

**THE EVOLUTION OF A REPORT CARD:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY
OF DOCUMENTATION PRACTICES**

by

Patricia Gail Story

B.G.S., Simon Fraser University, 1991

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in the Faculty
of
Education

© Patricia Gail Story, 1994

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

March 1994

All rights reserved. This work may not be
reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy
or other means, without permission of the author.



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file *Votre référence*

Our file *Notre référence*

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-612-17122-1

Canada

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis, project or extended essay (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

The Evolution of a Report Card:

An Ethnographic Study of Documentation Practices

Author:

(Signature)

Patricia Gail Story

(Name)

March 30, 1994

(Date)

APPROVAL

NAME Patricia Gail Story
DEGREE Master of Arts
TITLE The Evolution of a Report Card:
An Ethnographic Study of Documentation
Practices

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Chair Diane Dagenais

Meguido Zola
Senior Supervisor

Mike ~~Manley~~-Casimir
Member

Leone Prock
Associate Professor
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University
External Examiner

Date: April 30, 1994

Abstract

The Evolution of a Report Card: An Ethnographic Study of Documentation Practices

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the anecdotal report card currently being used in the public schools of British Columbia. This examination is primarily concerned with whether or not anecdotal report cards effectively meet the needs of students, parents and teachers. Research regarding the use of narrative/anecdotal comments when reporting student progress is limited: therefore, the literature review includes selected studies pertaining to the positive and negative aspects of using anecdotal/narrative reporting, as well as recent survey results released by the British Columbia Ministry of Education. The thesis seeks to establish an analytical framework as well as providing detailed information for all those affected by the use of anecdotal report cards. This will enable the reader to critically analyze anecdotal report cards used in our schools today and to assess their effectiveness for students, parents, and teachers.

The method consists of five stages of data collection. This thesis recounts experiences of educators as they search for a more accurate and effective method of reporting student progress. An ethnographic exploration focuses on teachers within the culture of the school as they experience the frustrations of composing anecdotal comments. Fieldwork, spanning a three year period, results in: Phase 1 – a critical examination of participant observations of those living and experiencing the task of writing anecdotal report cards; Phase 2 – analysis of coded survey results obtained from the parents involved in Phase 1; Phase 3 – individual interviews conducted with nine parents and three teachers; Phase 4 – a focused group interview session involving nine parents; and Phase 5 – development of a report card and analysis of coded survey sheets pertaining to the developed report card.

This is done in order to clarify insights into the writing of text which directly deals with reporting student progress.

The results of the research show that although anecdotal report cards have some positive aspects (e.g., nurturing self-esteem and discouraging comparisons), their shortcomings (e.g., time consuming to write, the content is often difficult for parents to interpret) are extensive resulting in some justifiable concern among parents and teachers. Consequently, a set of criteria for developing a more effective report card is proposed.

This thesis argues for a report card that informs students, parents, and teachers of: 1) what the student is able to do; 2) areas in which the student requires further attention and development; 3) how the student can be supported in his or her learning; and 4) the student's progress with reference to standards of development for children in a similar age range.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all educators who have the love of children within their hearts and the desire to continually improve the education system, and to the children and parents whose feelings and wishes are shared and documented within these pages.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my husband, Harry, whose faith in my abilities as an educator and whose support for my academic endeavors has enabled me not only to complete this thesis but to seek answers and solutions to educational issues in order to protect our greatest resource: children.

To my children, Julie and Thomas, for their hugs, encouragement, and admiration they have given to me for my years of study in the field of education.

Many thanks to Meguido Zola, whose belief in my ability to embrace change and adopt new challenges has enabled me to persevere with my studies and continually improve as an educator.

Thank you to Mike Manley-Casimir for his reassurance, coaching, and guidance as I compiled data, analyzed the findings, and developed this thesis.

I extend my gratitude to L.M. Prock for consenting to be my external examiner. Taking the time from her busy schedule is very much appreciated.

To Trevor Lautens, whose expertise in editing, moral support, and talent for making text come alive; I am forever grateful.

I applaud the dedicated teachers and staff of West Vancouver with whom I work (in particular those of Caulfeild Elementary and Eagle Harbour Primary) who were so willing to share their thoughts and experiences; Ridgeview Elementary for giving me permission to use portions of their codes and definitions (Appendix G); John Bowbrick, my principal, who encouraged and supported my efforts to find a more suitable reporting format; the parents who provided much of the data upon which this thesis is based; and the children who inspire me to take the initiative to continue to enhance their education: a big thank you.

Table of Contents

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	v
Acknowledgments	vi
Chapter One: Background and Statement of the Problem	1
Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting	1
The Research Question	6
Significance of the Study	7
Definition of Terms	8
Assessment/Evaluation	8
Reporting	9
Written Reports	9
Anecdotal Reports	9
Structured Written Report	9
The Primary Program	10
Foundation Document	10
Resource Document	10
Resource Teacher	11
Focused Group Interview	11
Limitations	11
Outline of the Chapters	16
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature	17
Introduction	17
Reporting	18
Ministry Documents—Recent Survey Results	21
Overview of the Literature on Anecdotal Reporting	24
Chapter Three: Method	30
A Tradition of Ethnography	30
Methods and Procedures of Data Collection	32
Phase 1: Participant Observation	33
Teacher Concerns	34
Parent Concerns	38
The Context of the School Environment	40
Phase 2: Survey	46
Phase 3: Interviews with Key Informants	47
Phase 4: Focused Group Interviews	50
Phase 5: Survey Responses to New Report Card	51
Data Analysis	51
Chapter Four: The Results	54
Phase 1: Participant Observation	55
Phase 2: Survey	59
Positive Statements	60
Comments Suggesting Improvements	63
Phase 3: Interviews with Key Informants	68
Highlights from the Findings of Phase 3	78
Phase 4: Focused Group Interviews	86
Phase 5: Survey Responses to New Report Card	88
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications	90

Bibliography	98
Appendix A: School Act—Pages E65, E66	106
Appendix B: Report Card Samples	108
Appendix C: Revised Written Report Card	127
Appendix D: Transcripts of Teacher Comments	130
Appendix E: (1) First Letter of Explanation	133
Appendix E: (2) Second Letter of Explanation	134
Appendix E: (3) Summary Plan	135
Appendix E: (4) Primary Reporting Process Survey	136
Appendix F: Interview Questions	137
Appendix G: New Structured Written Report Card	138
Appendix H: Survey for New Report Card	153
Appendix I: (a) Sample Anecdotal Report Card	154
Appendix I: (a-1) Sample Anecdotal Report Card	155
Appendix I: (b) Sample Anecdotal Report Card	156
Appendix J: Guide for Writing Structured Written Reports	157

List of Charts

Chart 1: Positive Statements	61
Chart 2: Suggested Improvements	64

Figure

Figure 1: Topics Identified by Parents and Teachers	72
---	----

Chapter One: Background and Statement of the Problem

Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

The first day of school: what an evocative phrase, written into a universal experience. Children flood the school yard that so recently was somberly silent. Their faces are clean and shiny and they bear, proudly and still a bit awkwardly, treasures that are aliens in their hands: new pencils, felts, books. The treasure of treasures, the recess snack or the noon hour lunch, may be tucked away in the inner sanctum of their backpacks. Excitement fills the air—and a touch of apprehension too. A year of partnership—of unpredictable potential, unimaginable result—between student, teacher, and parent is about to unfold.

That first, truncated school day is a day of welcoming and of shy—often mutually shy—beginnings of rapport. More prosaically, it is also a day of organization, of the start of the accumulation of the "hardware" on which the many school days ahead will subtly, almost invisibly, run.

When that day ends, the children, whether predominantly animated, subdued, stricken by a sudden silence that would amaze their parents, or even terrified, and perhaps all of these at times, are never left indifferent. They are already changed forever. And even the fearful or the timid are awakened into curiosity. Most children anxiously—even pesteringly to their parents—look forward to the next day. They are eager to see their new-found friends again. And the teacher must become one of—perhaps, without undue inflation of his or her role, the most important of—those new-found friends.

For myself, the silence that falls on the classroom when the children leave casts a sobering shadow. I too have been excited, but first-day "high" retreats into a sense of tremendous responsibility.

I have arrived with the "regulation" equipment—the Primary Program Foundation and Resource Documents. I have read them, become familiar with them. Now I must translate them into the development of the whole child: artistic and aesthetic, emotional and social, intellectual, physical, and socially responsible. I must get to know the children. I must understand where they are in terms of their development.

That assessment may be done in a number of ways. For example, I may test the level of student attainment, gather data to enhance my teaching abilities, or, for purposes of accountability, project the students' future, set standards, and—not least—motivate them (Barrow & Milburn, 1986, p. 20).

That requires interpretation of evidence. I must make judgments and decisions based on that evidence. So the evidence itself must be sound. Assessment and evaluation are part of a shared process; they work hand in hand. The quality of the assessed information determines the quality of evaluation: evaluation is only as good as the assessment on which it is based. Assessment and evaluation are harnessed to advance each child's learning.

The assessment and evaluation "terms" also carry the responsibility to:

- gather evidence on what a child can do, determining individual strengths and learning needs;
- help the teacher shape a curriculum based on the strengths and needs of the child;
- provide feedback to the child;
- help the child develop and value the practice of assessing and evaluating his or her own learning capabilities;

- describe the child's growth and development in all goal areas;
- provide a basis for communicating progress to the child, to parents, and to school personnel;
- nurture and develop a positive self-concept in the child; and
- promote lifelong learning (*Foundation Document*, 1993, p. 93).

Providing a basis for communicating progress to the child, to parents and to school personnel can be painfully frustrating. The following passage from my professional journal serves to illustrate:

My mind is so full right now, with ideas, concerns, wishes, and frustrations about evaluation and assessment. It's been bothering me for the last three years, that something as important as assessment and evaluation are often the areas in which my fellow teachers, including myself, have experienced feelings of inadequacy.

My colleagues identify with this. We are finding that gathering authentic data over time and communicating the progress observed to the students and parents has become complicated and stressful. I try to trace the source of this complication. One reason often given is the fact that the form of the report card has changed since 1990. The Ministry of Education, through the School Act, Sections 97 (3), 103 (2) (j), and 182 (2) (see Appendix A) requires Primary progress reports to be anecdotal (Appendix I(a)).

It should be noted, however, that reporting has always contained some form of written anecdotal comment and/or conferences. (Samples of Report Cards used over the past years are in Appendix B.) What is it then that causes so much anxiety among teachers when it comes time to write report cards? Ask any teacher how he or she feels at "report card time." Teachers will tell you that they would rather do anything else than sit down and write comments about their students, even though they know them extremely well.

At its best, the reporting system is a process of two-way communication between two cooperating sets of adults responsible for the child's well-

being, leading to a greater realization on the part of each of the needs, the growth, and the long-range promise of the child. The reporting process is seen as the outlet for information summarizing the results of previous programs planned for the child, and as the instrument through which steps are taken toward new and more effective programs for the future. It reflects not only an important aspect of curriculum planning, but also the "Partnership Principle" that has developed over recent decades (Goodlad & Anderson, 1987, p. 103).

The school system in British Columbia is responsible for reporting student progress five times per year. Three of these reporting sessions consist of written comments and mainly involve the parents and teachers. The student, however, is by no means excluded from the reporting process. Assessment and evaluation of products, process, and behaviour are shared with the students on a daily basis. Twice a year, informal reporting sessions are conducted that include the student. Three-way conferences, sharing portfolio samples with parents through student-led conferences, theme presentations (sharing projects, songs, plays), and self-evaluation sessions are examples of how the student is involved in the reporting process.

The problem of reporting pupil progress to parents has probably received more attention from both educators and citizens than any other educational topic (Goodlad & Anderson, 1987, p. 102). It is not surprising then that it is a problem for the parents, teachers, and students within the district where I work.

In response to concerns from educators and parents, a booklet *Improving the Quality of Education in British Columbia* was issued by the Ministry of Education (November, 1993). This booklet informed educators of changes being made with report cards. It states:

The following improvements will be made to the Primary Program for Kindergarten to Grade 3: anecdotal reports will be discontinued; structured written reports following new specific guidelines will replace anecdotal reports so that parents will

know how well their children are doing. (*Improving the Quality of Education in British Columbia*, 1993, p. 2)

Anecdotal report cards mentioned above refer to a written account providing specific detailed information on the child's continuing progress and development—an official record of student progress—which enables the teacher to report information consistent with the goals of the Primary Program. The School Act requires that teachers exchange information with parents five times per year. Three of these communications must be in the form of written anecdotal reports (*Foundation Document*, 1994, p. 117). An example of an anecdotal report card can be found in Appendix I(a-1).

"Structured written reports" in the above statement is defined:

Structured written reports are descriptions of students' progress, and include any areas where the teacher has concerns about a child's learning. (*Improving the Quality of Education in British Columbia*, 1993, p. 2)

On January 14, 1994, the British Columbia Ministry of Education held a Reporting Institute. It was at this institute where the assistant to the Deputy Minister distributed some of the results of a survey done by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation concerning the Primary Program. He noted the finding that while educators in Primary are "living" the Primary Program, teachers continue to show concern about the area of reporting.

Discussion took place as to how legislation could support effective reporting. It was clearly emphasized at this institute that for a student in Kindergarten to Grade 3, student progress reports must be in the form of written comments. To continue improving the quality of reporting, the Ministry also published *Policy for Student Reporting in British Columbia*, a draft for discussion purposes. It states on page two of this draft that "structured written reports" must use direct, plain language and answer the following questions:

1. What is the student able to do?
2. Which areas require further attention and development?
3. What ways can the child be supported in learning?
4. How is the child doing in relation to other children in a similar age range?

In order to elicit responses concerning report cards from educators around the province, a draft, *Guide to Primary Reporting*, focusing on the topic of reporting was published in January, 1994, and was distributed to the delegates at the Ministry Reporting Institute, January 14 and 15, 1994. The purpose was to encourage the delegates to return to their districts, organize response committees, and submit suggestions to the Ministry. After revisions, a document will then be published and distributed to teachers as a guide for writing "structured written reports".

The report card's purpose is to inform parents about the progress of their child (Goodlad & Anderson, 1987, p. 104). As a teacher who is currently involved in the reporting process, I have reservations about whether the report cards of today are meeting this expectation.

The Research Question

Assessing and reporting pupil progress are perennial topics for debate among students, parents, and teachers. How can we address their concerns? This study addresses the question: *Does the written anecdotal report card meet the needs of students, parents, and teachers?* Research, analysis, and synthesis of data is required to determine if written anecdotal report cards are the best method of communicating student progress to the student, parent, and school personnel. Several questions have remained unanswered in my mind and have guided my research.

These questions include:

- Are the comments on the written anecdotal report cards clear to the parents? That is, do the parents truly understand what the teacher is trying to say or do they misinterpret the meaning of the comments?—even after an interview is given. Exactly how well are teachers communicating with parents through anecdotal reporting?
- Do the report cards meet the needs of students, parents, and teachers? Do they do the job they are suppose to do? The job is communicating student progress stating what they are able to do, areas which require further attention and development, and ways in which the student can be supported in learning.
- How can we improve anecdotal report cards? Is there an alternative format that may be more accurate in sharing student progress with parents?

Significance of the Study

After struggling with composing and sharing written anecdotal report cards with parents, I decided to start my research in 1991 by contacting the Ministry of Education for information concerning evaluation and "anecdotal report cards" as they were referred to at that time. The Ministry's literature stated that:

One of the strengths of anecdotal reporting is that it is a potential means to keep parents better informed about their child's learning in school. However, there has been very little research on the quality of communicating about a child's learning to parents through anecdotal reporting. (*Anecdotal Reporting*, 1992, p. 1)

The fact that there has been very little research done in the area of quality of communication is a concern for me as well as for many of my colleagues and parents. The purpose of this study is to determine if written anecdotal report cards are the best method of communicating student progress to the student, parent, and school personnel. The information this

study provides will be of particular interest to students, parents, and teachers who are constantly dealing with the issue of reporting.

Searching for an improved method of communicating student progress deserves attention in that the literature illustrates that whatever passions they arouse and polemics they incite report cards are intended to summarize student performance. Although some summaries are narrative (Primary Report Cards), most consist of brief, even terse, symbols. Given from first year in the Primary Program through college, most contain course titles and rating codes. Some list educational aims; others provide advice to parents.

Previous surveys reveal considerable variety in marking codes in both elementary and secondary schools (Chansky, 1975, p. 184). This study contributes to our understanding of the problems inherent in the process of reporting and provides information which educators can use to develop reporting methods that are more compatible with their clientele.

It is important to note that I was well into the study of anecdotal report cards when the Ministry went to "Structured Written Reports." Please note the following time line:

- Jan. 1990 – In the four years of the primary program, written student progress reports shall be anecdotal in nature (Appendix A).
- Sept. 1990 – Anecdotal report cards used in primary grades (Kindergarten to Grade 4).
- Nov. 1993 – Anecdotal reports will be discontinued; structured written reports following new specific guidelines will replace anecdotal reports (*Improving the Quality of Education in British Columbia*, 1994, p. 2).
- Jan. 1994 – Ministry Reporting Instituted held in Delta, B.C. Guide to Primary Reporting draft distributed to delegates for reading, sharing, and responding.

Mar. 1994 – Ministry interim document Guidelines for Writing Structured Written Reports published.

Fall 1994 – Kindergarten to Grade 12 resource on reporting to be published and distributed to school districts.

Sept. 1994 – Implementation of Structured Written Reports (Guidelines for Writing Structured Written Reports).

Definition of Terms

Assessment and Evaluation

“Assessment is the process of gathering evidence of what a child can do. Evaluation is the process of interpreting that evidence and making judgments and decisions based on that evidence. Assessment and evaluation form part of one process. In the context of the classroom, teachers carry out both parts of that process, often almost simultaneously. Evaluation is the ongoing process of making judgments and decisions based on the interpretation of evidence gathered through assessment. The purposes of evaluation are to make informed instructional decisions and to provide a basis for reporting progress to the child, to the parents, and to school personnel (*Foundation Document*, 1993, p. 360).”

Reporting

“Reporting is regular communication, both formal and informal, about a child's progress. This communication is made to the child, to the child's parents, and to appropriate school personnel, depending on need and purpose. Communication between school and home encompasses a range and variety of reporting strategies both formal and informal. Reporting may be oral or written (*Foundation Document*, 1993, p. 362).” All reports referred to within this research are written reports.

Written Reports

All reports referred to within this research are written reports; they are composed in written form for publication, they are a published account of what has happened (*Oxford Mini Dictionary*, 1992, p. 616)."

Anecdotal Reports

"An anecdote is a published account of a short, amusing or interesting true story (*Oxford Mini Dictionary*, 1992, p. 16)." An anecdotal report is a written account concerning student progress that is currently distributed to parents of British Columbia three times each school year.

Structured Written Report

This is the term used for what is now called anecdotal report cards. "Structured written reports" communicate key aspects of each student's growth and achievement. They describe significant aspects of each student's learning within a specific reporting period. Each "structured written report" must use direct, plain language, and include the following:

- a clear description of the student's achievement and learning;
- a specific statement outlining any areas of learning and development that require attention and support;
- a comment about the ways in which the teacher is supporting the student's learning needs;
- suggestions, where appropriate, as to the ways in which the student's parent(s) might support the child's learning."

(*Policy for Student Reporting in British Columbia*, 1994, p. 2.)

The Primary Program

"The primary program refers to the program that a teacher envisions, creates and together with students (Kindergarten, Grades One, Two, and Three) calls into being. The program is guided by a philosophy which

promotes the nurturing of continuous growth of children's knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world, recognizes children as unique individuals, honours the development of the whole child (intellectually, socially, emotionally, artistically, aesthetically, physically, and socially responsible). The curriculum is outlined in the Foundation Document; assessment, evaluation and reporting are supported and guided by standards of development for children in a similar age range, provincial curriculum standards, and specific standards and expectations for individual classroom activities (*Foundation Document*, p. 15)."

Foundation Document

"The Foundation Document, prepared by the Primary Program team, provides a statement of purpose and direction for the education of primary-aged children in British Columbia. It is comprised of:

Section A: Introduces The Primary Program and gives a brief overview of the document;

Section B: Ministry Directions;

Section C: Guiding Principles; and

Section D: Outline of goals, model for assessment and evaluation, examination of key components of the curriculum (*Foundation Document*, p. 5)."

Resource Document

"The resource document was prepared by the Primary Program Team and provides resources to illustrate practical applications of the ideas presented in The Foundation Document. It includes information about program implementation that will be useful for both district and school staffs (*Foundation Document*, p. 4)."

Resource Teacher

Resource teacher refers to a teacher on a school staff who spends a portion of his or her time assisting teachers by presenting demonstration lessons, planning, organizing, and facilitating change. "This person is someone to whom one can turn to for help (*Oxford Mini Dictionary*, 1992, p. 439)."

Focused Group Interview

"Focused group interview refers to an interview where the persons interviewed are known to have been involved in a particular situation. The social scientist has provisionally analyzed the hypothetically significant elements, patterns, processes and total structure of this situation. Through this content or situation, he or she has arrived at a set of hypotheses concerning the consequences of determinate aspects of the situation for those involved in it. On the basis of this analysis, he or she takes the third step of developing an interview guide. Finally, the interview is focused on the subjective experiences of persons exposed to the pre-analyzed situation in an effort to ascertain their definitions of the situation (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990, p. 3)."

Limitations

I began this research because of my feelings of frustration and concern for teacher and parent attitudes towards anecdotal report cards. Since I am a teacher by profession, as well as a parent who has received many different report card formats over the years, I realize that my observations, perceptions, and conclusions may be affected by the experiences I have had as teacher and parent. As a teacher, I have found positive and negative aspects for each type of report card I have had to fill out; as a parent, I have found advantages and disadvantages for every report card format I have read. I have made an effort throughout this research to be conscious of this limitation by remaining neutral in the collection of the data, asking questions, and recording what was said rather than trying to influence or lead the interviewee into making statements that I thought should be made.

The parents chosen for this study were not selected at random but in this manner:

For one phase of this study, Phase 3, I chose three teachers who would be willing to volunteer their time and feel comfortable enough to let me interview the parents of their students and study the reports they had written. In order to do this, I chose teachers from the same school in which I had previously taught. The teachers in turn selected parents that they felt would be cooperative and supportive (which may have slanted the study in a positive direction).

