain additional information from attendance at Parent-Teacher Association meetings and other school activities. Daily reports from the children to the home, homework, newspaper items, dramatic and other programs at school, and posters and displays in the school and even in the show windows of local merchants are all methods of communicating information about pupil progress in the elementary school.

In order to improve its methods of reporting pupil progress, a community must survey its needs and decide on the method which will best meet them, for there is no one best method for all communities.