It was interesting, however, to note that even these positive parents felt comfortable sharing their real feelings. They did not hesitate to tell me exactly how they felt. I state this because I had been concerned they might not give their true feelings considering that I was the teacher of their children during the previous year.

Once the questions were addressed and the parents were reassured that the purpose of the research was to help improve the method of written anecdotal reports, they relaxed and gave very straightforward and honest answers. This was sometimes so evident that I would leave an interview feeling depressed and somewhat "beaten up."

The motivation for doing this research was caused by a quote that I had previously read in *Anecdotal Reporting: Quality of Communication with Parents*. It states:

Every effort has been made to provide a representative sample of teachers, parents, students and regions of the province. However, some caution must be used in applying the results of this research to all BC. One limitation may be the sample of teachers, who were all very supportive of anecdotal reporting. Most of the teachers also had at least 10 to 20 years experience. Another limitation may be the sample of parents who took part in this study. While they appear to be representative and hold a diversity of views on anecdotal reporting, it is not clear if their views necessarily reflect the views of all parents. A study with a larger sample of parents is needed to measure the views of parents toward anecdotal reporting in BC. (*Anecdotal Reporting*, 1992, p. 1)

This quote encouraged me to initiate a research project in West Vancouver as research data had not been gathered from this area of B.C. Since my choice of clientele was limited to one socioeconomic area, the results may not be the same as those acquired from another area; my results should not, therefore, be generalized.

I was concerned from the beginning that the small number of parents involved (eighteen) would not provide a broad enough base of study. I wondered if a larger number of parents would result in a different outcome. However, although the number of interviewees was small, similar responses began to appear: the parents seemed to have similar concerns about the same types of issues.

Phase 1 of the research was done to find out if anecdotal report cards clearly communicated student progress to the parents. The report cards analyzed, however, were not written in paragraph form but were done in a point-form in which the comments were listed under the five main goal headings—Aesthetic and Artistic Development, Emotional and Social Development, Intellectual Development, Physical Development, and Social Responsibility (Appendix C). I am concerned that my findings about clear communication may have been affected by the use of the point-form and headings. It would be interesting to take the results of this research and compare them to a research study done with anecdotal report cards written in paragraphs, with no headings. Would the findings be similar or different?

The report cards issued in November 1992 played a major part in this research project (Appendix C). When these report cards were issued they were done in this manner:

The parents arrived at the interview, the report card was given to them to analyze, and the contents of the report card was discussed and explained in detail with student work samples.

If the report card had been sent home to the parents without an interview and no student work samples provided for the parent to analyze, or if report cards had been sent home for pre-reading prior to the interview, would the findings of this part of the research have been different? This provides another avenue of research that might be explored.

During the focused interview held in Phase 4 of this research, I made an effort not to approach the interview with preconceived ideas. I entered each session to observe and focus on what the parents were bringing to me in the form of their dialogue. Being aware that individuals are often influenced by what they have previously seen or have done, I wanted to remain neutral and not bring preconceived ideas, or assumptions to the interview. I wanted to be the asker of questions—questions that would simulate introspection and to provide an interview environment that contained the criteria of an effective focused interview—range, specificity, depth and personal context (Merson, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990, p. 12). There were occasions, however, during the interview when I became a participant almost without realizing it. My feelings about the experiences with anecdotal report cards, combined with the questions the parents would unexpectedly ask me, stimulated discussion. I was quick to realize this, however, no doubt a lesson I had learned from my first set of individual interviews conducted in Phase 3 of this research. In coding and analyzing the transcripts of the interview, it was clear by the tape transcripts that my interaction did not guide the discussion but in fact clarified issues. Nevertheless, this should be acknowledged to assure the reader that I was aware of the importance of neutrality.

I also realize that the findings from the focused interview represent a summary of the over-all feelings and impressions given by the parents in the interview. The findings which appear in the coded transcripts clearly indicate positive and negative aspects of anecdotal report cards, attributes of an effective report card, other points of interest regarding reporting, as well as the parent's interpretation of an ideal interview situation. All parents agreed when consulted later that the points referred to in Phase 5 (Chapter Four: Results) were accurate representations of their feelings towards reporting.

Outline of the Chapters

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature on report cards, with an overview of literature specific to the rationale for report cards, what parents want to know, and the advantages and disadvantages of anecdotal/narrative grading and reporting.

Chapter Three provides a detailed description of the method of this investigation. It describes the collection and interpretation of evidence drawn from participant observations, interviews, survey questionnaires, and focused group discussions.

Chapter Four reports the findings and provides a discussion pertaining to the results of parent, student, and teacher input. The characteristics of an effective report card are outlined.

Chapter Five addresses questions raised in Chapter One, and discusses problems with anecdotal report cards. It also provides recommendations and characteristics of an effective anecdotal report card and reporting methods which better serve the needs of parents, students, and teachers.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relating to anecdotal reporting. It seeks to provide an answer to the question: *Does the anecdotal report card meet the needs of parents, students and teachers?*

A preliminary computer search of library databases at the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University revealed few articles entirely dedicated to anecdotal reporting. Many contain issues concerning assessment and evaluation such as academic records, achievement ratings, grading profiles, and student evaluation, but little insight is gleaned into the nature of anecdotal report cards in the majority of these articles. Consequently, reviews and studies comparing various types/methods of reporting were selected; for it is within these articles that information concerning anecdotal report cards can be found. Articles written by Wise and Newman (1976), Jacobs (1972), McConnell (1957), and Goodlad and Anderson (1987) are discussed within this review to highlight the value of reporting. Current Ministry draft documents addressing the concerns of parents, teachers and administrators regarding anecdotal reporting are analyzed and discussed. Advantages and disadvantages of anecdotal reporting are analyzed by referring to the work of Malehorn (1984), Kazalunas (1978), Rhodes and Nathenson-Mejia (1992), Kevina (1987), Goodlad and Anderson (1987), and Clift, Weiner, and Wilson (1981). Reading this material, dialoguing with educators, watching, listening, asking questions, and formulating hypotheses enabled me to acquire some sense of the social context in which report cards are written and to understand the culture of the participants: those who experience concerns and celebrations when using various reporting methods. I developed a deeper understanding of the complexities of reporting as I: (a) read the

articles, (b) listened to the stories educators had to tell, (c) asked questions of myself, a teacher, who is required to write anecdotal report cards, and (d) identified patterns that recurred in the literature. I have attempted, through this literature review, to capture a summary of the existing research and real-life experiences of teachers, knowing, of course, that this literature summary cannot be inclusive of all the issues involved in reporting systems.

The chapter begins with a brief analysis of recent literature on anecdotal reporting and concludes with a theoretical perspective derived from a summary of the literature.

Reporting

In setting the context of reporting, I chose only those articles that I felt captured the essence of my struggle to develop a broader understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of anecdotal report cards.

The issue of reporting is an old one. "Even though being evaluated is a basic part of living, being graded or evaluated has been argued about since almost the beginning of time" (Arcy, 1979, p. 310). Each reporting period finds teachers discussing and agonizing over the anecdotal report card. Such questions as, "How do I say this and get it through to the parent? What if someone calls me on this? (Appendix D, second page). How can I say all I need to say about a child in just a few paragraphs? While literature concerning grading is abundant, discussion and research regarding anecdotal/narrative report cards is sparse. It is difficult to find concrete data addressing the advantages and disadvantages of anecdotal reporting prior to 1991.

Most available literature pertaining to report cards in general, however, stresses the value of reporting. McConnell (1957) states, "Reporting to parents enables them to cooperate more intelligently with the school in guiding the child" (p. 87). Providing clear, objective information concerning

a student's progress informs the parent of their child's development, states areas of concern and ways in which the child can be supported to promote further development. Jacobs (1972) agrees with this as is shown in the following quote: "The parents can see if Joe and Mary are improving, regressing, or maintaining their previous skill level. They can also see the skills that Joe or Mary has not gotten to but that are part of the program" (p. 46). Good communication between home and school provides consistent reinforcement for the student. Goodlad and Anderson (1987) state:

The reporting process is seen as the outlet for information summarizing the results of previous programs planned for the child, and as the instrument through which steps are taken toward new and more effective programs for the future. It reflects not only an important aspect of curriculum planning, but also the "Partnership Principle" that has developed over recent decades. (p. 103)

Teachers and parents often share common goals. They want students to apply themselves and behave appropriately in the school setting, and they want improved communication between home and school (Wise & Newman, 1976, p. 253). Otto found that both parents and teachers wanted realistic, factual descriptions of student development. They also wanted information about specific strengths, weaknesses, areas for improvement, and suggestions for ways in which parents might help their child. The general conclusion is that a public school has the responsibility to report meaningfully and honestly to parents what the school is teaching and how well their child is learning (Wise & Newman, 1976, p. 254). McConnell, as far back as 1957, agrees:

The types of questions asked tend to show that parents want specific and detailed information about their children. Parents want concrete evidence of the status, progress, and development of their children, whether the information is given by report cards, by letters, or by conferences. Parents indicate that they want the school to accept responsibility for the improvement of personal and social behavior of their children as well as for their intellectual growth. One parent summed up her idea of the function of the school in reporting to parents in this statement: "I think you should tell parents anything that they should know about their children, whether you think they would like it or not. (p. 56)

With the implementation of the Primary Program in 1990, anecdotal report cards were adopted as the method used in the reporting process. Frustration ensued for many teachers, parents and administrators.

Most teachers were not familiar with the process and found it difficult to write concise, clear, accurate prose, and to state the student's progress in articulate fashion. It was difficult to describe all the skills that needed to be addressed and not use educational jargon.

Parents found that they could not understand parts of the report cards. For example, such terms as "math concepts," "conventional spelling," and "emergent readers" which appeared on report cards were not familiar to parents. Many anecdotal reports contained numerous "can do" statements such as: "Mary can write most numerals to 100. She can sort objects according to different characteristics." (Appendix I(a)). Although these statements provided details and specifics about the Math Curriculum and what the child had mastered in that area, they did not inform the parent as to where the child was in relation to others his/her age. The parents didn't know whether to be concerned or happy about their child's progress. Concerns and suggestions as to how the parents might assist their child were often lacking as well.

Administrators were suddenly faced with the task of reading and properly editing vast amounts of prose, facilitating workshops to assist teachers in writing more efficient and effective report cards and addressing parental concerns.

In response to all of this, several Ministry draft documents were published to address the concerns of parents, teachers, and administrators. These involved:

- *Needs in Assessing Student Learning: Teachers' and Principals' Survey Results-Preliminary Report*, February 1992;
- *Anecdotal Reporting: Quality of Communication with Parents*, October, 1992; and

- *Perspectives on Assessment Practices in the Elementary Classroom*, June, 1993.

Ministry Documents—Recent Survey Results

A closer examination of the above Ministry documents provides evidence of a pattern which shows how the official attitude towards anecdotal report cards began to change over the period from February 1992 to June 1993.

Analysis of these documents indicates that, at first, the directive to use anecdotal report cards was supported by educators. It was recognized that inservice and continued dialogue were required to facilitate the implementation of this method of formal reporting. By October, 1992, research stated that teachers communicated well through anecdotal reports and parents liked this method, though some parents did not feel they completely understood these reports. With time, frustrations (such as problems in clarifying comments and in dealing with time constraints) were expressed by educators and parents. Educational leaders were now aware of the need to ensure support and guidance for teachers; to facilitate their efforts in writing clear, concise report cards.

A synopsis of these Ministry documents is presented below.

a) Needs in Assessing Student Learning: Teachers' and Principals' Survey Results

In February, 1992, the document, *Needs in Assessing Student Learning: Teachers' and Principals' Survey Results*, summarized that principals and teachers were very supportive of new methods of student assessment and reporting. Many were interested in receiving further information and materials on these new methods; the Ministry was seen as a possible source. The concerns and issues raised by teachers and principals had many common themes. To assist in meeting assessment needs, educators reported that they would like to discuss their concerns and share materials, experiences and ideas

through in-service and school and district professional development workshops. It was noted that written anecdotal reports were being widely used in all programs. Teachers using them had confidence in the accuracy of the reports, but some teachers were concerned about the time involved.

b) **Anecdotal Reporting: Quality of Communication with Parents**

By October 1992, the Education Research Unit Research and Evaluation Branch, Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights published the document, *Anecdotal Reporting: Quality of Communication with Parents*. Its focus was the quality of communication of a child's learning progress to parents through anecdotal reporting. In doing so, the paper validated the strengths of anecdotal reporting in communicating with parents, pointed to suggestions for possible ways to improve the quality of this communication, and provided additional information about teacher/parent communication and anecdotal reporting in British Columbia (*Anecdotal Reporting*, 1992, p. 1). It was apparent that teachers communicated well through anecdotal report cards and most parents liked anecdotal reporting but some parents did not feel they completely understood these reports or how their child was doing in school.

c) **Perspectives on Assessment Practices in the Elementary Classroom.**

In June 1993, findings were published in the Executive Summary Concerning Perspectives on Assessment Practices in the Elementary Classroom published findings showing responses from teachers, parents, students, and administrators concerning assessment, evaluation and reporting. Several findings dealing with issues related to assessment and evaluation were quoted in this document. For the purposes of this chapter, I have commented on only those statements pertaining to anecdotal report cards. These statements are as follows:

- Teachers have reported problems in selecting and interpreting information and in the time required to prepare reports; some primary students had trouble making sense of their reports.
- All students recognized the importance of meaningful reports in providing them with feedback and, in some cases, as a basis for planning their academic goals.
- Parents were consistent with what they wanted from classroom assessment: information about their child that effectively communicated how the child was doing in school, particularly how the child was performing academically. Definite criteria were asked for by the parents regarding reporting: to be informative, evaluative comments needed to be directly related to their child to be meaningful; honest evaluation should be provided describing both strengths and weaknesses; frames of reference should be meaningful and provided in order to interpret the information provided by the teacher; they wanted to relate the curriculum and program goals to the assessment information on their child and to the performance of other children. In terms of reporting, parents liked teachers to strike a balance of descriptive and evaluative comment (Ministry of Education, 1992, p. iii).
- Administrators were basically supportive of the current directions in classroom assessment and provided guidelines. It was observed that considerable variability was possible in assessment practices from school to school and district to district (Ministry of Education, 1992, p. iv).

These documents provide evidence of the change in attitude by teachers, parents, and administrators towards anecdotal report cards. Support for the underlying principles behind anecdotal reporting is evident but disadvantages are also identified. These disadvantages need to be addressed through dialogue, inservice, and support from administration.

Overview of the Literature on Anecdotal Reporting

It is clear from a review of the literature pertaining to reporting, that written reports have been used in the primary grades for some time (Anecdotal Reports: A Written Review of Achievement, 1993, p. 1). A recent publication from the Ministry of Education states the objective of these written reports and suggests the foundation on which they were built:

Instead of grades the teacher would say how well a child was doing in each of the subject areas, what sort of problems were showing up in specific areas and how well a student was progressing in both academic and social development. A letter was used to indicate if work was satisfactory or needed improvement. Anecdotal reporting is built on this process. (Anecdotal Reports: A Written Review of Achievement, 1993, p. 1)

Many writers have argued that the anecdotal report card has advantages over reports that primarily use grades. Malehorn (1984) found they supply much more information about a learner's potential and progress than grades (p. 257). Writing a paragraph that states what a child is able to do and providing suggestions as to how he/she may be assisted to further his/her development tells the parents much more than receiving a letter grade without explanation or examples. Narratives, experts agree, provide much more information than letter grades, including diagnostic information (Alexander, 1993, p. 4). If written properly, they can supply parents with a wealth of information about their child and build self-esteem in students. The reports should tell parents where their child stands on the continuum of learning in all areas of the curriculum. Knowing the strengths and areas requiring improvement will enable parents to help their child at home. Narrative reports can pay off in better understanding between the home and the school.

Anecdotal reports are flexible and allow the teacher to provide a great deal of useful information. An example of this flexibility can be appreciated when a teacher sits down to write his/her report cards. If the major focus for the term has been "Social and Emotional Development," this area may

be discussed more extensively on the report card than other areas of development. If marks or checklists are used, rather than anecdotal format, the teachers are forced to deal with only those items that appear on the form. The Ministry of Education agrees:

Written reports give parents and students clear information about areas where a student is learning well and areas where the learning may be weak. Suggestions on how to support further learning in the weak areas will be included. Parents will know where a child's strengths and weaknesses are in each program/goal area, and they can work with the student and the teacher to address difficult areas and to set individualized learning goals. (Anecdotal Reports: A Written Review of Achievement, 1993, p. 1)

Anecdotal reports have a further advantage over other forms of report cards. They provide a profile of a student that presents him/her as an individual, as it includes those situations and influences peculiar to him/her. The report consists of information about the child, how he/she is reacting within the learning environment of the classroom. Careful documentation of the child's progress can be shared with the parent through a narrative format. This documentation is representative of the individual child being discussed and depicts what that individual has done, is capable of doing and how he/she may be helped in order to improve. The pupil is not under the pressure of "the norm" as in testing; and the reader is able to consider the influences that have shaped the individual before him/her rather than relying on what may be misleading test data (Kazalunas, 1978, p. 182).

It has been argued that:

Anecdotal records can be written about products or can include information about both process and product. As process assessment, resulting from observation, anecdotal records can be particularly telling. Taken regularly, anecdotal notes become not only a vehicle for planning instruction and documenting progress, but also a story about an individual. A story is "a way of knowing and remembering information—a shape or pattern into which information can be arranged." Anecdotal records are a natural and easy way to impart information about students' literacy progress to parents and others who care for the children. In short, anecdotal records are widely acknowledged as being a powerful

classroom tool of ongoing literacy assessment. (Rhodes & Nathenson-Mejia, 1992, pp. 502-503)

A student's progress can be determined by the products that he/she produces. More revealing, however, is the documentation of the process which a child uses to complete a learning task. Writing a paragraph about the stages a child has gone through in order to master a concept provides parents with insight into how their child learns; it tells about the process of learning.

Anecdotal report cards also discourage comparisons. Report cards which used grades were often criticized in the past because they caused comparisons among other students and increased the competition among students. It was not uncommon to hear students ask one another at report card time, "How many A's did you get? I got two." For this reason parents and teachers appreciate anecdotal reports because of their more personal and less competitive nature. It is nearly impossible to compare one child's progress to another if the anecdotal report card describes each child as an individual.

The above advantages lead one to believe that if educators use the anecdotal report card style all aspects of a child's progress will be effectively and efficiently communicated with the student and with the parent. It leaves the reader with the impression that these reports can stand on their own providing an accurate record of the student's achievements that clearly states what he/she is able to do, how he/she may be supported to foster continued growth and how the parent may assist in this progress.

Researchers are not altogether totally positive about anecdotal reporting; they also point to some disadvantages. Malehorn states that anecdotal comments provide much information but he also points out that written reports have too often been inaccurate, incomplete, and prejudicial. The reality is that teachers have found through experience that narrative reports take a lot of time to compose. Those who are willing and able to put in the quality time necessary to write excellent anecdotal report cards

produce reports that meet many of the requirements parents expect. Teachers who find the task overwhelming, do the best they can, but find it difficult to do the task in detail. A few teachers fail to meet the minimum criteria required for a clear, objective, detailed anecdotal report.

The written content of the report card is affected by the instruction that occurs in the classroom and the efficiency and effectiveness of data collection. The teacher's ability to perform these tasks directly affects the accuracy and detail of the written reports; the quality of the report depends on the teacher. Experienced teachers find the task of collecting, analyzing and writing anecdotal reports a challenge; newly trained teachers require support, inservice, and guidance. Teachers agree that anecdotal reports are time-consuming and require skill in preparation (Educational Policies Service, 1972, p. 2).

Narrative reports also tend to be more subjective than other reporting methods. Kavina (1987) agrees:

Entries are subjective if the recorder attempts to cite his/her interpretation of another's feelings, motives, beliefs, values, or knowledge of facts. "Jack is happy." is subjective while "Jack completes his work." is objective. The text should be composed of data and facts that are relevant to the business of the classroom. (p. 457)

Many anecdotal report cards studied in the course of this research contain phrases about students that have little to do with factual information gleaned from the classroom, phrases such as:

Matt does not march to the sound of his own drummer. He has his own brass band, which transmogrifies into everything from symphonies to pan pipes and everything in between. (See Appendix I(b))

There are other limitations. Some teachers find writing a good letter or comment of this type is difficult. Other teachers often resort to vague, general language to avoid difficult situations (Goodlad & Anderson, 1987, p. 121).

Goodlad (1987) found that teachers are frequently reluctant to say negative things on paper, and that teachers may omit references to things that would ordinarily be included if the checklist were on hand as a reminder (p. 121). The reluctance to say negative statements on paper results in teachers listing "can do" statements about the child. Learning how to phrase statements of concern in a positive manner is a skill that requires development. One of the most challenging tasks for teachers is to say all there is to say about the child; to provide a specific, detailed analysis of a child's progress and to make sure everything is covered. There are guidelines in the Foundation Document and Reference Sets to assist teachers but the abundance of descriptors are overwhelming for most teachers. Hall (1990) expressed concerns similar to those of Goodlad in that parental dissatisfaction resulted from not knowing more about specific objectives their child needed to accomplish, concerns pertaining to their child not learning what he/she needed to learn, the narrative being unclear, and the need for stricter guidelines. Parents want to know where their child is located on the continuum of learning, where they are going, the mastery level for each subject area, and how far their child has to go before he/she have mastered the concepts.

Clift and Weiner (1981) provide the reader with a summary of the advantages and disadvantages of the anecdotal format by stating:

The writing of good anecdotal records appears to require a great deal of practice and skill. We have had a great deal of discussion about the value of such records. Criticisms have been made about the subjectivity of many of the comments, the lack of skill with which many of them are written and difficulties of interpretation by receiving teachers. However, despite these detractors, they are preferred by many because teachers consider that they are able to describe personality and progress of pupils more fully and interestingly by using hand written profiles than with other recording techniques. (p. 207)

In summary, there are many advantages in using anecdotal report cards; there are also shortcomings. Factors such as building self-esteem, reducing the risk of comparing one child to another, providing more information concerning strengths and weaknesses and ways in which the

home and school can support the development of the child are all excellent reasons for considering their use. The child would surely benefit from such reports if they addressed all these areas. Knowing how to write and finding the time to do so often depend on the commitment of the teachers, as much as their skill in writing them. Also, being aware of and being able to write comments that are subjective, complete, accurate, not prejudiced, specific, and clear depends on the ability of the individual teacher.

With advantages and disadvantages now stated, I pose these questions:

- Do the advantages of anecdotal reports outweigh the disadvantages?
- Can the reports stand on their own and protect children from falling through the cracks and getting lost in the system?
- Will the description of the child's progress be clearly understood so the parents will know exactly where their child stands?
- Do the reports address the needs of students, parents, and teachers?

The purpose of this study is to determine if written anecdotal report cards are the best method of communicating student progress to the student, parent, and school personnel. In doing so, it is my aim to understand the needs of parents, students, and teachers in the area of report writing in order that a reporting format may be developed to better meet the needs of these individuals.

Chapter Three: Method

The purposes of this chapter are: (a) to set the study within the tradition of ethnographic inquiry; (b) outline methods and procedures of data collection and (c) to describe the way in which data is analyzed in order to provide a description of anecdotal report cards that meet the needs of students, parents, and teachers.

A Tradition of Ethnography

If one recognizes that meaningful social life is produced and reproduced through the use of language, then one must also recognize that language is constitutive of how social life is represented. There is a direct parallel between the methods of everyday understanding and the methods of ethnographic inquiry (Atkinson, 1992, p. 2). We develop ideas and try them out; we ask, look, listen; sometimes we join in and sometimes we hang back and observe. Investigating the area of assessment and evaluation—in particular methods of reporting—required a complex set of readings, observations, and inferences. As stated by Atkinson, these complex sets are transformed into the personal narrative of the ethnographer, who constructs this textual reality from the shreds and patches of appearances and verbal testimony. "Even though the informants speak, their authenticity is warranted by the ethnographer's incorporation of them into the definitive record." (Atkinson, 1990, p. 62) The difference between the subject matter and the inquiry rests on the attitude adopted by the researcher. "For the ethnographer, the procedures of research are the methods of mundane practical understanding, grown self-conscious." (Atkinson, 1992, p. 2)

The ethnographer uses the methods of everyday accounting—narratives, analogies, descriptions, metaphors and examples to reconstruct the social worlds that are the subject matter of books, chapters, and papers—

so, too, did I, as I recorded my findings while participating in the culture of the school, becoming immersed in the daily life of assessment; struggling with aspects of reporting and inquiring into the beliefs and values of teachers, students, and parents. This involvement resembled the process an anthropologist might use to study a specific culture.

An ethnographic procedure involves conducting an intensive study of a single social system. The total immersion in the culture of the school over an extended period of time is the essence of ethnography. This exploration draws on approaches developed by ethnographers and is therefore considered to be within a tradition of ethnography. What characterizes this study as ethnographic is the total immersion, focusing on a specific problem found in the school culture, drawing on a wide range of sources of information, capturing the meaning of everyday human activities, and probing to uncover deeper layers of meaning to uncover the pattern of relationships.

A study must be more than rich description to qualify as ethnographic. Paul Atkinson (1992) argues:

We are dealing not with mere descriptive writing. It contains within it the analytic message of the sociology itself. In other words, when we talk of the role of understanding of interpretation in interpretative, qualitative studies, we are often dealing with something other than or additional to explicitly stated propositions. (p. 62)

Ethnography is based on thorough research, ethically and conscientiously conducted, with a systematic review of sources and evidence, and conveyed to the reader through coherent written texts (Atkinson, 1992, p. 4). To ensure that an ethnographic study corresponds with the facts, the researcher is careful to ensure that the participants understand the events described. This involves choosing participants who are somewhat familiar with the topic of inquiry and are able to express themselves in a meaningful manner. Interviews, which involve constant checks on meaning through questions that probe, are required. Confusions and contradictions are clarified through "focused group discussions." Further clarification is obtained by having these groups study and analyze the written transcripts

to ensure that the text is an authentic representation of the culture as seen by the participants.

Methods and Procedures of Data Collection

My sample was limited to a group of teachers, parents, and students in the district in which I teach. Therefore, one school district, five teachers, a group of parents, and two schools were involved in this research project. The process for establishing who would take part in the research was:

- The school district in which I teach was chosen in order that I could gather data more efficiently and effectively.
- Three teachers were asked if they would like to take part in this research. I then contacted the parents of three children in each teacher's room to see if they would be willing to take part in the study. Finally, the students who were going to be involved were asked if they would mind if we analyzed their report cards. A range of children's abilities were represented; the children were in Grades Two, Three, and Four.
- An additional group of parents with children ranging from Kindergarten to Grade Two, was asked to take part in a Focused Interview. These parents, part of a Report Card Committee which had been struck at the school in which I taught, volunteered for the task.

This study was divided into five phases of data collection:

- The first phase, referred to in this research as Participant Observation, discusses, analyzes, and reflects upon a process involving change which occurred on a primary staff in the district of West Vancouver (1991–1992).
- Phase 2 consists of the distribution and analysis of a Primary Reporting Process Survey sent to one hundred and fifty-nine parents. The purpose of this survey was to elicit from the parents their responses concerning the revision of the anecdotal report card which resulted from the change process referred to in Phase 1 (November, 1991).

- In the third phase, interviews of nine individual parents and three teachers were observed, analyzed, and evaluated. Each interview was examined and weighed against the other interviews in search of patterns. The intent of conducting the research in this manner, was to provide an insight into the phenomenon of anecdotal report cards within a given context and to provide a method of improving this form of reporting (November, 1991).
- The fourth phase evolved when the need for further input from the parents became apparent. The transcripts from the individual interviews became a framework for a focus group that was conducted. This focus group was composed of nine parents whose children were enrolled from Kindergarten to Grade Two. The conversation of the focus group was tape recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. The information gathered was examined for patterns, for areas where patterns did not exist and for areas in which new patterns arose.
- Phase 5 resulted from the information obtained from the focused interview. After the need for a revised report card became apparent, one was drafted, returned to the interview participants for analysis, published, and distributed to all parents within the school during the November reporting period, 1993. Surveys were distributed with the new report card.

Data collection procedures included participant observation records from anecdotal report card planning sessions held with teachers and administrators, a survey of West Vancouver parents, interview transcripts, observations with key informants, focus group tape recordings and transcripts, development of a new report card, and surveys to determine its appropriateness.

Phase 1: Participant Observations

Notes, discussions, and interactions with teachers and administrators were analyzed in order to examine the present value of current anecdotal report cards, to reflect on why these report cards were not addressing the

needs of their authors or recipients and to find ways in which anecdotal report cards could be improved so that they would better meet the needs of everyone. The frustrations I was hearing from my colleagues needed to be addressed and so I turned to discussing these frustrations with those who were experiencing them—mainly the teachers and parents.

Teacher Concerns

Gathering Data

In 1990, the Primary Program Foundation and Resource Documents were distributed to the schools in British Columbia and the implementation of the Primary Program began. These documents stated that the collection of evidence occurs in the context of the learning environment and is related to the curricular expectations and the goals of the Primary Program. The goals referred to here are: Aesthetic and Artistic, Emotional and Social, Intellectual and Physical Development as well as Social Responsibility. Methods of assessment and evaluation data listed in these documents consist of:

- observation of process in a variety of contexts and activities and being aware of the process of demonstrating what a child knows;
- observation of product where products are collected and conferences and conversations in small groups or on a one-to-one basis are held;
- describing what the child can do (conversing and conferencing) through collecting evidence, use of folders, cards, computer software, post-it notes.

Many teachers became concerned. They wondered if they understood the methods of assessment and evaluation. Teachers throughout the district began to ask questions: "How do we use post-it-notes to record progress?" "How can I organize all these product examples?" "I don't have computer skills, so how can I use one to assist in my assessment and evaluation?" Weighing all these questions, they began to doubt the methods they had been using during their teaching careers. Should record books

and lists of test scores still be used or should one be using audio and visual tape recordings, student-led conferences and student self-evaluation forms? The teachers constantly questioned, "How do I learn how to do all this?"

Terminology

In addition to these recommendations a variety of terms were surfacing to assist the teachers with their evaluation and assessment—terms such as "Focus Questions," "Learning Dimensions," and "Descriptions of Learning."

Even though the meanings of these terms were listed in the Primary Foundation Document, the extensive lists were overpowering to many teachers and they were unsure of how to organize these data into a package that could be managed.

Use of Authentic Data

The teachers were aware that observation and record-keeping are, at very least, time-consuming. Each teacher must decide which method or methods is most useful and efficient. Observations should be as unobtrusive as possible (e.g., jottings of significant events to be recorded later), and accepting rather than judgmental. The challenge was to analyze their individual programs and to decide upon methods of evaluation to provide a variety of on-going authentic data. Some of the more valuable methods for evaluation suggested were: teacher observation, collections of student work, teacher-student interviews, teacher-made tests, criterion-referenced tests, and attitude scales. Decisions had to be made as to which methods to use.

'Can Do' Statements

After the first year of writing anecdotal report cards, it was noticed by the administrators in the district that the quality of the comments varied from teacher to teacher. The Ministry set guidelines for the format of the report card but teachers had different interpretations of what they ought to be

recording. The Primary Program Resource Document states that summative evaluation is intended to describe what the child can do (Resource Document, 1993, p. 101). Many teachers felt this meant that they were not to mention any areas which the child "could not do."

In essence, what this statement in the Resource Document means is that comments made about the child should be honest and tactfully stated so they are not phrased in a negative manner. Workshops and discussion groups helped clarify this misconception.

Anecdotal Comments

As teachers, we were aware of the importance to provide parents with three kinds of information about the individual child:

- a) A complete and accurate picture of the child's potential and the extent to which his progress in school measures up to that potential.
- b) An approximate description of the relative standing of the child within his own class and his own school.
- c) An approximate description of the way the child's potentiality and progress compare with other children of his age throughout the country (Goodlad & Anderson, 1987, p. 110).

We were also aware that words are more informative than numbers; thus the anecdotal report conveys both information and judgment and is a useful way of communicating information (Ontario Board of Education, 1980). Written reports have been used in the primary grades for quite some time. Instead of grades the teacher would say how well a child was doing in each of the subject areas, what sort of problems were showing up in specific areas and how well a student was progressing in both academic and social development. A letter was used to indicate if work was satisfactory or needed improvement (Anecdotal Reports, 1993, p. 128).

As teachers began to write anecdotal comments without the aid of checklists or symbols such as G(Good), S(Satisfactory) or IN(Improvement Needed), many began to experience the challenge of communicating a student's progress clearly and concisely through the use of words. For many teachers, it became a challenge to communicate the intended message to the parent and child. Many used phrases they gleaned from old report cards or lists, such as "manipulates, 3-D materials" or "shows interest and curiosity in others in the classroom". Many such phrases were listed in computer profile programs, and teachers began to express concerns at workshops that these lists of computer-generated phrases might be over-used thus removing the individuality and personal tone of the report cards.

Teachers began to realize that if parents want complete reporting, as assuredly they do, public officials and school administrators must insure that the teachers have the time, the training, and the resources to do the job (Goodlad & Anderson, 1987, p. 128). As a result, teachers approached the Primary Coordinator in the district and requested workshops to assist them in writing concise anecdotal comments.

Computers

In 1990, it was arranged through the Senior Administration and the District Computer Coordinator that every Primary Teacher in the district would be given a computer to place on his or her desk. The purpose was to help teachers compile evaluation and assessment data and assist them with their report card writing. Unfortunately, many teachers did not possess word processing skills and/or were computer illiterate. Many computer training sessions were offered, some teachers began to develop skills but the frustrations still persisted as staff members tried to adjust to the new technology.

Misinterpretation of Comments

The distribution of report cards was usually done in the following manner. The reports were written by the teacher and sent home for the parents to

read. An interview or conference was then held with the parent or the parent and the child to discuss the child's progress. Teachers were beginning to question this procedure. They were beginning to ask themselves, "Does the report card have to go home first?" This question was being asked because at times, parents would attend the interview and were confused about something stated on the report card. It would take valuable conferencing time to clarify the misunderstanding, and the confusion over the comment affected the atmosphere of the conference. Hogan (1975) states that the face-to-face conference affords parents as well as teachers the opportunity to question and to listen (p. 312). Teachers were finding that time that ought to be spent on discussing a child's progress, how the child might be supported and where the child's future progress was to lead, was spent in frustrating clarification sessions.

Time

Teachers were becoming more and more concerned about the amount of time and effort it was taking to report on their students. The School Act requires that teachers exchange information with parents five times per year. Three of these communications must be in the form of written anecdotal reports (Foundation Document, 1993, p. 101). The report cards took a long time to write, they began to develop into mini-essays, teachers often wrapping comments in flowery prose (see teacher interview supporting this statement; Appendix D). It was admitted by teachers that the actual report did not receive the attention it warranted for the amount of effort and time that went into its preparation. This was told to them by parents.

Parent Concerns

Since 1990, I have conducted informal discussions, parent-teacher conferences, and interviews with parents. Information received from these discussions, conferences, and interviews provides evidence of concern from parents regarding anecdotal report cards.

- Parents feel that the anecdotal report cards don't always tell what the child "couldn't do" but seemed to focus mainly on "can do" statements. The reports sounded so "good and nice". The parents want to know the areas of concern and/or weaknesses and want these concerns spelled out clearly so they can monitor their child's progress and assist them at home. The parents often feel that the teachers are not telling the whole story. McConnell (1957) supported these statements in a study he conducted with 1,400 parents. The question he posed to the parents was, "What do you want to know about your child's achievements in the school situation?" The results of the study coincide with the above statements made by the parents I asked. McConnell found that his parents wanted to know the following: "How are his marks? Will he pass? How can I help at home?" (p. 84)
- Many phrases used on the reports are difficult to understand. Phrases and/or words that are familiar to teachers (number facts, digraphs) are not necessarily understood by parents who have to translate this educational jargon.
- Parents feel that the anecdotal report cards are unclear at times; and especially that the report cards don't really tell them where their child is in relation to other students. McConnell found in his studies that a small percentage of parents, ranging from 5 to 12 per cent in the various groups, asked about the aptitudes and abilities of their own children. Most of these parents were in the higher socioeconomic group. The one question most frequently asked concerned the ability of the child in relation to other children: "Is he slow, fast, or average as compared with others?" (McConnell, 1957, p. 85). I find this particularly interesting because the parents I questioned were also of the higher socioeconomic group and were asking the same question.

As these concerns continued to mount, groups of teachers began to voice their concerns and pursue methods of improvement. We realized there was a need for change, both on the part of staff and parents.

The Context of the School Environment

Teacher Initiated Action Plan

In the fall of 1991, the primary teachers on my school staff became increasingly agitated at the prospect of once again being required to write anecdotal report cards. Inservice on reporting was not solving the teachers frustrations, and so the staff decided to tackle these frustrations as a group to see if they could solve some of their concerns. We were aware that the school was situated in a highly educated community which was constantly putting general pressure on the school to adopt high-quality, academic-oriented changes (McConnell, 1957, p. 68). These pressures and tensions were part of the change process and they assisted in the later development of another method of reporting that would address the needs of the teachers, students, and parents.

The process of change proceeded one step further when our Primary Coordinator came to our school to discuss reporting procedures with the staff. It became very obvious that anecdotal reporting was not a resounding success with either teachers or parents. We expressed our feelings to the coordinator and she agreed that it was not very satisfactory and thought that something could be done to change it. This did not solve our immediate problem—namely another set of report cards that had to be written. We felt that this problem was relevant and important (Fullan, 1991, p. 68), and that the anecdotal reports were legislated and did not fit our clientele. The teachers were angry and frustrated because they were caught up in a situation in which they didn't have control. They felt powerless. As illustrated from my professional journal, a feeling of dread was encroaching:

Oh no, here we go again. How do we say this and that and make it understandable to the parents and children? What if someone calls us on this? Will we be able to concretely back up our flowery prose? All this work—for nothing? Why are we doing all this and it's not even being appreciated?

Each of us left the meeting feeling we did not want to write another set of anecdotal report cards which took so much time and appeared to be of such little value. By the end of the day it became obvious that each of us had

been reflecting on our past experience with report card writing and our meeting with the coordinator because after school, two small groups from our primary staff spontaneously met, independently, to discuss report card writing. When we realized what was happening we joined forces and discussed it as a group. We realized that for reporting to be meaningful to parents, they had to be involved in the reporting process. The child's work needed to be available to make comments and recommendations valid, we needed to be able to qualify a statement such as "He or she needs to improve his or her proofreading skills" and show what this actually meant. We decided to see if the principal would attend this impromptu meeting on reporting with an open mind, for we were experienced teachers and were aware that initiation of change never occurs without an advocate (Fullan, 1991, p. 54) and that the principal strongly influences change (p. 76).

Administration Support

It was evident from the beginning that the administrator took the role of the enabler by providing support and incentives. He also balanced his withdrawal with support, so that he didn't seem disinterested or laissez-faire. His ultimate goal was not to take away the importance from the individuals or take credit for the process itself. His attendance at meetings gave evidence of his support but he did not chair these meetings; he left that responsibility to the resource teacher. He was an initiator working collaboratively with the teachers. Even his body language was memorable; although he was with the teachers, seated around the table, his chair was pulled back and he was there only to listen to the plan, ask for clarification and offer guidance. One could feel his support because he sat with us and became familiar with our concerns and plans. He provided administrative guidelines for us to think about, realizing that a fit between a new program and district and school needs was essential (Fullan, 1991, p. 69).

The Plan

A supper meeting was held, with the goal to find a way to put together a report card that would be meaningful for students, parents, and teachers, one that would communicate the student's progress more easily and accurately.

The five-hour supper meeting was intense. Among the statements and questions were:

We'll need to notify parents of the changes. How can we make the experience more friendly? Should we serve coffee? What about work samples? What will we cover in the overviews? How can we be sure that nothing is missed?

All of us understood that this process required the support of others if the ideas were to go anywhere (Fullan, 1991, p. 55) and that we ourselves were committed. We also felt this commitment must be balanced with the knowledge that people may be at different starting points and with different legitimate priorities (Fullan, 1991, p. 139). We seemed to go around the circle to make sure everyone had added his or her thoughts; no decisions were made or written down before everyone agreed. We recognized the importance of peer discussion to allow us to clarify our expectations and focus our concerns resulting from the change (Werner, 1988, p. 103).

How did the teachers feel about this experience?

"It felt so positive to work together." "People listened to one another, everyone wanted a say but everyone backed each other." "I think that's because we all wanted a solution to our needs. Brainstorming brought us together as a group. We worked out glitches together. I guess it's a matter of ownership." "The collegiality between staff and everyone putting together their ideas created a spontaneous, not legislated, natural, and enthusiastic environment." "It was truly a phenomenal meeting for we knew that if we wanted it to work, we would have to talk about it to solve out concerns."

We took each item and discussed the details, writing down our ideas, crossing out this, adding that, changing the order of this. There were times when some of us felt uncomfortable with various parts of the process but

what made it special was that these concerns were discussed, modifications were made, feelings were respected, and we comforted one another and at times made compromises. We role-played situations to help us see what it might feel like to be in the parents' shoes. At this point we were developing clarity of the problems related to implementing the change (Fullan, 1991, p. 70). We focused on ways in which:

- to facilitate a friendly environment;
- to actively involve the parent in the reporting process—to provide them with ownership in the reporting process and share the interview;
- to give the parents an opportunity to contribute to the content of the report card;
- to clearly state the child's progress so that the parents were able to understand what we were trying to say, minimizing teacher jargon and hidden meanings; and
- to provide time and space for notes and action plans.

By the end of the evening we had completed a summary plan (Appendix E (3)) and had come to the realization:

- This was not a new method of reporting. Many of us had participated in reporting sessions that were similar.
- The most important factor that had come out of the evening was that we had created a product, but it was the manner in which we had reached this product that was so rewarding. As Fullan (1991) and Werner (1988) have stated in their literature, the change had become a process, not just an event, and that time is essential for this change to occur successfully.
- The evening was so successful because all of us were ready for change, all of us knew we were not reaching the needs of the parents with the anecdotal reports, and all of us felt that there had to be a more meaningful way to communicate to parents.

- What we hoped we had designed was not necessarily a model to follow, or a package, but a method that suited our school, teachers, and parents.

We had taken a very complex problem, broken it down into components, and made plans to implement them in a divisible and or incremental manner (Fullan, 1991, p. 71). We had listed the exact steps to follow, right down to the most minor detail. We had developed a shared vision of the change process.

By evening's end we had decided that:

- A letter had to be sent home to explain/inform parents of our new reporting method (Appendices E (1) and E (2)).
- An overview format had to be planned.
- A form for parent/teacher interviews had to be designed (Appendix E (4)).

Commitment began to emerge as a consequence of the project activities (Corbet & Rossman, 1989, p. 177). The more we did, the more excited we became. Comments from teachers who were asked to reflect on how they felt at this point in the implementation were:

"We did it, we were the driving force, we knew there was a better way, all of us had a portion of this better way." "We owned it, we wanted it, we would stand behind it. We wouldn't have given up so much time if we hadn't felt the ownership." "We had developed an open-ended framework in which we could develop an interview that suited our own styles. It was a great movement. We felt empowered—we really cared about it so we really wanted it to work."

The change now called for coordination, to orchestrate and steer the process of implementation (Van Der Vegt & Knip, 1990, p. 191). Over the next few days we had developed these steps for a modified primary reporting process:

- letter of explanation sent home to parents;
- one week prior to conferences overviews were to be sent home;

- teachers prepare a point form report for each child;
- parents sign up for a 30 minute conference;
- folders of children's work and other relevant data completed in preparation for conferences;
- parent-teacher conferences help to discuss child's progress relevant to the overview;
- after the interview teacher would amend the point-form report adding any parental input and/or action plans agreed upon by both parties. This completed report would then be typed and sent home in the Primary Progress Report Card Folder as a formal record of the child's progress for the term.
- Parent survey sent home asking for a response to this reporting process.

The Co-operative Reporting Process was implemented and the teachers involved in the process shared their reflections:

"The reporting week was an absolute high—like dancing from one interview to the next. It was like a black cloud had lifted, I had all this data to back what I was telling the parent—I could show them work samples and examples of reading material. You could see the growth the students were making and give feedback to the parents." "Communication was improved, action plans could be composed right on the spot and the parents didn't come with preconceived worries or misunderstandings since they didn't see the report card until they arrived." "I liked the face-to-face honesty. We could clarify concerns and I had the parent's input to back up my observations."

By encouraging this reflection, it was noticeable that the participants were going beyond merely solving their problems, they were extending the range of analysis and reflection and gaining new insight into their work (transcripts of teacher interviews can be found in Appendix D).

Through our collective action, we set out to find a more effective reporting method to use with our parents and students. In doing so, we developed a modified system that we thought would be more effective

(Appendix C). We tested our system with the parents and students at the November 1992 reporting period.

After the reporting process had been implemented, survey sheets were sent home. The findings from this survey suggested we were on the right track.

By August 1993, I felt that as teachers we had more or less dealt with the major concerns expressed by teachers and parents and had addressed the issue of improving communication on the anecdotal report cards I was incorrect to assume this, because during the summer of 1993, it was made clear to me that there were many questions in the area of assessment and evaluation that were still unanswered in the minds of parents.

The following is a segment taken from my journal. It is a conversation I had with a friend. Having taught her child for a year, I had grown to respect her honesty and tactfulness. I wanted an answer to a very personal question and so I asked her: "If there was an area that you felt needed improvement concerning the manner in which I taught your child this year, what would that be?" Her reply was surprising and disturbing:

I felt that I really didn't understand the area of Evaluation and Assessment and the report card really bothers me. I have a lot of questions about it. I wasn't sure how you collected data, how you managed to evaluate and assess everyone, how you organized all the information that you were able to gather, how you had time to do it all, how often you collected information on my child, how you came up with the statements on the anecdotal report card and how you were able to justify your findings. I feel badly to have to say this because I know you put a lot of time and effort into your anecdotal report cards but they don't mean a lot to me. I want to know where my child is. Your reports don't tell me that.

Phase 2: Survey

Upon completion of the above analysis of the anecdotal reporting procedure, a Primary Reporting Process Survey was distributed to one hundred and fifty-nine parents of children who were in the Primary Program in one

West Vancouver School. The parents were asked to fill out the survey sheet, giving their opinion whether these new report cards were an improvement or not, and citing aspects about the reports that they liked and ways in which they could be further improved and also for any other comments (Survey Questionnaire is included in Appendix E(4)). Of the one hundred and fifty-nine parents who received surveys, responses were received from seventy-three. It is to be noted, however, that thirty-nine families had more than one child in the primary years located in the school and would have responded with only one reply. Taking this factor into account, the response rate would have been approximately seventy-three replies out of one hundred and twenty; which represents a response rate of 61%.

Data gathered from Phase 2 provided insights into the issue of Anecdotal Reporting and increased the need for further investigation. Thus, Phase 3 was undertaken to supplement, support, and/or refute data obtained through Phase 2.

Phase 3: Interviews with Key Informants

Unanswered questions and issues that arose from Phase 1 resulted in the need for further information concerning the existing reporting procedure. The surveys undertaken in Phase 2 provided a generalized view of the perceptions held by parents in the immediate community surrounding the school in which the research was undertaken. In order to accomplish a more detailed analysis concerning the report card issue, individual interviews were conducted.

The major goal of these interviews was to obtain personal feedback from parents and teachers; about their feelings, thus encouraging and maintaining retrospection. Therefore, it was important to choose parents who felt comfortable with the prospect of being interviewed and would thus share their true feelings about anecdotal report cards.

Likewise, teachers who would feel comfortable having their report cards critically analyzed by the parents of children they were currently teaching had to be found. With this criterion in mind, three teachers who had originally been involved in the observation stage of Phase 1 were approached. These teachers were conversant with the pending concerns and advantages of anecdotal report cards and were thus eager to be involved in the interviews in order to seek solutions to the issues that had been raised. Each of these three teachers chose three parents who they felt would cooperate in the interview process, cooperate in the sense that they would attend the interviews and not be inhibited at providing a critical analysis of the anecdotal report card. Each teacher was asked to choose parents whose children were at different ability levels.

Six of these parents had children attending the same school. Three other parents were chosen from a different school. All parents resided in the same socioeconomic area of West Vancouver. The procedure used throughout this phase of the research was patterned after the research done by the Education Research Unit, Research and Evaluation Branch (Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights, British Columbia). This was done to enable me to send the results of this research to the Ministry to supplement their findings which were published in a document *Anecdotal Reporting: Quality of Communication with Parents*. A list of interview questions for the parents and teachers is contained in Appendices F.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using questions to guide the discussion. In many cases neither the exact wording nor order of the questions were followed. Each interview was administered in a comfortable room within the school setting and lasted 1 1/2 to 2 hours. These interviews focused on the November 1992 report. Each teacher and parent interview was conducted separately. Every attempt was made to ensure that the participants were relaxed enough to share their feelings, concerns, and support for the anecdotal report card. All interviews were completed by August 1993.

To evaluate the quality of communication, the interviews of a teacher and the student's parents formed a "set". The procedure was:

- The answers to the first question concerning the Three Most Important topics raised by the parents and teacher were compared to determine if they were the same or different.
- The comments which were listed by the teacher under the Three Most Important topics chosen by the parents (e.g., Intellectual Development, Physical Development) were evaluated to see if they were understood by the teacher and parent in the same way.
- Other similar points about the report raised by the remaining questions used in the interview of the teacher and parents were also noted.

Each interview "set" was placed into one of the following five categories: (this method of analysis followed the same format as the that used in the document, *Anecdotal Reporting: Quality of Communication with Parents*, Ministry of Education, 1992, p. 3).

Group 1: "Fail/Poor" communication

- one topic communicated fairly well
- some points raised in common

Group 2: "Fair/Good communication:

- one topic communicated well
- more points raised in common throughout

Group 3: "Good communication:

- two topics communicated well
- many common points raised in two or three topics and throughout

Group 4: "Very Good" communication:

- all topics of either parent or teacher raised clearly (e.g., two of teachers topics covered three of parents)
- many points raised in common throughout

Group 5: "Excellent" communication

- same three topics raised by both
- each topic communicated very well.

Phase 4: Focused Group Interviews

Interviewees were invited to a final interview session. This group was composed of nine female parents whose children ranged from Kindergarten to Grade Two. This session was called to provide an arena for discussion of the main issues that had surfaced through Phases 1, 2, and 3, to provide clarification for various areas of the study and to check for validity of the data found during the research phases.

The meeting was held in the office area of the school and the participants were seated at a round table. This was done to help reassure the participants that all ideas would be equally valued. Two and a half hours of tape recorded dialogue was transcribed after the meeting resulting in thirty-five pages of transcript that tells the story of these parents' feelings about report cards. The numerous pages of transcripts were coded and analyzed.

As a final validity check, on completion of the transcripts and a summary of the findings from the focused interview, the interviewees received a copy of both and were invited to read them for accuracy and respond. They were then asked to return the transcripts and summary accompanied by their signature to indicate that they fully agreed with the contents.

Phase 5: Survey Responses to New Report Card

The results obtained from the focused group interviews indicated that a different style of report card was needed. One was designed with the assistance of the information gleaned from the parents, teachers, and administrators (Appendix G). A survey (Appendix K) was distributed with the report card to sixty-five parents. Forty surveys were completed and returned. It is to be noted, however, that ten of the families located in the school had more than one child in the primary years and would have responded with only one reply. Taking this factor into account, the response rate would have been forty out of fifty-five which represents a response rate of 73%.

Data Analysis

For one to think of ethnographic texts as simple affairs would be wrong. Whatever the over-all degree of sociological or literary sophistication, they can present the reader with a complex and variegated surface (Atkinson, 1990, p. 82). The analysis of collected data throughout this research proved reflective of commitments and tensions which derived from my epistemological and sociological convictions.

Field notes, reflecting upon the continual changes in the report card formats which continued to occur over the period of 1990 to the present (paragraphs, point-form, criterion-based, summary statements, combinations of all the above); observations, conversations, and interviews (individual and focused) were coded. The object of this qualitative research was to gather insights and to look for other instances for which I had not accounted, while also making a concerted effort not to let my previous knowledge (or lack of it) of reporting or my understanding (or lack of it) of the school culture effect the interpretation of my research.

Themes began to emerge as I carefully studied the data gathered over the years. Also, once I was able to seriously sit back, reflect upon, and truly

analyze what had occurred with the report card format over the span of four years, it became increasingly apparent that there were similar patterns which also began to surface.

The data were collected from all the sources studied; field notes depicting the story of the struggle ensued by parents and teachers as they agonized over the format of anecdotal report cards, interviews were conducted, and coded transcripts analyzed. Careful inspection of all this information resulted in common themes becoming visible.

My confidence continued to grow as I began to see these themes and patterns continually occur through the phases of the research.

I wrote the story of change experienced by the parents and teachers in Phase 1, drawing heavily on conversations held with both parties and recording feelings of both parties regarding shortcomings of the reporting procedures. A narrative of the school cultures was described in detail drawing from all sources of data. The course of this narrative moves from initiating an action plan, to receiving support from the administration and finally to developing a plan. Throughout this narrative, the reader is exposed to actual conversations where feelings and knowledge of reporting are shared. It becomes evident through this narrative what is valued, believed and questioned.

As a result of the progress made in Phase 1, surveys were distributed which enabled further analysis and an opportunity to observe additional reoccurring themes, patterns, and relationships. Each survey sheet was carefully studied. After several were examined it became apparent that certain comments began to repeat themselves. Further analysis uncovered that the comments could be grouped into positive points about the point-form anecdotal report cards and areas requiring improvement.

Interviews with Key Informants were a natural growth feature resulting from information gleaned from the surveys. The main focus of these interviews centered around the issue of communication between

teachers and parents. If anecdotal report cards were to be used, were they in fact communicating effectively? To evaluate the quality of communication, the interviews of a teacher and the students' parents formed a "set". The following was then done:

- The answers which were given by the teachers and parents were compared to determine if they were the same or similar.
- Comments made during the interview were listed and coded.
- Particular attention was paid to whether or not the comments provided by the teacher on the report card were interpreted inaccurately. As the interviews were analyzed it became apparent that once again, the same themes and patterns were continuing to unfold.

The research continued with a focused interview to verify the validity of these reoccurring themes and patterns. Once the tapes had been transcribed and codes began to cross over all interviews, the patterns became faithful and stood up as the coding continued.

It was at this point that all participants began to question the use of anecdotal report cards as an effective means of accurately reporting.

The accumulation of the findings throughout the research and study of literature pertaining to the topic were considered and the development of a "new" report card resulted. The term "new" is used here in the sense that this report card was a compilation of many years of reflection; reflection based on the input of teachers, parents, and administrators. This report card is exemplary of what parents and teachers have repeatedly stated as being needed to provide an accurate account of the student's performance. Surveys distributed with these report cards provided a basis from which to analyze the "new" report cards strengths and areas for improvement.

Chapter Four: The Results

This chapter contains the findings of five phases of research conducted over a three year span. These pages report the results of this research. These results ultimately led to a decision to develop a revised written report card. The various phases differ in many aspects but most notably is the fact that some are narrative in nature and others consist of survey results. In both instances, however, the participants share their feelings, opinions, and expertise towards the methods of reporting student progress. As one studies the findings in each phase, a pattern begins to unfold. Certain ideas, comments, and concerns weave their way through much of the data which ultimately results in a set of conclusions pertaining to the criteria of an effective report card.

The first section of this chapter, Phase 1, portrays the culture of the school setting in which this research began, shares the observations of the participants within the school, and highlights the conclusions reached concerning the method of reporting used at that time.

Phase 2 depicts the findings of the survey conducted after the revised anecdotal report cards (Appendix C) had been implemented during Phase 1. Coding the returned survey forms indicated that positive statements and suggestions for improvement were present. The frequency with which each statement appears is also listed.

Phase 3, deals with a response analysis provided by key informants who were interviewed. This section specifically deals with the quality of communication concerning report cards written in anecdotal form and provides the reader with the data gleaned from this research. Both positive aspects of anecdotal reports and ways in which they may be improved are provided in this section of the chapter.

Phase 4, discusses the findings resulting from a focused group interview. Analysis and coding of the transcripts enabled the research to take an unexpected direction. This information provided good insight for the development of a revised written report card (Appendix G). Details on how this came about and what resulted are shared in this section.

The last portion, Phase 5, explains the results of the final survey sent to the parents (Appendix H). This survey accompanied the revised written report card which had been a shared project of parents, teachers, and administrators. Parents' perceptions, opinions, and concerns are provided.

Phase 1: Participant Observation

The characterization of the school culture begins with a brief summary of the participants involved: a description of their experience, grade placement, and beliefs and values towards assessment and evaluation procedures. It includes a summary of how the experience of identifying a problem (the anecdotal reporting format required by the Ministry), studying alternatives, and working as a team to find a solution affected the existence of both the participants and the school culture which ultimately led to the creation of a more suitable reporting format for the school.

The school culture was one in which a primary team of twelve excellent, experienced, qualified teachers worked. The breadth of their experience ranged from eight years of classroom teaching to more than twenty. All teachers had taught several grades and were aware of the developmental learning stages through which children pass in the years labeled Kindergarten to Grade Three. All teachers were at the stage of their careers where their beliefs and values were well established. Being vocal about contentious issues and expressing opinions was not a problem for this group of educators. Due to their experience with teaching and their ability to deal with everyday situations in the classroom; knowing what "felt right" for children, parents, and teachers was second nature to them. This is why all of these teachers began to seriously question the use of anecdotal

report cards in the fall of 1991. The reaction of the teachers involved was obtained through interview format.

All the teachers had a common goal in mind, to find an improved method of reporting student progress. The existing report card was not meeting the needs at the community level (Barman, Heber, & McCaskill, p. 17). It was addressing the response to locally identified needs that was partly responsible for enabling the group to achieve the desired outcomes. As one teacher stated:

The anecdotal reports were legislated and the parents were dissatisfied. We felt anger and frustration of being caught in something we couldn't control. We were powerless. It was satisfying to be doing something and to come to some resolution.

It was an exhilarating experience being part of a process where the teachers were involved in setting the goals, designing resources, implementing the process, and evaluating its effectiveness. They were involved in practical action (praxis) which added to their commitment and ultimate success of the implementation of change (Aoki, 1984). This was so aptly stated by one colleague:

When we met after school we were all feeling the same emotions. We were a group of women and we felt the principal would go along with our wanting change. He was seeing us as a group of strong women. We owned it, we wanted it, we would stand behind it. When we met at your house, we were like a "natter" group. There was an angry buzz and we were working our way through. It was like I was six years old and I had done all I could to please the person of authority and my reports were still not being appreciated. We all sat there; all feeling equal. It was a phenomenal feeling.

A combination of strong advocate, need, active initiation, and a clear model for proceeding characterized this successful start up (Fullan, 1991, p. 62). The principal supported the need to find a more effective way of reporting (relevance), the teachers were motivated and committed to a change (readiness), and a clear step-by-step procedure was developed with the assistance of the Resource Teacher (resources).

Ownership in the sense of clarity, skill and commitment is a progressive process; it comes out the other end of the successful change process (Fullan, 1991, p. 92). This was truly evident over the course of the school year. The change occurred in November 1991. A year later the teachers were still learning and reflecting on the implementation.

The implementation experience at the school addressed the technological, political, and cultural systems in the school and community. This in turn affected the change effort and made it successful. Technically, planning was done by the whole; team meetings were held which provided encouragement and assistance in understanding the proposed changes; the administration supported the change and the resource teacher provided assistance. Politically, the teachers were given power and authority and the changes were incorporated into the reporting process. Culturally, the teachers' beliefs and values were similar which enhanced the change process (Cobett & Rossman, 1989).

They felt they had to solve their dilemma and so they banded together. This collegiality resulted from a common problem that they felt had to be solved and was facilitated through the meetings in which they collaborated and came up with results that suited everyone. Ownership for the project was felt by every single participant as is shown from this interview excerpt.

I guess it's ownership. The collegiality between staff was fantastic. Everyone putting together their own ideas. It was a genuine issue with everyone all involved...spontaneous, it wasn't an assigned job, we had to do, it was a natural need that we had to solve...enthusiasm.

They felt like a team, their relationship with one another truly strengthened as did their respect for each others' talents (those who chaired the meetings; those who summarized headings; those who printed charts; those who thought in a clear, focused manner; those who kept all on track). A teacher shared:

Wow, it was an eye opener because I started to feel I was getting to know teachers personally. They were showing honesty, trust, support, acceptance and no one was judging anyone. We all talked and talked until we solved it.

They created a format of reporting including a revised report card form and an interview process that met the needs of the teachers, parents, and children (Appendix C). Communication was improved and parents knew where their child stood in relation to their age and how they might help their child make further growth. This can be felt in the following statements:

There wasn't as much stress about writing the reports. I could get right down to the "meat and potatoes" instead of the flowery jargon. There was more partnership between parent and teacher and the comments could be backed up with the children's work. You could negotiate a time-line plan with the parent (action plan). Even certain phrases in the point form could be modified. The parents and I did a lot of talking going over all the points.

As a primary team, they felt that they were placed in the center of focus and they considered themselves as having significance in shaping educational action (Goodson, 1991).

The strategy of designing this process facilitated, maximized, and in a "real" sense legislated the capturing of the teacher's voice. Collegiality and collaboration were powerful supports for teacher development as they worked through the process of change. It worked because they had the conditions, context, and processes that were right for them as a team (Raymond, Butt, Townsend, 1991, p. 212). They were regarded and treated as experts, each personal style was seen to have value.

Designing the process and reflecting on its successes and weaknesses allowed them to discuss with their peers. They were experiencing reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (Schon, 1983). As one teacher so succinctly put it:

Brainstorming brought us together as a group. We worked out glitches.

They found that team work alone did not suffice. The joint action that flows from the groups' purposes and obligations as they shape the agreed task and its outcomes does (Grimmett & Crehan, 1990). As shown below:

I missed the first part of the day when you met with the coordinator and had the meeting with the principal. Remember? I was away that day so I can only share how I felt when I arrived at your house for the meeting. It was exciting. We were really a group getting on a roll. Maybe I was bossy but I was so excited. We kept clarifying and everyone was so happy so we worked through the process. Everyone agreed and came up with a resolution. We all felt empowered. We really cared about it so we really wanted to make it work. I can remember how strongly we all felt about finding a solution to our problem.

They had a purpose, they were determined to find a solution, they all agreed to take responsibility for a section of the task and they were willing to try out what they had developed.

No one was dictating so we couldn't whine about having to do it so we had to solve it ourselves and we did. Different people took leadership at different times and we all put in our two bits worth. We all had lots of input.

The plan earned acceptance and it became the routine for the school year, therefore, the planning for school improvement worked. The acceptance of the process, having time to meet to consider the steps, support from the administration and early dismissal for interviews all helped make the venture successful, improve the school, and lead to further teacher development (Liebermann & Miller, 1984).

Phase 2: Survey

Surveys were distributed to the parents requesting their opinions regarding the new format developed by the teachers referred to in Phase 1. These surveys were analyzed and coded. The survey questions were such that they asked:

- if the revised process was an improvement or not an improvement over the paragraph version of the anecdotal report card
- for two things that were liked about the revised reporting process and two things that needed improving

- for any general comments. The format of the survey resulted in two categories becoming evident; positive statements and areas for improvement.

Positive Statements

A total of one hundred and fifty positive comments supporting the new report card format were provided by the parents on the seventy-three survey forms which were returned. When coded, it became apparent that some comments appeared over and over again. When further analyzed, twenty-six statements strongly supported the new reporting format. Chart 1 provides a summary of these results.

The positive comments appearing on Chart 1 are listed below, accompanied by a brief explanation. They are placed in the order of frequency in which they appeared on the survey forms. This frequency measure is based on the number of times the comment appeared out of the total number of positive statements.

1. Point form format—the parents felt that point form rather than using paragraphs was preferred because:
 - point form was more efficient; $5/150 = 3\%$
 - the message was clearer with less jargon; $25/150 = 17\%$Comments supporting the point form format appeared $30/150 = 20\%$ frequency.
2. Time allotment given for the interview—parents liked having a half hour interview as opposed to the fifteen minute time allotment they were given at previous reporting periods. This comment appeared $23/150$ times which equals 15% frequency.
3. Detailed and specific—parents wanted their child reported on in depth with specific statements being made. Comments of this nature appeared $13/150$ times = 9% frequency.

CHART I - POSITIVE STATEMENTS

STATEMENTS	# of times appeared	% appeared
1. - point form format more efficient	5	3%
- message clearer, less jargon	25	17%
- support	30	20%
2. - time allotment for interview. Preferred half hour.	23	15%
3. - wanted in-depth report.	13	9%
4. - see work samples at interview.	12	8%
5. - parent and teacher concerns raised at same time.	7	5%
- personal interaction with teacher.	7	5%
6. - parental input in evaluation process.	6	4%
- overview seen of concepts taught before seeing report card.	6	4%
7. - parents liked report to state how parents could help child learn.	5	3%
8. - see where child is in program	4	2%
- interview provides opportunity to have questions answered and to receive practical suggestions	4	2%
9. - report card easier to understand because was sent home after the interview	3	1%
- liked frank exchange about child's progress	3	1%
- point form reports easier for teacher, liked that	3	1%
10- use of headings gave clearer picture	2	1%
- liked openness of school	2	1%
- each child evaluated individually	2	1%
- process more personalized and individual	2	1%
- children don't feel bad about not doing well	2	1%
- prefer interviews held late in term	2	1%
- well prepared before interview	2	1%
- this style of report looks at total child, not just classroom performance	2	1%
- report card said more after the interview	2	1%
- liked child present at interview	2	1%

4. Work samples—parents felt that work samples at interviews provided a starting point from which the interview could proceed, thus, showing exactly how the child was doing. This appeared 12/150 positive comments = 8% frequency.
5. Two positive comments appeared seven times.
 - a. With this style of reporting (parent is shown report card for the first time when the parent arrives at the interview and the teacher explains it at that time) the concerns of the teacher and parent could be raised at the same time.
 - b. There is personal interaction with the teacher. Each appeared 7/150 = 5% frequency.
6. Two comments each appeared 6/150 times = 4% frequency.
 - a. There was an opportunity for parental input in the evaluation process.
 - b. It was helpful to see an overview of the concepts taught before seeing the report card. It was thought that this helped with the time constraint of the interview.
7. Parents liked it when the report clearly stated how the parent could help their child learn. This appeared 5/150 = 3% frequency.
8. Appearing four times were:
 - I could see where my child was in the programme.
 - The interview provided an opportunity to have our questions answered and to receive practical suggestions. This appeared 4/150 = 2% frequency.
9. Those comments appearing three times:
 - There were no surprises when the report card was sent home because I had already had an interview with the report card that helped me understand the report card.
 - I liked the frank exchange about my child's progress.

- I was able to find out the expectations of the teacher.
 - The point form reports are easier for the teachers and we like that.
 - The report card was easier to understand because it was sent home after it was discussed at the interview. This appeared 3/150 = 1% frequency.
10. Appearing two times were:
- Use of headings (Social and Emotional Development, etc.) gave a clearer picture.
 - I appreciated the openness of the school.
 - Each child is evaluated individually.
 - The process was more personalized and individual.
 - Children don't feel bad about not doing well.
 - Interviews held late in the term are better than when they are held in September.
 - I was well prepared before the interview with questions.
 - This style of report looks at the total child rather than simply classroom performance.
 - The report card said more to me after the interview.
 - I liked my child present at the interview. This appeared 2/150 = 1% frequency.

Comments Suggesting Improvements

A total of sixty-seven statements suggesting improvement were provided on the seventy-three survey forms which were returned. Several statements repeatedly appeared. When carefully tallied, it became clear that out of the sixty-seven statements, twenty-two distinct statements were present. Chart 2 presents a summary of these results.

CHART II - SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

STATEMENTS	# of times appeared	% appeared
1. - need guideline to indicate what child can do	9	13%
2. - would like longer interview time (more than 30 minutes)	7	10%
3. - overview and report sent home before interview to allow for focus by parent	5	7%
4. - term overview and course outline at beginning of term so parents can monitor child's progress more easily	4	3%
5. - would like letter or numeric grading	3	4%
- interviews over 2 week period instead of 1 week	3	4%
- parents need to know more about curriculum	3	4%
- first interview too late in year (November)	3	4%
- more interviews; not just twice a year	3	4%
- more time to review child's work before interview should be provided	3	4%
6. - jargon still used on report cards	2	3%
- checklist would be more informative	2	3%
- samples of children's work available prior to interview	2	3%
- intermediate and primary reports should be sent home at same time	2	3%
- a checklist on work habits	2	3%
- honesty re child's ability	2	3%
- point format not personal enough	2	3%
- more in-depth report needed	2	3%
- report card envelopes should be decorated	2	3%
- do not want teacher to change comments to please parents	2	3%
7. - teachers should be trained in more effective communication techniques	1	1%
- want to be included in decision making when decision is made about child before report card interview session	1	1%

PS/eb
Repcard
1%

The statements suggesting improvement appearing on Chart 2 are listed below, accompanied by a brief explanation. They are placed in the order of frequency in which they appeared on the survey forms. This frequency measure is based on the number of times the comment appeared out of the total number of statements suggesting improvement.

1. I need a guide line as to what a child of my child's age can do. Frequency: $9/67 = 13\%$.
2. I would like longer interviews. (The increase in time from 15 minutes used previously to 30 minutes was appreciated but even more time would be better.) Frequency: $7/67 = 10\%$.
3. The overview and report card should be sent home prior to the interview to allow for focus by the parent. (The procedure which was used was that the overview for the term was sent home a week prior to the interview. The report card was shown to the parent for the first time at the interview and was carefully explained to the parent.) Frequency: $5/67 = 7\%$.
4. How about a term overview and course outline at the beginning of the term instead of just prior to interviews so that parents could monitor a child's progress more effectively and contribute appropriately. Frequency: $4/67 = 3\%$.
5. Those comments which appeared $3/67 = 4\%$ were:
 - Would like a letter or numeric grading system.
 - Having the interviews over a two week period would be better rather than jamming them into one week.
 - The parents need to know more about the curriculum.
 - The first interview is scheduled too late in the year (November). It's too late in coming home.
 - I want more interviews throughout the year. Not just twice a year.
 - More time to review the child's work before the interview should be provided. (The process used was—the parents were encouraged

to arrive 10 minutes early to their child's interview during which time they could look through their child's portfolio. This portfolio was located in the office for privacy reasons.)

6. Comments which appeared 2/67 = 3% were:

- Jargon is still present on these report cards.
- A checklist would be more informative.
- Samples of children's work should be available prior to the interview.
- These reports should be sent home at the same time as the intermediate students. Having children in Primary and Intermediate, it was very hard on my Primary child not to have a report card to show us but his brother in Intermediate did. (The Primary overview was sent home at the same time as the Intermediate Report Cards but the Primary report card was not. It was shown when the parents arrived at the interview.)
- I want honesty—your child is here—here's how all of us can help.
- I would like a checklist on work habits.
- The point form format is not personal enough.
- A more in depth report is needed.
- The report card holders (envelopes) should be decorated.
- I want to be assured that teachers are not swayed by the parents' point of view so that they will stick by what they have placed on the report card and won't change things just to keep the parent happy.

7. Comments appearing 1/67 = 1%:

- Teachers should be trained in more effective communication techniques.
- I want to be in the decision making process when decisions are made about my child before the report card interview session. My

child is in Learning Assistance and I didn't know until the interview.

Out of the twenty-two statements of improvement, twelve were suggestions as to how to improve the format of the interview and ten were suggestions that parents presented in order to further improve the report card itself. Listed below are these suggestions.

1. Remove jargon.
2. Checklist would be very informative.
3. Provide a guideline as to what a child of my child's age can do.
4. Be honest, tell me how I can help.
5. Letter or numeric grade preferred.
6. A checklist on work habits should be included.
7. Report needs to be more personal.
8. Need to know more about the curriculum.
9. More in depth report needed.
10. Teachers should not be swayed by parents point of view.

The results of this survey provided the teachers with statements of support and concrete suggestions on how to continue to improve the reporting process and the anecdotal report card. The most encouraging finding of this survey was that when asked if they thought the revised process was an improvement or not, sixty-four out of seventy-three forms said yes which equals 88% in favor of the change from anecdotal report cards written in paragraph form to the anecdotal report cards using point form format accompanied with a revised method of interviewing. The other nine who did not think the process was an improvement thought that for the following reasons:

1. Six parents felt they had nothing with which to compare the revised process as they were new parents to the school.

2. One parent felt that it was hard to say.
3. One parent was undecided (good and bad).
4. One parent felt that more doesn't mean better.

This encouraged the staff to continue to grow in their quest to find a more effective means of reporting, thus, Phase 3 resulted.

Phase 3: Interviews with Key Informants

The search for report cards that were more efficient and effective in communicating student progress continued with interviews held with key informants. Based on the findings from this section of the research, the quality of communication with parents through anecdotal reporting using point form format was considered as "good."

This became evident when each interview set was placed into one of five categories of communication (see p. 48). The numerical breakdown of "sets" in each category was as follows:

Group 1	Fair/Poor	1 set
Group 2	Fair/Good	2 sets
Group 3	Good	3 sets
Group 4	Very Good	2 sets
Group 5	Excellent	1 set

Once all interview sets were placed into one of the above 5 categories, it showed that out of the nine parents and three teachers who were interviewed, the communication on seven out of the nine report cards could be classified in the fair/good, good, or very good range.

After analyzing the parents' and teachers' sets and their interpretation of the comments, the following conclusions were made.

1. The communication was mostly affected or influenced by how clearly the comment was stated—comments that were specific and provided examples were more clearly understood.

Example: "knows his/her addition facts" was a confusing statement for parents; "is able to quickly recall addition and subtraction facts to the 10 family ($8+2=10$)" was much clearer.
2. Parents felt it was easier to understand the point form format of the report card than trying to decipher paragraphs thus improving their ability to understand what the teacher was trying to say.
3. Since all reports were written using the point form format and still the communication was not excellent in all cases—it leads me to believe that other factors besides the format of the report card are affecting the communication.
4. Other factors that repeatedly affected the communication were:
 - a) general statements (understands math concepts);
 - b) statements used without examples (happy, sociable child);
 - c) use of teacher jargon (writes sequenced narratives);
 - d) misunderstanding of terms (focus for next term—does this mean parent is to deal with this or teacher does?);
 - e) parents perception of their child and teacher's perception (the teacher feels the child can develop complex sentences and the parent feels that he can't);
 - f) comments that didn't state where the child is, where improvement was needed and what strategies could/would be done to achieve mastery—common terms or standard terms were needed by parents so they could relate to where their child was—such terms as good, satisfactory, poor; and
 - g) comments that didn't tell the parent where their child was in relation to his/her age group.

Example: drawings require more detail—the parent felt that they didn't know how much worry they have to put into this—is my child way below in this area?

When reviewing the topics (Emotional and Social Development, Intellectual Development, etc.) in which the communication was not clear, the following was found:

Areas where communication was found to be unclear...

Number of Set	Topic	# that was unclear
Set 1	Intellectual	3
Set 2	Emotional/Social	1
Set 3	Emotional/Social	3
Set 4	Emotional/Social	1
	Intellectual	2
Set 5	Emotional/Social	1
	Intellectual	4
Set 6	All areas were clear	
Set 7	Intellectual	2
Set 8	Emotional/Social	1
	Intellectual	1
Set 9	Emotional/Social	3
	Intellectual	6

When sorted, the results were: Emotional/Social Development—10 miscommunications; and Intellectual Development—18 miscommunications.

A pattern suggested that certain areas of a child's development were being communicated more clearly than others. Intellectual Development was misinterpreted more often than Social and Emotional Development. This is interesting in that the teachers who were interviewed worried about their ability to accurately report on the Emotional and Social Development of the children in their class because they rarely were able to observe the

children outside on the playground and they felt their evaluation of this area of the child's development was somewhat hindered by this fact.

One set in this study was found to be communicating poorly. Parents and teachers always raised something in common from the November reports on all sets.

The Following Information Addresses the Findings to the Main Questions Asked in the Interview

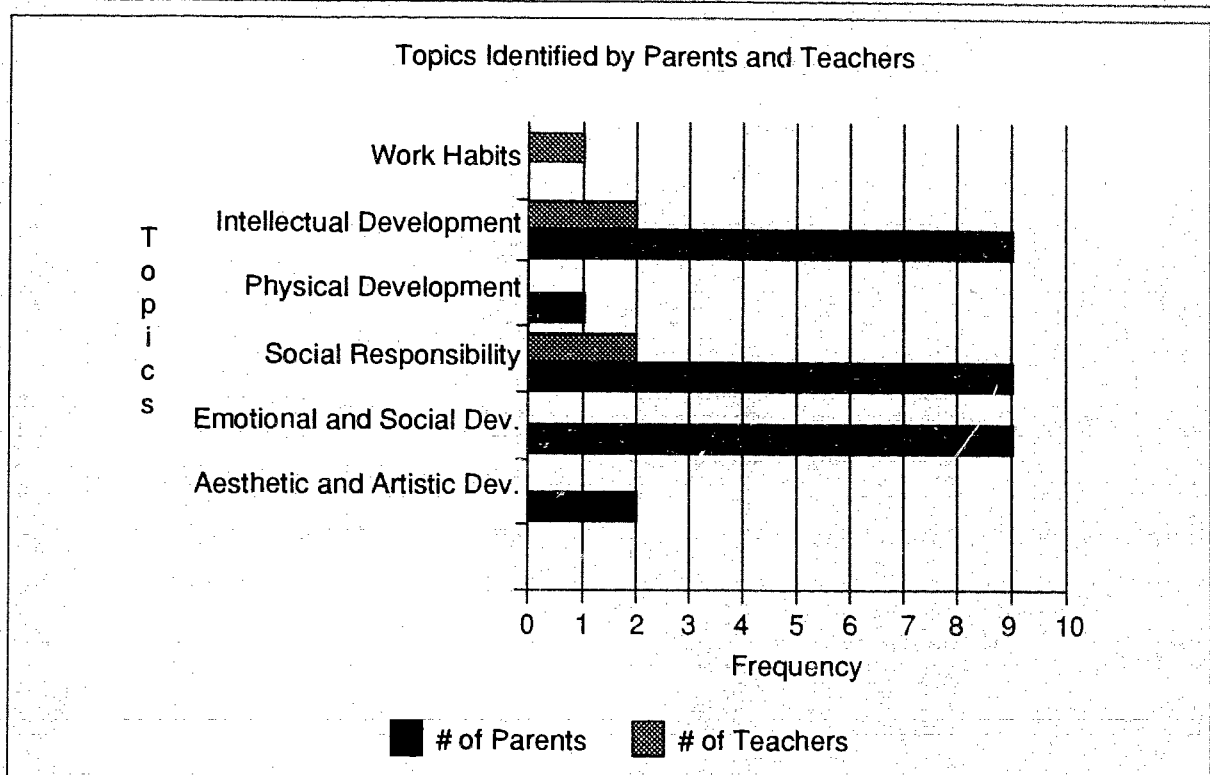
1. Question A—Can you identify the three most important topics about your child's development discussed in the report?

When asked to identify the "three most important topics" about a child's development discussed in the report, both teachers and parents placed a strong emphasis on a child's Emotional and Social Development and Intellectual Development. It was not that one was more important than the other but that all were important.

As there were no restrictions on how the topics could be identified, responses ranged from specific topics such as reading, math, and self-esteem to more general topics such as intellectual or social development.

The graph (following page) shows the three most important topics in the November reports as identified by parents and teachers.

The above findings indicate that parents felt that the most important sections of the report card on which they would like to be informed were Intellectual and Emotional and Social Development, both of which were equal in importance followed by Social Responsibility. Aesthetic and Artistic development were only mentioned by two parents and Physical Development was only mentioned by one. Teachers felt that Intellectual Development and Social Responsibility were very important. One teacher mentioned work habits.



2. Question B—How do you feel about the way the three most important topics are described?

The results were as follows:

Parent #1: I trust the school.

Parent #2: They are fine.

Parent #3: Fine.

Parent #4: Over-all, it was clear.

Parent #5: Gave no comment

Parent #6: I like it—it tells me a lot about my child.

Parent #7: Gives general over-all statement that things are fine.

Parent #8: Positive, Specific

Parent #9: Very general, over-all things are fine.

All the parents interviewed in this study liked everything about the way their child's development was reported. The comments were basically composed of:

- fine, over-all—it's fine
 - but the information given by the teacher is general.
3. Question C—Have all the parts of your child's development that are most important to you been discussed in the report?

Teacher #1 Yes
 Teacher #2 No
 Teacher #3 Yes

Parent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

The majority of parents and teachers felt that the areas of importance had been discussed but the concern which did appear was that all areas had not been discussed in enough specific detail.

Regardless of which category was observed, 8 out of 9 of the parents felt positive about this section.

Many parents liked the positive tone of the reports.

An interesting correlation between what parents liked about a report and the quality of communication was the use of examples in the written report—parents who said they liked the examples/details in their child's report had a good understanding of that report.

Category	# of parents stating they liked the examples
Fair/Poor	0 out of 1
Fair/Good	0 out of 2
Good	2 out of 3
Very Good	1 out of 2
Excellent	1 out of 1

Another interesting correlation was that of the use of point form rather than paragraphs. Parents who said they preferred point form had a good understanding of their child's report card comments.

Category	# of parents who stated they liked point form
Fair/Poor	0 out of 1
Fair/Good	2 out of 2
Good	2 out of 3
Very Good	1 out of 2
Excellent	0 out of 1

4. Question D and E—parents were asked "What, if any, are a few things that you really liked about the way your child's development was reported?" and "What, if any, are a few things that you did not like about the way your child's development was reported?"

Aspects of the way their children's development was reported that parents liked included the following most frequently stated comments (parents could give more than one example):

- The positive way growth is stated 5 parents
- Focus for next term shows where improvement is needed. 3 parents
- They tell you a lot more than the old ones. 2 parents
- I like the point form rather than paragraphs. 2 parents
- Intellectual areas—it's really well done. 2 parents
- Details-specific examples were given. 2 parents
- The teacher understands my child. 1 parent

Aspects of the way their children's development was reported that parents did not like included the following most frequently stated comments (parents could give more than one example):

- Nothing. 4 parents
 - This way is O.K. for the first 4 years, in Grade 4
I want marks so I know exactly where my child is. 3 parents
 - Physical Development is useless, we know this area better than the teacher. 1 parent
 - Math progress needs to be stated more specifically. 1 parent
 - Social Responsibility is stated too nicely. 1 parent
 - When it's written like this, how do the students know how they can do better? 1 parent
 - Comments were too general—no comparisons. 1 parent
5. Question F—Do you feel this report portrays an accurate picture of your child?

Teacher #1 Yes
 Teacher #2 Yes
 Teacher #3 Yes

Parent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

All teachers felt that the report portrayed an accurate picture of the child. Eight out of nine parents felt a positive response to this question while only two did not. Interestingly enough, both of these parents have high average children, one was anxious to figure out where their child was in comparison to other children of their age group and the other felt that the report was ambiguous because there were too many areas in which the parent did not know what the teacher had meant.

6. Question G—What other ways do you communicate with each other about your child's development?

Category	Adult	Home-work	Notes	Phone	Calls	Chats	Inter-view	Room Mom
Very Good	# 1						•	•
Very Good	# 2					•	•	
Good	# 3			•		•		•
Good	# 4					•		
Fair/Good	# 5		•				•	
Excellent	# 6					•	•	
Very Good	# 7							
Good	# 8		•	•		•		
Fair/Poor	# 9						•	
Total			2	2		5	5	2

These findings show that the most frequently used methods for keeping in touch (teacher and parent) is by informal chats and the interview. There is an interesting correlation between the use of informal chats and interviews and being involved in the school as a means of communicating and the category "good communication". The "Fair/Poor" and the "Fair/Good" category only used the interview for their communication and did not use informal chats or school involvement as additional ways of communicating.

7. Question H—"What do you think about Anecdotal Reports?" This was done to gauge what feelings and opinions they had about this method of reporting and its philosophy that could affect how they read and understood the reports.

Consensus among the three teachers was that:

- a. This style of report gives an over-all view of the child.
- b. The amount of work spent on the reports is extensive; if they aren't specific then the parent may not understand them.
- c. We need to state where the child is, where they are going and how far they need to be to reach mastery.

- d. We need to be experts in all areas of the curriculum.

The parents felt:

- a. That they were very sympathetic towards the amount of work the teachers must go through to write the report cards
- b. Point form was preferred over paragraphs—it's easier to sift through all the information. (This was based on their previous experiences trying to sort out paragraphs from previous report cards.)
- c. Weaknesses must be clearly listed.
- d. These reports may be addressing the low and average child but not the bright children—bright children's reports are all positive—parents feel that even these children have areas on which to extend especially if the *Year 2000* encourages continuous learning. So often the bright children aren't given direction as to where to go next, especially if they have completed the level's work.
- e. The reports must be specific with examples included.
- f. The parents didn't always know where their child was. They felt they needed to know a way to compare their child to a standard so they would know where their child was—where their child needed to go and what mastery consisted of—maybe a different form was needed along with the anecdotes—a continuum or a checklist. As parents, they worried about their children's futures. They needed specifics stated so there are no surprises appearing in Grade 4. The world is now based on "Grade Point Averages" for entrance to higher learning—they felt it was important to know where their child stood.
- g. The reports must be personalized, not computer generated statements.
- h. These reports were better than the graded system, they tell us more.

- i. This style of report is good for the self-esteem.
- j. The reports should tell where the child is so the child can be inspired to continue to improve.

Five out of eleven of the main points shared by the parents (those listed above) were related to clear communication which does not show a strong correlation between what parents thought about anecdotal reporting and how well their child's teacher communicated with them through the November report.

It is important to know that all three teachers in this study included overviews with their reports so that each parent had an idea of what was generally covered in each curriculum area and yet these overviews were not used by the parents to assist in the clarification of the report cards. The overviews were found to be impersonal and because they did not refer to the children specifically the parents did not tend to pay much attention to them. As the overviews were separate from the report cards, they were misplaced by all parents. The above data leads one to believe that that the overview ought to be included within the personalized report card so that both items (the report card and overview) are combined.

Highlights from the Findings of Phase 3

1. Teachers in this study communicated well with parents through anecdotal reporting.
2. Clear, concise language and the use of examples of a child's development in a report were important factors that influenced how well parents understood the report.
3. Point form format made it easier for the parents to understand the comments.
4. Parents felt the progress of their child could be best communicated if the following components were included:
 - state where the child is;

- state what has to be improved;
 - state strategy of how to get there; and
 - let them know where their child is in the continuum towards mastery.
5. Miscommunications occurred more often in the area of Intellectual Development than in Emotional and Social Development.
 6. Intellectual, Emotional and Social Development was heavily stressed by teachers and parents in the interviews and in the anecdotal reports themselves.
 7. The parents liked everything about the way their child's development was reported, especially the positive tone that was used.
 8. Parents felt that the report was an accurate portrayal of their child.
 9. Informal chats, interviews, and being active in the school increased the clarity of the communication.
 10. Parents felt strongly that weaknesses must be stated on the report—even for the bright children.
 11. Parents sympathized with the teachers for all the work and effort they placed into the report card—they wondered if there was an easier way to do it.
 12. All parents agreed that anecdotal reports told them more than report cards based on A, B, C and that the reports were wonderful for a young child's self-esteem.

Phase 4: Focused Group Interviews

Since the primary objective of the focused interview is to elicit as complete a report as possible of what was involved in the experience of a particular situation, this focused interview session was conducted to uncover any further responses to the topic of reporting that had not already surfaced through observations, surveys, and individual interviews; to uncover a

diversity of relevant responses. The questions used for this interview session were nondirective. This nondirection simultaneously served to elicit depth, range, specificity and personal context of responses (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1990, p. 15).

This portion of the research then, consists of the findings of the focused interview session as well as quotations from dialogue which ensued during the interview process. Meticulous inspection of the coded transcripts resulted in the realization that the parents went through a definite set of stages. At the beginning, the dialogue mainly focused on a discussion of how they felt about their child's anecdotal report cards. As the discussion continued, it became very evident that several concerns were beginning to surface regarding the use of anecdotal report cards whether they were in paragraph format or point form. Following this, the parents began to narrow down their perception of what a report card ought to consist—qualities of an effective report card. Through this dialogue several points of interest were shared ending in the sharing of their opinion of an ideal interview format.

At the beginning of the interview, the transcripts show all parents felt the present form of anecdotal reporting had been well done by their child's previous teacher during the 1992-1993 school year. It was also evident that there were also some reservations about this style of reporting. One mother stated:

I think about the June report card and how different it was from the November one. By the time the June report card came out I had the feeling that I was almost there in the classroom. I really felt that the teacher was really on top of it. The first one in November, I didn't feel that way. There was so much more detail in the last report card, The first one was full of nice phrases and it was all happy and positive but I didn't get a feeling that there was a lot of knowledge.

The only reasons for accepting and appreciating anecdotal report cards were as follows:

1. Anecdotal reports allow for positive comments; all parents love to hear these, this is harder to do when we use ticks or codes with a list of skills.

I think the best thing about them is that it gives the teachers a chance to say a lot of really positive things about your child which no one can hear enough good things about your child and it helps you bring out these things in your child as well. It is a lot harder to do that in the confines of just a satisfactory or needs improvement.

2. They make a parent feel good.
3. Anecdotal report cards discourage comparisons.

Further dialoguing enabled the participants to share their feelings of concern pertaining to the use of the anecdotal format.

1. Anecdotal report cards are often vague.

"As I mentioned to you earlier, I was working at a centre for children who were having difficulty with learning and I came across a lot of parents that brought their childrens' report cards in and especially when the anecdotal cards came out there was a lot of consternation because they were so different from the traditional report card and in reading some I thought the same way too. They were very vague in terms of what should be done and where the child was in terms of their own development and do they need a little extra help at home or is everything going O.K.? Like they just didn't know."

2. They are unclear as to what should be done to help the child.

"A report card needs to tell me what my child did well and what he did not do. This one (paragraph anecdotal) doesn't tell me a darn thing about what I need to do to help my child. It tells me everything is hunky dory and all the good stuff buy nothing useful."

3. They can be contradictory.

"And I don't understand anything in that little paragraph under social and emotional development. In one phrase this child is settled and in the next phrase the child is not settled. So what are you trying to tell me?"

4. They do not tell where the child is, they can be misleading.

"We had out and out anger with some of the parents in one of the particular schools because they felt they had been misled that at the beginning of the year they were told that the child was doing writing and reading and so on and by the time they got to the end of Grade One it became apparent that they couldn't read really at all...certainly to the level they should have been at the end of Grade One. They felt cheated and really misled and they felt that if they had known early in the year they could have helped at home."

5. Many phrases can be unclear.

"Telling that a child is doing something to the best of their ability doesn't tell you very much. It just tells you that they are doing it to the best of their ability. Are they doing it to the ability of a six month old?"

6. Can anecdotal report cards be trusted? What if a child slips through the cracks?

"It's an issue of trust. If you could trust these things to be really laying it on the line for you maybe you would be a little more receptive to them. I really liked the report cards last year but I really wondered. That's what I find really frightening about just an anecdotal report card. Under the right teachers and in the right hands it can be a wonderful, wonderful tool but your child may not have a wonderful teacher every year and there is just too much scope for things to get lost in the cracks."

7. Too much jargon is used.

"It's just that it is hard for the teacher to have a guideline and for the parents to pick up on the jargon and understand what is being said...is this a problem, is this something we should be working on at home or are you saying everything is going O.K.?" Another thing here in this one 'conventional stage of spelling' I don't know what that means, and reversals 9 and I don't know what that means or emergent writing."

8. Anecdotal reports can be open to interpretation.

"I think a lot of incidences the teacher feels they are being very specific in what they are saying but you're not interpreting what they are saying the way they think you are going to interpret it. For example, it says her reading will improve rapidly as soon as she learns all the consonant sounds. Well, does that mean that

she should know them by now or that all the class is learning them and then as soon as she learns them well..."

9. They don't easily provide the parent with an idea of where their child is going.

"And there is no scope in the anecdotal. It says reads and writes numbers 999 and if they don't how far away from it are they? And if they can do more then how far ahead are they?"

10. The "can-do's" are stated but not weaknesses.

"The report card said this is what your child can do but it didn't say what the child should be able to do and what the strengths and weaknesses were."

11. They often aren't specific.

"Anecdotal may or may not be specific; you never know what you are going to get in an anecdotal."

Through some rather heated dialoguing, the parents' discussions clearly indicated that they felt there were ways to solve the shortcomings of the anecdotal format. They were able to identify the qualities of a report card which they felt would be effective for them. This report card would have the following criteria:

- is personal;
- is balanced—contains codes and comments and the paragraphs or comments add the personal touch and expand on the coded section. Therefore, the feelings of the teacher and the specifics of the curriculum could be shared. This allows for more information to be shared to the parent and less likelihood for the child to fall through the cracks and not be identified as requiring assistance and support.

"It's nice to have codes with definitions and it's nice to have comments. Why not combine the two? So you get your good, bad, satisfactory and whatever but you also get the feelings from the teacher."

- evaluates many areas and skills;

- the lists of skills or descriptors provide teachers with some guidelines; they must be clear and understandable to the parent;
- these skills are evaluated with the use of codes which are clearly defined in order that the parents know what the codes mean;
- is detailed; this tells a lot more which equals better understanding;
- comments concerning progress are specifically stated; they tell me exactly where my child is in the continuum of learning;
- weaknesses are clearly stated and areas of concern pointed out;
- tell what the child can do and not do; isn't just stating nice things;
- has a clear lay-out; spaced out for easy reading;
- gives the feeling that the teacher knows the child; this in turn increases the confidence of the parent;
- provides practical information;
- addresses the areas of effort as well as academic;
- contains the Five Goal Areas—Social and Emotional, Intellectual, Artistic and Aesthetic, Physical and Social Responsibility; and
- space is built into the report card to allow the teachers to add in skills taught in their class.

An ideal report card then from their point of view would:

1. contain a detailed list of understandable skills or descriptors;
2. have a code which is clearly defined and understood by those reading the report card;
3. use a code to indicate where the child was in terms of his/her development by placing the code beside each skill or descriptors;
4. list areas of growth and areas of concern would be listed;
5. contain a summary paragraph to add a personal touch and authentic evidence;

6. contain a continuum of skill development particularly in Language Arts and Mathematics;
7. be objective not subjective;
8. be clear, concise, specific, and detailed; and
9. be understandable; free of educational jargon.

Other points of interest arising from the focused interview were:

- It was clear that parents would hate to write anecdotal report cards.
- Communication between the school and home regarding assessment is vital. An interview with the report card helps the communication.
- A report card sent without an interview has to be very clear and cover much more than one that is done with an interview.
- Advantages of report cards with lists of skills and codes; skills which are clearly understood by the parents and codes which contain definitions and are not leave themselves open to misinterpretation.
 - provides a clearer picture of the over-all development of the child- is assured to cover all areas of the curriculum at a glance.
 - tells you exactly where your child is in his/her stage of development
 - enables teachers to organize thoughts to enable them to
 - remains objective and sticks to the point (skills and codes) but also offers the opportunity to discuss activities in the class and provide sharing of authentic evidence; a summary which offers a personal touch to the report card.
- Disadvantages of Report Cards with lists of skills and codes with definitions.
 - The coded areas might take over and only a few meaningless comments would be given.

- What if a skill isn't listed, will it get missed and the child will never be evaluated or taught in this area?
- Parents and children might compare with other peers.
- Grading should start by Grade Four.
- It should be very helpful to have a continuum to see where the children are and where they need to progress. Would like the skills listed for each grade to provide the levels of expectation. Report should state where the child falls in this continuum.
- Would like a different report card for each grade or at least one that covers a span to address the child who is struggling as well as the child who is excelling. Appropriate skills should be listed on these.
- All parents wanted their child to love school and to love learning.

The parent's perception of the ideal Interview Format was as follows:

A report card would be sent home which would then be followed by an interview. This would allow time for reading and sharing the report with a spouse. The interview would occur without the child being present. It was agreed that it was very important for the child to be involved in the reporting process at some point in the evaluation process to enable them to evaluate his/her own performance and to work together with the teacher and parent towards the learning process. It was felt that this could be done through parent nights and student-led conferences.

The outcomes of the focused interview made it very clear that the parents involved felt strongly about revising the anecdotal report card. Their concern for their children's education was clearly evident throughout the entire interview session. They wanted to know exactly what their child could do, where the children needed to go next in the continuum of learning, and how they could support that learning. Their fears concerning the shortcomings of the straight anecdotal format were clearly identified through the focused interview; they felt they required a more comprehensive, clear picture of their child's progress. To achieve this, they set out

criteria for a more acceptable form of a structured written report. A report card was drafted following these criteria in conjunction with considerable consultation amongst the researcher (myself), administration, parents, and teachers. Particular attention was paid to the section on "Reporting" in the *Primary Program Foundation Document* (1993). It states clearly in this document that:

Checklists are inappropriate for reporting purposes. Comparison with other children, or the assigning of letter-grade symbols and pseudo-letter grades, are also inappropriate.

Inappropriate reporting procedures include:

A,B,C,... Excellent, very good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory
G,S,N,... above average, average, below average
S,N,U... I = improvement needed or improving
VG,G,S,U...√ (*Foundation Document*, 1993, p. 31)

It was imperative that we follow these Ministerial Guidelines when deciding how we might meet the criteria set out by the parents, teachers, and administrators. Codes with definitions were carefully chosen in order that they did not result in comparisons amongst other students or result in standardization. The focus in this area was to inform the parent of the development of their child in relation to the widely held expectations for their age. A consensus was reached and the draft was completed. It was returned to the interviewees for their consultation, further minor alterations were made resulting from their input and a final product was published (Appendix G). During November 1993, the newly designed report card was used by the teachers located in the school and submitted to the entire parent population. A survey accompanied the report card (Appendix H).

Phase 5: Survey Responses to New Report Card

For the most part, the results of the survey arrived in narrative format. Parents shared their feelings and beliefs concerning reporting. It was very clear from the answer to the fourth question on the survey, "Would you rather have this style of report card or straight anecdotal?", that the parents

preferred the new report card as the response rate was 84% with all but three parents stating that they preferred the new format.

The following is a summary of what they particularly liked about this newly designed report card:

- tells parents exactly what is being taught (communicates well);
- indicates where the child can improve; lists of concerns stated;
- indicates where the child is in the areas of development;
- is not composed of "flowery statements" but shows growth;
- detailed—all areas are thoroughly covered, comprehensive;
- specific, detailed;
- effort and academic progress are being addressed;
- clarity—can instantly see where their child stands, not vague;
- covers all areas of development, pinpoints each separate area of development;
- concise;
- objective-free of judgement, informative;
- states how to help your child;
- provided suggestions for next term;
- like academic achievement code;
- do not have to sift through commentary to retrieve relevant information;
- not generic, meaningful;
- shows performance of the "total child";
- is easy to interpret;
- provides insight;
- well set out;

- easier for the teacher to do;
- more honest;
- allows me to feel more prepared and more aware in approaching a parent/teacher interview that when I received an anecdotal report; and
- performance can be tracked since the same form containing all three terms is returned to us throughout the three formal reporting periods.

Analysis of the survey comments, showed only one area of concern which appeared on six survey sheets. The concern related to the use of one of the codes. The code in question was the term "Developing". They felt that it should be made clear whether developing:

is an area of concern or does it mean that the child is developing well...is developing the norm...is my child not pulling his weight or is it because it's not expected.

It was agreed by teachers and administration that this was an area that needed to be addressed before the report was reissued in March, 1994.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications

The reporting process is the outlet for information summarizing the results of previous programs planned for the child, and as the instrument through which steps are taken toward new and more effective programs for the future. The reporting process is centrally concerned with reporting the child's progress to parents. If parents are interested in being told about certain aspects of the child's adjustment, they will give close attention to a report on such aspects and are likely to take action if it is needed. The school therefore should do an especially conscientious job of reporting on those aspects in which parents are most interested.

In the long run, reporting serves no purpose more important than to report meaningfully and honestly to parents what the school is teaching and how well their child is learning. Our purpose in the schools is to help people to discover and develop their talents (Goodlad & Anderson, 1987, p. 137).

The focus of this research has been to analyze the current reporting procedure in the present school system—anecdotal report cards. This research has shared many stories from participants. Results from observations, surveys, individual interviews, and focused interviews have been thoroughly analyzed and reported.

It has been stated throughout this reflection that anecdotal reporting has its pros and cons. Reporting requires one to reflect on what had happened—no simple task. As Dorothy Smith (1974) states:

I take it as axiomatic that, for any set of actual events, there is always more than one version that can be treated as what has happened, even within a simple cultural community. This is because social events or facts at the level of those I am analyzing here involve a complex assembly of events occurring in different settings, at different times, sometimes before collections of persons. Further, the moment of actual observation is at that

point where the consciousness of the individual is, and any process of assembly from the past can no longer draw on the total universe of resources which were at successive "moments" present to the observer. For these reasons, an endemic problem must always be how a given version is authorized as that version which can be treated by others as what has happened. (p. 24)

So many "things" are brought to a situation, so many "things" have occurred before one is involved in a situation, we bring so many "things" with us before we observe a particular situation. We must be aware that all of this is going on when we enter an observational situation in our classroom. This might explain why so many of our observations regarding children's development are objective in nature. It is an area of which we ought to be aware when we are reflecting upon situations that occur in the classroom and responding to them in written form. This might explain why so many of our comments are misunderstood by those who read them. Others bring with them an entirely different perspective as to what things mean because of their view on life.

According to the draft documents issued by the Ministry of Education, Kindergarten to Grade Three reports must be in the form of written comments which relate to areas of learning and must describe what the student is able to do, the areas in which the student requires further attention and development and ways of supporting the student in his or her learning. As well, two informal reports must give in oral or written form, information about the child concerning how he or she is doing in relation to his or her age group.

Although this seems straight forward, it may not be. Based on what has been previously cited concerning Dorothy Smith's (1974) work, each individual approaches situations in a different frame of mind depending on experiences, background and educational opportunities. Not only might each teacher see "things" differently, each parent might interpret written passages differently. It is important that children are protected and that their learning progress is reported accurately and clearly. If we are to rely on "structured written reports", will this occur?

It is important to ask ourselves this question. In addition to the importance of considering the individual student in the process of assessment, evaluation and reporting, it is also important that we consider the community in which the education is taking place. How one assesses a student's personal and academic growth largely depends upon the educators, community and the children involved. No single methodology is appropriate for all students and all communities. Any good evaluation program is evolutionary in nature (Sartore, 1975, p. 263). No one method of reporting is adequate for all.

These statements are particularly comforting because they match my beliefs regarding reporting. When the Ministry (1993) document *Improving the Quality of Education in British Columbia* was issued, its comments under *The Kindergarten to Grade 12 Curriculum* (p. 3), offered hope that all schools may not necessarily have to be confined to using strictly anecdotal report cards for the three formal reporting periods. The policy statement states: "Anecdotal reports will be discontinued, structured written reports following new specific guidelines will replace anecdotal reports so that parents will know how well their children are doing." This statement gives the reader the impression that the previous use of anecdotal reports fell short of expectations in informing parents of their child's development. At least it seems that there is room for discussion about reporting. The publication of a response paper, "A Guide to Primary Reporting," also provides an indication that dialogue concerning reporting methods is being welcomed.

Anecdotal report cards have strengths evident in the chapter dedicated to the literature review and the findings from the individual interviews, focused interview, and surveys. When balanced by other forms of evaluation, anecdotal report cards become a powerful package for sharing student progress.

We have also found through this research that written comments have their shortcomings. Within the classroom structure and with the teacher who has composed the narrative, the report card is no doubt a very good

representation of the individual child's learning development. Once the narrative report leaves the classroom, however, the clarity diminishes. The parent does not always interpret the meaning of the anecdotal comments in the way the teacher intends them to be interpreted. Dorothy Smith (1974) in her article "The Social Construction of Documentary Reality" states that one has reason to doubt, even more, whether we ought to be only using a written format for the three formal reporting sessions mandated by the Ministry of Education. She states that our knowledge of contemporary society is to a large extent mediated through documents of various kinds (p. 257). Very little of our knowledge of people, events, social relations, and powers arises directly in our immediate experience. Factual statements in documentary form, whether as news, data, information or the like, stand in for an actuality which is not directly accessible (Smith, 1974, p. 257). Parents can't be in the room all day long; they do not witness the immediate experience. They rely on us to give an account of the actual situation in which they cannot take part on a daily basis.

The socially organized practice of reporting and recording work upon what actually happens or has happened to create a reality in documentary form which is then provided to the reader to interpret. We report on what we see to create a written form of a real situation. It is in the interpretation that problems often occur. Most factual documents, in this case the anecdotal report card, are not made to be detachable from specific contexts of interpretation (Smith, 1974, p. 260). This explains why it might be difficult for teachers to write about what happens in their classroom, to explain in "parent-friendly" language exactly how the child is performing, and at the same time have it impeccably understood.

The last set of surveys distributed in Phase 5 of this research was returned with unanimous support for the inclusion of an interview as part of the reporting process. The parents are aware of the importance of clearly understanding where their child is in the learning continuum. They know that it is difficult to decipher all comments made by teachers. They are aware the curriculum has changed since they were at school and many of

these concepts require further explanation, more than can be given in written comments. I once again ask: "Can anecdotal report cards stand alone and be clearly understood by parents?"

I will continue to reflect on the value of the anecdotal report card as it stands alone. Is there a more efficient, precise, and accurate manner of reporting? One of the biggest rewards for me was analyzing and reflecting upon this research. In the process, I found myself noticing the improvement I have made in writing my own report cards. A Ministry representative at the Ministry Institute on Reporting held in Richmond, (British Columbia, January 14–15, 1994) noted that over the last four years teachers have improved their skills in writing anecdotal report cards. Parents have told me they have never received such detailed reports and ones that have described their child so accurately. On the other hand, one parent said that her other child in another school received a report card that stated "I really enjoy your son's snowflakes". She asked me: "Now, what on earth does this mean? It doesn't tell me a thing about my child's skill development."

I worry about this. It is evident that teachers vary in their ability to write anecdotal report cards. We recognize the positive aspect of these reports but we also have found that they have shortcomings. Should we continue to accept only written formats and spend all of our time in teaching teachers how to write the reports properly and parents how to interpret them correctly? Or is the answer a more balanced approach, where we use the anecdotal and another format that takes less time and is accurate, complete, subjective, clear, specific, and free of misinterpretation?

One might use alternatives to the current system, or perhaps a modification or blending; or a totally new alternative could be created to meet special circumstances. What ought not to be lost is our democratic freedom to make educated decisions about what meets the needs of our students and parents in our school district. Classroom teachers have often felt frustrated because they had no choice or voice in selecting means of

reporting. But teachers are increasingly represented in committees considering school issues including system-wide changes in reporting. Sometimes they are even given an individual choice. Even if they have no choice, they can make the best of the reporting system they have by understanding its meaning, strengths, limitations, and relationships to their teaching programs and by helping students and parents to share such understandings (NEA, 1974, p. 25).

Within the literature on reporting, narrative reporting is well respected especially when it is compared to a grading system. It has won the most empirical support as the learning and evaluation environment with the greatest positive effect on student learning (Kyle, 1992, p. 13).

This leaves us with a tremendous amount of responsibility. If empirical research suggests that narrative reporting has the greatest positive effect on student learning, then it ought to be included in the reporting process. We have also noted through this research as well as other research that has been cited that anecdotal report cards have disadvantages. It is up to us as educators and parents to facilitate the best possible reporting format. Acting in the best interest of children, we need to consider the strengths and weaknesses of anecdotal report cards, confront their shortcomings, and compensate for them by applying other forms of reporting to provide the best form of reporting possible.

In reflection, has this research answered my question: *Does the anecdotal report card meet the needs of students, parents, and teachers?* I conclude that anecdotal report cards do not stand alone as an adequate method of formal reporting on pupil progress. There are many reasons why they fall short of their expectations—too many reasons, because children are our most precious commodity, to be protected and nourished. It is our responsibility to provide the best for them as educators. That "best" includes many things, among them is a reliable formal reporting procedure. It is not only the gathering and analysis of the research data that have convinced me that anecdotal report cards fall short of providing clear direction for promoting pupil growth. It is also living the experience of

writing and receiving these reports that has led me to search passionately for an alternative, or a combination of reporting styles.

Studying anecdotal report cards has been a three year endeavor during which I became more and more aware of the concerns parents and teachers were experiencing but it was in September, 1994, when I received two anecdotal report cards (Appendices I (a) November and (b) March) that I found anecdotal report cards to be unacceptable. The November report (Appendix I (a)) was for a new student from another district who entered my class at the beginning of Grade Two. After working with her for two weeks, it was blatantly clear that she was one year behind in her development for a child of her age. Nowhere on these report cards (November or March) was this assessment expressed. When the parents were notified, they were in shock. They had no idea that their child was lagging.

The second report, (Appendix I (b)), although certainly personal in the manner in the way it was written, leaves the reader with little information about where the child is located on the continuum of learning. This is why I believe that many children could be "falling through the cracks" and many parents are misled notwithstanding that the teachers who are composing these report cards are conscientious and thorough.

I conclude that an eclectic approach to reporting is needed. This does not necessarily mean "more". I agree with the phrase, "More is not necessarily better". But a method is needed that adequately informs the parent of their child's progress. Since we are expected each year to provide three formal written reports, their structure should allow the teacher to be clear, specific, detailed, and yet personal when reporting student progress.

We write report cards for the parents. They know what is the most helpful for them. Rather than spending hours of valuable time trying to solve problems among ourselves as educators, we must remember to involve those who are the recipients of our work.

This research leaves room for further investigation into the question of reporting. It is a complex, fascinating topic that deserves more reflection. I pass the report card on to the next individual who wishes to continue the quest toward an ideal method of reporting that best meets the needs of parents, students, and teachers.

Bibliography

References

- Aoki, T. T. (1984). Towards a reconceptualization of curriculum implementation. In D. Hopkins & M. Wideen (Eds.), *Alternative perspectives on school improvement*. London: The Flamer Press.
- Alexander, K. (1993). *Writing up/Writing down a textual ethnography: Documentation practices in a mental health boarding home*. Unpublished master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC.
- Arcy, T. H. (1979, Winter). Philosophies of grading systems. *College Student Journal*, 13(4), 310–314.
- Atkinson, P. (1990). *The ethnographic imagination*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Atkinson, P. (1992). *Understanding ethnographic texts: Qualitative research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Barrow, R., & Milburn, G. (1986). *A critical dictionary of educational concepts*. Brighton, Sussex: Wheatsheaf Books.
- Bachor, D.G. & Anderson, J.O. (1993, June). *Perspectives on assessment practices in the elementary classroom*. Ministry of Education & Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights. Victoria, BC: Province of British Columbia.
- Chansky, N. M. (1975). A critical examination of school report cards from K through 12, *Reading Improvement*, 12(3), 184–192.
- Clift, P., Weiner, G., & Wilson, E. (1981). *Record keeping in primary schools*, Hampshire: Macmillan Education.

- Corbett, D. H., & Rossman, G. B. (1989). Three paths to implementing change: A research note. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 19(2).
- Fullan, M. G. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Goodlad, J. L., & Anderson, R. H. (1987). *The non-graded elementary school*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Goodson, I. F. (1991). *Sponsoring the teachers' voice: Teachers' lives and teacher development*. London: Cassells.
- Grimmett, P. P., & Crehan, E. P. (1990). Barry: A case study of teacher reflection in clinical supervision. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 5(3), 214–235.
- Hall, K. (1990). *Determining the success of narrative report cards*. Virginia.
- Hawkins, J. M. (1992). *The Oxford mini dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hogan, J. R. (1975, February). The three-way conference: Parent, teacher, child. *Elementary School Journal*, 75(8), 311–315.
- Jacobs, R. M. (1972, May). What did you do in school today? Umm...nuthin. *American Vocational Journal*, 47(5), 45–46.
- Kavina, G. (date). Better pupil record keeping, *Education*, 98(4).
- Kazalunas, J. R. (1978). Substitutes for testing. *Clearing House*, 52(4), 180–183.
- Kyle, J. (1992, June). *Letter grades and anecdotal reporting literature review*. Victoria, BC: Ministry of Education.
- Malehorn, H. (1984, February). Ten better measures than giving grades. *Clearing House*, 57(6), 256–257.

- McConnell, G. (1957, November). What do parents want to know? *Elementary School Journal*, 58, 83-87.
- Merton, R. K., Fiske, M., & Kendall, P. L. (1990). *The focused interview*, New York: Collier Macmillan.
- Ministry of Education. (1992, February). *Needs in assessing student learning: Teachers' and principals' survey results*. Victoria, BC: Performance Assessment Unit.
- Ministry of Education. (1993, April). Anecdotal reports: A written review of achievement. *Ministry News*, 3(4), 1.
- Ministry of Education. (1993, November). *Improving the quality of education in British Columbia*. Victoria, BC.
- Ministry of Education. (1994, January). *Policy for student reporting in British Columbia*. Draft for discussion. Victoria, BC: Province of British Columbia.
- Ministry of Education & Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights. (1993). *Primary program foundation document*, Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data. Victoria, BC: Province of British Columbia.
- Ministry of Education & Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights. (1992, February). *Needs in assessing student learning: Teachers' and principals' survey results*, Performance Assessment Unit, Assessment, Examinations and Reporting Branch, Victoria, BC: Province of British Columbia.
- Ministry of Education & Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights. (1992, October). *Anecdotal reporting: Quality of communication with parents*, Education Research Unit, Research and Evaluation Branch. Victoria, BC: Province of British Columbia.

- Ministry of Education & Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights. (1993, April). *Assessing student learning: Second annual survey, 1992-1993*. Victoria, BC: Province of British Columbia.
- National Education Association [NEA] of USA, Research Division. (1974). Evaluation and reporting of student achievement. *N.E.A. Res. Sum. sl*, 4-29.
- Ontario Board of Education, Curriculum and Program Division. (1980). *Evaluating and Reporting Student Achievement*. Toronto, ON: Author.
- Rhodes, L. K., & Nathenson-Mejia, S. (1992). Anecdotal records: A powerful tool for ongoing literacy assessment. *The Reading Teacher*, 45(7), 502-509.
- Sartore, R. L. (1975, January). Grading: A searching look. *Educational Leadership*, 32(4), 261-264.
- Schon, D. A. (1983). From technical rationality to reflection-in-action. In D. A. Schon (Ed.), *The Reflective Practitioner* (pp. 21-69). New York: Basic Books.
- Smith, D. (1974). The social construction of documentary reality. *Sociological Inquiry*, 44(4), 257-268.
- Van Der Vegt, R., & Knip, H. (1990). Implementing mandated change. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 20(2).
- Werner, W. (1988). Program implementation and experienced time. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 34(2), 90-108.
- Wise, R. I., & Newman, B. (1976, November). The responsibilities of grading. *Educational Leadership*, 34, 252-256.

Additional References Used in Research

- Anderson, R. H., & Steadman, E. R. (1950, November) Pupils' reactions to a reporting system. *Elementary School Journal*, 51, 136–142.
- Bachor, D. G., & Anderson, J. O. (1993, June). *Perspectives on assessment practices in the elementary classroom*. Education Research Unit, Research and Evaluation Branch, Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights. Victoria, BC: Province of British Columbia.
- Bloom, B. (1981). *Evaluation to improve learning*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Broadfoot, P., & Grant, M. (1990, September/October). Records of achievement in primary schools: Some emerging issues. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 22(5), 483–488.
- Brown, R. H. (1987). *Society as text: Essays on rhetoric, reason and reality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- de Castell, S. C. (1990). Literacy as disempowerment: The role of documentary texts. *Philosophy of Education Society Proceedings of the 46th Annual Meeting*, 74–84.
- Collins, P. M. (date). Suggested changes for student evaluation. *College Student Journal*, 6(1), 84–85.
- Eddinger, J. (1975, January). Report cards . . . Who needs them? *Grade Teacher*, 86(5), 68–70.
- Eisner, E. W. (1979). *The educational imagination: On the design and evaluation of school programs*. New York: Macmillan Publishing.
- Fairchild, T. N. (1987, Winter). The daily report card. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 19(2), 72–73.

- Giannangelo, D. M. (1975, May). Make report cards meaningful. *Educational Forum*, 39(4), 409–415.
- Giannangelo, D. M., & Lee, K. Y. (1994, May). At last: Meaningful report cards. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 55(9), 630–631.
- Glaser, R. (1963, August). Instructional technology and the measurement of learning outcomes: Some questions. *American Psychologist*, 519–523.
- Glasser, W. (1969). *Schools without failure*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1992). *Ethnography, principles in practice*. London: Routledge.
- Jongsman, K. S. (1991, December). Rethinking grading practices (Research to practice). *Reading Teacher*, 45(4), 318–320.
- Krampen, G. (1987). Differential effects of teacher comments. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 79(2), 137–146.
- Krause, C. (1972, July). Person-centered evaluation builds positive self-concepts. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 49(4), 290–294.
- Leary, J. L. (1975, October). The grading controversy: How do you meet it? *Educational Leadership*, 31(1), 25–27.
- Leary, J. L. (1976, November). Assessing pupil progress: New methods are emerging. *Educational Leadership*, 34, 250–251.
- Linek, W. M. (date). Grading and evaluation techniques for whole language teachers. *Language Arts*, 68(2), 125–132.
- Longstreet, W. S. (1975, January). The grading system. *Educational Leadership*, 32(4), 243–246.

- Mathews, W. M. (1973). Narrative format testing reports and traditional testing reports—A comparative study. *Journal of Educational Measurement, 10*(3), 171–178.
- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education, a qualitative approach*, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Michaels, J. W. (1976, January). A simple view of the grading issue. *Teaching Sociology, 3*(2), 198–302.
- Millman, J. (1970, December). Reporting student progress: A case for a criterion-referenced marking system. *Phi Delta Kappan, 226–230*.
- Moulds, H. (1974, May). To grade or not to grade: A futile question. *Intellect, 102*(2358), 501–504.
- National Education Association [NEA] of USA, Research Division. (1970, November). Marking and reporting pupil progress, *N.E.A. Res. Sum. sl, 55–56*.
- Ornstein, A. C. (1989, April). The nature of grading. *Clearing House, 62*(8), 365–369.
- Page, F. M., Page, J. A., & Tremble, J. W. (1987). Parents' priorities in educating their children. *The Clearing House, 60*, 270–272.
- Ricoeur, P. (1981). *Hermeneutics and the human sciences*. (J. Thompson, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rinne, C. H. (1975, January). Grading and growth: Answer to an editorial. *Educational Leadership, 32*(4), 247–248.
- Sapone, C. V., & Giuliano, J. R. (1977, January). Alternative methods of reporting pupil progress. *NASSP Bulletin, 61*(405), 44–46.
- Simon, S. B., & Hart, L. (1973). Grades and marks: Some commonly asked questions. *Science Teacher, 40*(6), 46–48.

- Strom, R. D. (1982). *Educational psychology*. California: Brooks/Cole Publishing.
- Sugden, W. E. (1947, June). Co-operative planning for developing an achievement record. *Elementary School Journal*, 47, 571-574.
- Thomas, W. C. (1986, February). Grading—Why are school policies necessary? What are the issues? *NASSP Bulletin*, 70(487), 23-26.
- VanHoven, J. B. (1972, February). Reporting pupil progress: A broad rationale for new practices. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 53(6), 365-366.
- Walker, J. (1987). *A narrative critique of practical texts in education*. Unpublished master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC.
- Walling, D. R. (1975, January). Designing a "report card" that communicates. *Educational Leadership*, 32(4), 258-260.
- Wilson, R. J. (1990). Classroom processes in evaluating student achievement. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 36(1), 4-17.

Appendix A

Student Progress Report Order

Authority: *School Act*, sections 97 (3), 103 (2) (j) and 182 (2)

Ministerial Order 17/90 (M17/90)	Effective January 16, 1990
Repeals M145/89	
Amended by M123/90	Effective June 5, 1990
Amended by M124/90	Effective June 6, 1990
Amended by M242/91	Effective October 5, 1991
Amended by M205/92	Effective September 1, 1992

Application

1. This order applies to the 3 formal written student progress reports required in sections 4 (2) (a) and 5 (9) (a) of the School Regulation, B.C. Reg. 265/89.
2. In the 4 years of the primary program, written student progress reports shall be anecdotal in nature.

5th to 8th years of an educational program

3. (1) Each board shall determine whether written student progress reports for the 5th to the 8th years of an educational program will be anecdotal in nature, will use symbols or will use anecdotal comments and symbols.
 - (2) Where a board decides to use symbols for written student progress reports, for the 5th to the 8th years of an educational program, the board shall use
 - (a) the Provincial symbols set out in Ministerial Order 148/89, the Provincial Symbols Order,
 - (b) the optional Provincial symbols set out in Ministerial order 18/90, the Optional Provincial Symbols Order, or
 - (c) any additional symbols approved by the minister for use by the board.

[am. M123/90; M242/91; M205/92.]

9th to 13th years of an educational program

4. Each board shall use the Provincial symbols set out in Ministerial Order 148/89, the Provincial Symbols Order, or in Ministerial Order 18/90, the Optional Provincial Symbols Order, to evaluate student

progress in written student reports for the 9th to 13th years of an educational program.

[en. M205/92.]

Reports for designated programs

5. Notwithstanding sections 1 to 4, a board may provide written student progress reports for students enrolled in special education programs designated by the minister, that describe the achievement of the student in relation to the expectations for that student in his or her individual educational program.

Requirements for all student progress reports

6. A board shall ensure that written student progress reports contain
 - (a) the school's name, address and telephone number,
 - (b) the student's name,
 - (c) a description of the student educational program,
 - (d) a definition of all symbols used in the report
 - (e) the number of days that the student was absent during the reporting period,
 - (f) the number of days that the student was late during the reporting period,
 - (g) a description of the student's intellectual, social, human and career development,
 - (h) the name of the teacher involved in preparing the report, and the signature of the principal or other administrative officer,
 - (i) a place for the signature of the parent acknowledging receipt of the report,
 - (j) a statement that the report is on a form ordered by the minister or on a form approved by the board, and
 - (k) any other information that the teacher or administrative officer considers is relevant.

[am. M124/90]

British Columbia Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights Legislation and Policy Resource Services, February 18, 1993.

Appendix B

Sample Report Card

Ministry of Education

Primary Progress Report

Student's Name: _____

School: _____

Reporting Period: _____

The goals of the Primary Program are to provide a variety of experiences that foster the child's:

- Aesthetic and Artistic Development
- Emotional and Social Development
- Intellectual Development
- Physical Development
- Social Responsibility

All goals are emphasized throughout the entire Primary Program.

Front of Report
Card insert

Report Card copies
are reduced to
accommodate the size
of this document.

continuing in the Primary Program

beginning the Intermediate Program

Teacher's Signature _____

Principal's Signature _____

Parents: Please keep this copy and return the report card cover only. Thank you.

The Primary Program

- nurtures the continuing growth of children's knowledge and understanding of themselves and their world
- provides a safe, warm, caring environment where learning is continuous
- recognizes the uniqueness of each child
- allows for differences in learning rates, styles, experiences and interests
- encourages children to represent what they know in a variety of ways
- supports the social nature of learning
- recognizes the essential role of language in facilitating thought, communication and learning
- views assessment and evaluation as important to the on-going process of learning and teaching
- reflects an understanding that children learn through active involvement and play
- builds on what children "can do"
- invites parents to be partners in their children's education
- creates the climate of respect, success and joy, necessary for lifelong learning

Primary Program Goals

Aesthetic and Artistic Development

A variety of experiences will be provided which enable the child to:

- develop enthusiasm for the arts;
- imagine and visualize through the arts;
- respond through the arts;
- express and represent through the arts;
- interpret through the arts;
- create through the arts;
- appreciate the arts;
- think, learn and communicate through the arts.

Intellectual Development

A variety of experiences will be provided which enable the child to:

- sustain and extend natural curiosity;
- develop thinking through meaningful learning experiences;
- use language to facilitate thinking and learning;
- use language to communicate effectively;
- develop and integrate the attitudes, skills and knowledge of: the Fine Arts, the Humanities, the Practical Arts and the Sciences;
- become an independent lifelong learner.

Emotional and Social Development

A variety of experiences will be provided which enable the child to:

- develop a positive realistic self concept;
- develop independence;
- set appropriate goals and feel satisfaction in accomplishments and efforts;
- cope with change;
- share and cooperate;
- develop friendships;
- learn from others;
- enjoy living and learning.

Physical Development

A variety of experiences will be provided which enable the child to:

- learn and practise safety procedures;
- take care of and respect their bodies;
- develop awareness of good nutrition;
- develop a wide variety of motor skills while maintaining physical fitness;
- develop an appreciation and enjoyment of human movement;
- learn social skills in a physical activity setting.

Social Responsibility

A variety of experiences will be provided which enable the child to:

- value and respect individual contributions;
- value, respect and appreciate cultural identity and heritage;
- accept and demonstrate empathy;
- establish a collaborative environment and acquire cooperative and independent social skills;
- respect and care for the environment;
- adapt to a changing world.

Back of Report
Card insert

Additional Parent Comments to the Teacher

Date: _____

Back Cover of Report Card

Parent Signature

	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	TOTAL
Days Absent											
Times Late											

Teacher's Signature

Principal's Signature

Primary Progress Report

Student Name: _____

Teacher: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please sign and return this Report Card cover to the School

Front Cover of Report Card

*Purpose
of the Primary Progress Report*

This *Progress Report* describes your child's development in relation to the goals of the *Primary Program*. It is intended to provide you with information about your child's individual accomplishments, interests, abilities and attitudes.

In these early years, children are at many different stages of development. They learn at different rates and in different ways according to their abilities, interests and opportunities. We know that it is not beneficial to make comparisons between children, so care is taken to evaluate each child in terms of what he or she can do.

We encourage you to be an active partner in the education of your child. Please attend conferences and meetings during the school year and communicate with your child's teacher on a regular basis.

Parent Comments to the Teacher

As parents you are invited and encouraged to contribute information to the school about your child in the Primary Program.

DATE: _____

Parent's Signature

Conference requested

DATE: _____

Inside Cover of
Report Card

Parent's Signature

Conference requested

PROGRESS REPORT

K I N D E R G A R T E N

SCHOOL YEAR 1977-78 REPORTING PERIOD Dec.-March.

NAME _____

SCHOOL _____ DIVISION 7

TEACHER

A T T E N D A N C E R E P O R T

SEPT OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUNE

Days Absent	1	2	0	0	3	7	8			
----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--

Parents:

his copy of the report need not be returned to the school.

Should you have any questions regarding this report or any phase of your child's progress, please let the school know that you would like a Parent-Teacher conference.

INTELLECTUAL GROWTH

LISTENING

1. Listens attentively
2. Distinguishes between sounds (i.e., animal, household; people, transportation)
3. Able to recognize rhyming words
4. Able to recognize some beginning sounds which have been stressed
5. Able to follow sequence of directions

	1	2	3
1. Listens attentively	✓		
2. Distinguishes between sounds (i.e., animal, household; people, transportation)	✓		
3. Able to recognize rhyming words	✓		
4. Able to recognize some beginning sounds which have been stressed	✓		
5. Able to follow sequence of directions	✓		

VISUAL AND PERCEPTUAL MEMORY

1. Recognizes colours
2. Able to reproduce a pattern (blocks, beads, pegboard).

1. Recognizes colours	✓		
2. Able to reproduce a pattern (blocks, beads, pegboard).	✓		

ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

1. Uses words well (self expression)
2. Able to relate in sequence (stories, poems, field trips)
3. Articulates well

1. Uses words well (self expression)	✓		
2. Able to relate in sequence (stories, poems, field trips)	✓		
3. Articulates well	✓		

_____ shows sound development in all of the above areas. She is adept at socializing, independent, and an avid contributor to our classroom atmosphere. We all enjoy her company!

READING READINESS AND PRINTING

1. Prints own name
2. Able to discriminate between letter shapes. (i.e., A. H. C. G.)
3. Recognizes a few words (names, colours, etc.)
4. Able to give several letter names.

1 2 3

✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

1. Recognizes Geometric Shapes
(Δ \circ \square \square)
2. Recognizes numerals to 10
3. Rational counting to 20 (1234--20)
4. One-to-one correspondence (5 people-
5 cookies)
5. Counts ordinals and understands positions of objects to 6th (first, fourth, etc.)

✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		

Assigned to a first year primary class.... _____
 Assigned to a first year primary class
 with continued readiness activities
 necessary before beginning formal
 reading instruction

Date March 20, 1978

 Principal's Signature

 Teacher's Signature

NAME _____

KEY: 1. Yes
2. Occasionally or Partly
3. Not yet

Progress in unmarked areas has not been evaluated at this time.

MUSIC AND DRAMA

1 2 3

- 1. Movement, rhythm, appreciation
- 2. Enjoys dramatic play

✓		
✓		

EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL GROWTH

- 1. Shows self-confidence (good self-image)
- 2. Accepts class routines and requirements
- 3. Shows concentration in
 - (a) Self chosen activity
 - (b) Group activity
- 4. Relates well to his peers

✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		

PHYSICAL GROWTH

- 1. Gross motor control (skipping balancing)
- 2. Eye-Hand co-ordination (ball throw, catch)
- 3. Fine muscle co-ordination (pasting, cutting)
- 4. Differentiates between Right and Left

✓		
✓		
✓		
✓		

up.

PROGRESS REPORT

PRIMARY



TO THE PARENTS

The School considers each child as an individual who has his own rate of learning and who will develop mentally, physically, socially and emotionally according to his own abilities. The school also recognizes its obligations to create an educational environment within which each pupil is taught the essential skills that will enable him or her to function effectively in a changing society. Many variables affect achievement in acquiring skills, and the amount of time required to gain mastery will vary from one individual to another.

It is important that the home and school work together to bring about desirable progress for all children. Parent-Teacher conferences, therefore, will be scheduled at least twice a year. A more detailed analysis of this report will take place at conference time.

NAME OF PUPIL

Enrolled in the ...2nd... year of the ...5th... Division.

School Year September 1979.. to June 1980..

TEACHER SCHOOL

I. improving	1st Report		2nd Report		3rd Report	
	SP	NI	SP	NI	SP	NI
LANGUAGE ARTS						
Reading - is developing:	✓		✓		✓	
Independence in word attack skills including Phonics	✓		✓		✓	
Fluency and Expression	✓		✓		✓	
Comprehension						
Listening - is acquiring:	✓		✓		✓	
Skills in following oral directions	✓		✓		✓	
The techniques of a courteous, critical listener						
Speaking - is growing in ability to:	✓		✓		✓	
Express ideas orally	✓		✓		✓	
Speak clearly and use correct English						
Writing - is learning to:	✓		✓		✓	
Express ideas with clarity and originality	✓		✓		✓	
Print or write neatly and legibly	✓		✓		✓	
Apply spelling skills consistently	✓		✓		✓	
Use principles of punctuation, capitalization & grammar	✓		✓		✓	
General Effort	✓		✓		✓	
ARITHMETIC - is progressing in:	✓		✓		✓	
Knowledge and use of vocabulary	✓		✓		✓	
Use of numbers with understanding	---		I		✓	
Reasoning in solving problems						
Knowledge and use of number facts for:	✓		✓		✓	
(a) Addition	✓		✓		✓	
(b) Subtraction	---		✓		✓	
(c) Multiplication	---		---		✓	
(d) Division	---		---		✓	
General Effort	✓		✓		✓	
SOCIAL STUDIES	✓		✓		✓	
Organizes and presents ideas well	✓		✓		✓	
Contributes useful information to group work & discussions						
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	✓		✓		✓	
Development of Skills	✓		✓		✓	
Participation in Group Activities	✓		✓		✓	
Sportsmanship						
SCIENCE - is gaining in the ability to:	✓		✓		✓	
Observe, investigate and discover	✓		✓		✓	
Understand concepts						
ART - Skills in the use of art materials	✓		✓		✓	
MUSIC - is showing:	✓		✓		✓	
Development of musical skills	✓		✓		✓	
Accomplishment through participation in musical activities						

SP - Satisfactory Progress

NI - Needs Improvement

	1st Report		2nd Report		3rd Report	
	SP	NI	SP	NI	SP	NI
WORK-HABITS						
Settling down to work promptly	✓		✓		✓	
Paying attention in class	✓		✓		✓	
Working diligently on assignments	✓		✓		✓	
Completing work on time	✓		✓		✓	
Making needed corrections	✓		✓		✓	
Practising neatness consistently	✓		✓		✓	
Coming with needed supplies	✓		✓		✓	
CITIZENSHIP						
Respecting the opinions of others	✓		✓		✓	
Considering the feelings of others	✓		✓		✓	
Caring for personal property	✓		✓		✓	
Caring for the property of others	✓		✓		✓	
Getting along in group situations	✓		✓		✓	
Using free time and talent productively	✓		✓		✓	
Developing self discipline	✓		✓		✓	
Sharing in classroom duties	✓		✓		✓	
Obeying rules	✓		✓		✓	

COMMENTS:

1st Report:

_____ is making satisfactory progress at level 6. She makes a conscientious effort in all her work. She is learning to listen with understanding and this is helping to improve her vocabulary, her word-attack skills and her ability to express her own ideas.

_____ understands the basic concepts of addition and subtraction. She does all computation quickly and accurately. She has shown interest in other subjects and participates well in oral discussions.

2nd Report:

_____ continues to make satisfactory progress at level 7. She contributes many good ideas in oral discussions and is original and imaginative in her written compositions. She is quick to apply her word-attack skills and reads with confidence and understanding.

_____ has a good understanding of the basic concepts of +, -, x and does all computation fairly quickly and accurately. However, she has a tendency to do her work too quickly and carelessly, thus

making unnecessary mistakes, which in turn rattles her. She is still unsure of herself when working with problem situations.

June Report:

_____ is progressing well in all her school-work. She has made a sincere effort to improve her work habits.

Nice going, _____! Have a fun summer and good luck in Grade 3.

Parent's comments:

FIRST REPORT _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	SECOND REPORT _____ <input type="checkbox"/>									
Parent's Signature	Parent's Signature									
Please place a check in the box if you desire a conference.										
ATTENDANCE RECORD										
	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Days Absent	0	6	0	0	2	0	1 1/2	0	1	1 1/2
Times Late	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUPIL PLACEMENT										
In September 198 ⁸ , your child will be assigned as follows: <i>Grade 3 classroom level & Unit 3</i>										
Principal					Teacher					

PUPIL PROGRESS REPORT

GRADES FOUR TO SIX

Your children are individuals who have their own rate of learning and who will develop mentally, physically, socially and emotionally according to their own abilities.

We recognize our obligation to create an environment within which your children are taught the skills that will enable them to function in society. Many things affect achievement in acquiring those skills and the amount of time needed to gain mastery will vary for each individual.

It is important that the home and school work together. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled at least twice a year although you may contact the school at any time. At that conference a more detailed report will be provided.

Authorized for use by the Board of School Trustees

NAME OF PUPIL.....

GRADE..... *5* *Division 4*

SCHOOL YEAR..... *1982-83*

TEACHER..... SCHOOL.....

Appendix B: Sample Report Card

NAME _____ GRADE 5 YEAR 82-83

Grade Level Achievement (G.L.A.) as assessed by the teacher

Individual Performance (I.P.) in relation to the pupil's ability and effort as assessed by the teacher

- ✓ above grade level
- ✓ at grade level
- below grade level

- O - outstanding
- G - good
- S - satisfactory
- I - improvement needed

	1st Report		2nd Report		3rd Report	
	GLA	IP	GLA	IP	GLA	IP
LISTENING AND SPEAKING	✓		✓		✓	
follows directions.....		G		G		D
listens attentively.....		G		G		G
speaks clearly and expressively..		G		G		G
understands and uses new words...		G		G		G
uses grammar correctly.....		S		S		G
READING	✓		✓		✓	
uses word attack skills.....		G		G		G
shows growth in vocabulary.....		G		G		G
reads fluently.....		G		G		G
reads with expression.....		G		G		G
reads with understanding.....		G		G		G
reads for pleasure.....		G		G		G
uses library effectively.....		S		G		G
WRITTEN LANGUAGE AND SPELLING	✓		✓		✓	
does well in spelling lessons.....		G		G		G
uses correct spelling in daily work		I		S		S
uses good handwriting.....		G		G		G
writes with reasonable speed.....		S		G		G
uses correct grammar.....		S		G		G
expresses ideas clearly.....		G		G		G
uses correct punctuation.....		F		G		G
shows creativity in written expression.....		G		G		G

Mathematics

	1st Report		2nd Report		3rd Report	
	GLA	IP	GLA	IP	GLA	IP
	✓		✓		✓	
understands concepts.....		G		O		O
recalls number facts quickly.....		G		G		G
computes accurately.....		S		G		G
solves written problems.....		S		G		G

SCIENCE

	1st Report		2nd Report		3rd Report	
	GLA	IP	GLA	IP	GLA	IP
	✓		✓		✓	
understands concepts.....		S		G		G
retains information.....		S		G		O
participates readily.....		G		G		G
uses research skills.....						
completes projects and reports...						G

SOCIAL STUDIES

	1st Report		2nd Report		3rd Report	
	GLA	IP	GLA	IP	GLA	IP
	✓		✓		✓	
understands concepts.....		S		G		G
retains information.....		G		G		O
participates readily.....		G		G		G
uses research skills.....						
completes projects and reports...		G		G		G

ART

	1st Report		2nd Report		3rd Report	
	GLA	IP	GLA	IP	GLA	IP
participates readily.....		G		G		G
completes assignments.....		G		G		G
fosters techniques.....		G		G		G

MUSIC

	1st Report		2nd Report		3rd Report	
	GLA	IP	GLA	IP	GLA	IP
participates readily.....		O		G		G
shows growth in skills.....		G		G		G

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

	1st Report		2nd Report		3rd Report	
	GLA	IP	GLA	IP	GLA	IP
participates actively.....		S		I		G
shows growth in skills.....		S		S		S
shows sportsmanship.....		C		G		G

due to illness

CITIZENSHIP AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT (I.P.)

	1st Report	2nd Report	3rd Repo
WORK HABITS			
completes assignments.....	G	O	O
works independently.....	G	G	S
uses time wisely.....	G	G	G
works neatly.....	G	G	G
follows direccions.....	G	G	G
organizes work appropriately.....	G	G	G
comes with needed supplies.....	G	G	G
CITIZENSHIP			
accepts responsibility.....	G	G	G
co-operates with others.....	G	G	G
behaves in class.....	G	G	G
behaves on the playground.....	G	G	G
considers the opinions of others.....	G	G	G
cares for property of others.....	G	G	G

	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	TOTAL
Times Absent	-	1	1	2	-	1	1	1	-	1	
Times Late	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

FIRST REPORT: COMMENTS

_____ is a serious student who puts a fine effort into all her work. She contributes well to class discussions. _____ frequently completes class assignments in reading quickly and is able to enjoy enrichment activities. Hope your knee heals well,

FIRST REPORT: COMMENTS (cont'd)

Teacher's Signature

SECOND REPORT: COMMENTS

has made steady progress in all areas. She has mastered well all the math skills taught this term. Her written work reflects the good quality of her effort.

Teacher's Signature

FINAL REPORT: COMMENTS

_____ has put her best effort into her school-work with good results. Her C.T.B.S. standardized tests show strengths in Language Usage and Map-
ing - 95th %ile, and her weaknesses in Spelling and Punctuation - 78th %ile. As you can see, her test standing is above average, matching her achievement in class. I would like _____ to aim for a little more self-confidence and self-reliance in interpreting lesson instructions. She often requires repeated assurances that she is on the right track.

It was a good year, _____ !

Teacher's Signature

PLACEMENT

In September 19 83 your child will be assigned to:

Grade Six

Appendix C

Revised Written Report Card

Aesthetic and Artistic Development

- enjoys drawing and is capable of producing quality art work consisting of color and detail
- loves to sing, dance and play musical games-has become very responsible with his behavior when songs are sung-he no longer calls out or acts silly

Emotional and Social Development

- has been much more settled this term when tackling seatwork
- loves people, likes to share experiences with others (at times finds it difficult to settle during share time when we are all at the carpet)
- enjoys learning, has shown signs of maturing this term-more settled and responsible

Intellectual Development

Reading

- is reading at a level which is higher than would be expected of a child his age
- expression is developing when oral reading
- reads easily-his reading is beginning "to flow"
- has a good understanding of phonics
- sight vocabulary is very good as is his comprehension

Writing

- more focused this term-better organized, making better use of his time, is working hard and taking pride in his efforts
- is "tuned in" to the efforts made by his classmates and learns from them thus improving his skills
- printing is neat and tidy, words are placed on the lines and spaced properly
- spelling- averages 3x on his weekly spelling tests, is approaching the conventional stage of spelling
- is aware of punctuation and capitals at the beginning of sentences but does not always use them
- many of responses to the novel "Indian in the Cupboard" have been impressive-has put forth the maximum effort and demonstrated his ability to comprehend what has been read

Specific Areas for Improvement—consistent use of punctuation and capital letters

Math

- tells time to the hour, half-hour and 15 minute interval
- counts forward and backward to 999
- skip counts by 2's, 3's, 5's
- understands odd and even and identifies fractional parts of the whole
- recognizes the placement of numerals in the 100's, 10's and 1's place
- is capable of writing numbers to 999
- understands the concept behind addition, subtraction and multiplication
- knows number facts to the 10 family

Specific Area for Improvement—reversals-9, coin equivalency (1 dime = ___ nickels)

Physical Development

- has participated in a variety of activities this term
- stations work included the use of hoops, balls, skipping ropes and mats
- soccer skills have been taught as well as team games such as California Kickball and Dodgeball
- has enjoyed using the parachute, jogging and preparing for Fiesta Fun Day

Social Responsibility

- is fascinated by the world about him, values nature and all that is in it
- has a caring attitude towards others and is learning to voice his opinions when he feels situation are not fair (soccer)

Appendix D

Transcripts of Teacher Comments

Teacher Interviews

Each interview was conducted in the same manner. Each teacher was asked the same question.

Teacher 1

Question: I would like you to think back to November, 1991, when we worked together as a staff to develop a new method of reporting in our school. Can you tell me how you felt about the experience?

I guess it's ownership. The collegiality between staff was fantastic, Everyone putting together their own ideas. It was a genuine issue with everyone all involved, spontaneous, it wasn't as assigned job we had to do, it was a natural need that we had to solve—enthusiasm. It was a vital issue that made the process so useful. We all benefited and it wasn't imposed on us from the top. WE wouldn't have given up so much of our time if it had been imposed on us. It was a neat experience.

The reporting process that we developed was open enough that we could add our own personal touch to the interviews. We had a framework but the interview was mine. I could lay out my books of various levels and the parents could see where their child stood in relation to other children their age.

We'll probably use the same format—there had been no mention of not doing that.

Teacher 2

Question (as above)

I missed the first part of the day when you met with the coordinator and had the meeting with John. Remember? I was away that day so I can only share how I felt when I arrived at your house for the meeting. It was exciting. We were really a group getting on a roll. Maybe I was bossy but I was so excited. We kept clarifying and everyone was so happy so we worked through the process.. Everyone agreed and came up with a resolution. We all felt empowered. We really cared about it so we really wanted to make it work. No one was dictating

so we couldn't whine about having to do it so we had to solve it ourselves and we did. Different people took leadership at different times and we all put in our two bits worth. We all had lots of input.

Teacher 3

Question (same as above)

The anecdotal reports were legislated and the parents were dissatisfied. We felt anger and frustration of being caught in something we didn't have control of. We were powerless. It was satisfying to be doing something and to come to some resolution. Administration supported us because he trusted us and we know from passed experience that he would go along with our group outcome. It was positive to work together. People listened to one another and everyone wanted say but everyone backed others. I think this happened because we wanted a resolution. Brainstorming brought us together as a group—we worked out glitches. When it came to the actual reporting procedure, I liked the fact to face honesty that I felt with the parents. It was so effective. No one can argue with the facts when they see exactly where their child is. The parent input was great and I could clarify concerns right there on the spot.

Teacher 4

Question (same as above)

I remember feeling a sense of dread. "Oh no, here we go again." How do I say this and get it through. What if someone calls me on this? Frustration—all the work—so often for not. Why am I doing all of this? It's not appreciated. I remember the coordinator coming and I although. "Oh good, here it comes—some clarification." It bugs me—still bugs me that we've been accused or using grading in primary in the past—there's been ticks used for effort not achievement. I stated positive things on report cards 10 years ago—weak things were recorded in a supportive way and it seems like everyone thinks we are using a new way now and it is different from 10 years ago. Anyway, I thought the muddy waters would be cleared and the coordinator would make some sense out of the reporting issue. But it didn't happen. I felt really, really angry that we had to tow the line and not solve our problem. when we met after school we were all feeling the same emotions. We were a group of women and we felt John would go along with our wanting change. He was seeing us as a group of strong women. We owned it, we wanted it, we would stand behind it. When we met at your house, we were like a "natter" group. There was an angry buzz and we were working our way through. It was like I was 6 years old and I had done all I could to please the person of authority and my reports were still not being appreciated. WE all sat there; all feeling equal. It was a phenomenal meeting. My reaction was one of a childish mood "AH ha ha—we won—we're winning, this one's ours." Wow, it was an eye opener because I started to feel I was getting to know teachers personally. They were showing honesty, trust, support, acceptance and no one was judging anyone. We all talked and talked until we

solve it. Thinking about the reporting interview itself with the parents, I got a sense that it was owned by me. The week was an absolutely high, like dancing from one interview to the next. It was like having a black cloud lifted. I had all this stuff (children's work) to back me and I could show them (the parents). You could see the growth—you could be so specific. Yes, I want to do it again.

Teacher 5

Question (same as above) It should be noted that with this interview, the teacher preferred to discuss the actual reporting interview and the effects it left on her and the parents.

There wasn't so much stress about writing the reports. I could get right down to the "meat and potatoes" instead of the flowery jargon. There was more partnership between parent and teacher and the comments could be backed up with the children's work. You could negotiate a time-line plan with the parent (action plan). Even certain phrases in the point form could be modified. The parents and I did a lot of talking going over all the points—they didn't have a chance to read the report before and a lot was coming at the parent. I think there was more of me talking that I would have liked—it wasn't always a two way discussion—next time I want it to be less teacher directed. Everyone in the school is going to do it again.

Appendix E(1)

First Letter of Explanation

November 18, 1991

To Parents/Guardians of Primary Students

Dear Parents:

This year, in an attempt to improve our communications about your child's progress, we are modifying the reporting process for the three formal reporting periods.

First, on the date of report card issuance, you will receive an overview of the program which was presented to the entire class in the first term.

Second, at a parent-teacher conference, each teacher will discuss with you, your child's progress relevant to the overview. To accommodate this, we have extended all interviews to thirty minutes and expect that all parents will join in the interview process.

Third, after the interview, each teacher will summarize the discussion, have it typed, and will send it home as the formal record of your child's progress for the term.

We sincerely hope that this discussion of your child in relationship to the overview and generally held expectation for the age group, will be meaningful to you.

To put the revised process in motion, please come into the school on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and choose an interview time convenient to you.

After the first reporting period, we will invite your comments with a view to further improving the reporting process in successive terms.

Our goal is to communicate effectively with you, using written and verbal procedures.

Yours truly

J. Bowbrick
Principal
Caulfeild Elementary

Appendix E(2)

Second Letter of Explanation

December, 1991

Dear Parents:

This is the third year in which parents have been receiving the Ministry mandated anecdotal primary reports.

During this past reporting period, our primary teachers, in response to our mutual concerns about effective home/school communication, tried a modified approach to the process.

The approach included:

- an extensive overview of the term's work, sent home before the interview
- a package of work samples for each child presented prior to the interview
- a half-hour interview about each child
- a point form anecdotal report sent home after the interview.

Our goal was to improve the reporting process within the structures of the Ministry and School Board guidelines.

We would appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to respond to the following, detach it, and return it to the school ASAP.

Yours truly

John Bowbrick, Principal
and The Primary Staff

Appendix E(3)

Summary Plan

Steps for Modified Primary Reporting Process at Caulfeild School

1. Letter of explanation sent home to parents. (written by principal)
2. One week prior to conferences overviews are written and sent home.
3. Teachers prepare a point form report for each child.
4. Parents sign up for 30 minute conferences.
5. Folders of childrens' work and other relevant data compiled in preparation for conferences.
6. Parent-teacher conferences held to discuss child's progress relevant to the overview.
7. After the interview teacher will amend the point form report adding any parental input and/or action plans agreed upon by both parties. This complete report will be typed and sent home in the Primary Progress report card folder as a formal record of the child's progress for the term.
8. Parent survey sent home asking for response to this reporting process.

Appendix E(4)

Primary Reporting Process Survey

A. I thought the revised process was:

an improvement

not an improvement

B. Two things I liked about the revised process were:

1. _____

2. _____

C. Two things I would like to see improved are:

1. _____

2. _____

D. General Comments:

Appendix F

Interview Questions

- A. Can you identify the three most important topics about your child's development discussed in the report card? What do these mean to you?
- B. How do you feel about the way they are described?
- C. Have all the parts of your child's development, that are most important to you, been discussed in the report?
- D. What, if any, are a few things that you did not like about the way your child's development was reported?
- E. What, if any, are a few things that you really liked about the way your child's development was reported?
- F. Do you feel this report portrays an accurate picture of your child?
- G. What other ways do you communicate with each other (parent-teacher) about your child's development?
- H. What do you think about anecdotal reporting?

Appendix G
New Structured Written Report Card
(Eagle Harbour Primary School)

Student _____

Date _____

Teacher _____

Reporting Period _____

EFFORT CODE

A - always	R - requires frequent reminders
U - usually	S - seldom

A. AESTHETIC AND ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT	1ST	2ND	3RD
Drama			
Music			
Visual Art			
B. EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT			
Demonstrates self confidence			
Copes with new situations			
Demonstrates self-discipline			
Settles down to work promptly			
Works diligently on assignments			
Completes work on time			
Works well in groups- shares and co-operates			
Work well independently			
Is enthusiastic about learning			
Does not hesitate to ask for assistance			
C. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY			
Respects the opinions of others			
Considers the feelings of others			
Cares for personal property			
Cares for the property of others			
Makes responsible choices			
Shares in classroom/school duties			
D. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT			
Participates willingly in all activities			
Demonstrates knowledge of skills taught			
Performs skills taught			
Demonstrates the importance of safety			
THEMES-INTERGRATED CURRICULUM- SOCIAL STUDIES AND SCIENCE			
Understands concepts			
Organizes and presents ideas well			
Completes assignments			
FRENCH			
COMPUTERS			

DEVELOPMENTAL READING STAGES

Students who are learning to read progress through a series of developmental stages as described below.

I READING

A. Self-Awareness Stage.

- Enjoys listening to literature.
- Voluntarily chooses to look at books.
- Participates in choral reading.
- 'Reads' or retells content of a familiar book using pictures for clues
- Role-plays reading by attempting to match memory with actual words.
- Can follow a line of print.
- Recognizes personal name and some other words of high environmental content.
- Pick words out of print but is not consistent.
- Can identify and name most letters.
- Can give words orally that begin similarly.
- Can recall words and phrases from a story.
- Recognizes that print has a fixed meaning.

B. Bridging Stage

- Picks out individual words and letters consistently.
- Understands the concept of a word.
- Reads words in one context but may not be able to read them in another.
- Reads familiar books by following print rather than pictures

The readiness phase usually continues through November; for some students it will be carried on for a longer period. This is the section which would be mostly used by the Kindergarten class.

C. Take Off Stage

- Recognizes some phonic generalizations:
 - Rhyming
 - Beginning Sounds
 - Ending Sounds
 - Blends
 - Vowels
- Attempts simple books
- Can read familiar words in new print situations.
- Developing a store of sight words.
- Reads some things independently.

D. Independent Stage.

- Can read a simple book appropriate for their age level, never seen before.
- Reads in word clusters rather than word by word.
- Reads orally with meaning and expression.
- Reads using pictures, meaning, phonics and grammar.
- Reads silently at an appropriate rate.
- Reads with understanding.
- Identifies the main idea of a story.
- Can sequence events in the story.

E. Skilled Reading Stage.

- Reads for information.
- Reads at varying and appropriate rates.
- Read a variety of print forms for pleasure and information.

II. SPELLING

- uses random letters to represent sounds.
- Uses initial consonants to represent whole words.
- Uses initial and final consonants for each word.
- Uses initial, final and medial consonants for each word.
- Uses vowels.
- Is approaching standard spelling.
- Uses standard spelling consistently.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT CODE	
I - INTRODUCED	- has been introduced only
D - DEVELOPING	- continued instruction and practice being provided
A - ACQUIRED	- demonstrates understanding and performance at a level consistent with the widely held expectations for this age
E - EXTENDING	- transfers and integrates understanding and performance which go beyond expectations for this age
N - NOT INTRODUCED	- the class is not working on this area at this time
C - CONCERN	- extra help from home and school required

E. INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT	1ST	2ND	3RD
LANGUAGE ARTS			
Reading:			
Enjoys literature			
Participates in shared reading			
Role plays reading, attempts to match print with word			
Recognizes familiar words			
Can identify and name most letters			
Reads familiar books by accurately identifying each word			
Attempts simple books independently			
Listening - is acquiring:			
Skills in following oral directions			
The techniques of a courteous, critical listener			
Speaking - is growing in ability to:			
Express ideas orally			
Speak clearly			
Use correct English			
Writing - is learning to:			
Successfully writes words according to sounds heard (invented)			
Write words using knowledge of letters and sounds			
Label pictures with one word			
Repeats sentences			
Approach standard spelling			
Form letters correctly			

MATH			
Number Sense and Numeration			
Place Value			
Number Computations			
Addition:			
concept			
facts			
Subtraction:			
concept			
facts			
Problem Solving			
Patterns			
Data Analysis			
Measurement			
Geometry			

COMMENTS

...

⋮

Additional Parent Comments to the Teacher

As parents you are invited and encouraged to contribute information to the school about your child in the Primary Programme.

COMMENTS:

Date

Parent Signature

Teacher's Signature

Principal's Signature

Parents: Please return this copy and the report card cover to your child's teacher. Thank you.

Student _____

Date _____

Teacher _____

Reporting Period _____

EFFORT CODE

A - always	R - requires frequent reminders
U - usually	S - seldom

A. AESTHETIC AND ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT	1ST	2ND	3RD
Drama			
Music			
Visual Art			
B. EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT			
Demonstrates self confidence			
Copes with new situations			
Demonstrates self-discipline			
Settles down to work promptly			
Works diligently on assignments			
Completes work on time			
Works well in groups- shares and co-operates			
Work well independently			
Is enthusiastic about learning			
Does not hesitate to ask for assistance			
C. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY			
Respects the opinions of others			
Considers the feelings of others			
Cares for personal property			
Cares for the property of others			
Makes responsible choices			
Shares in classroom/school duties			
D. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT			
Participates willingly in all activities			
Demonstrates knowledge of skills taught			
Performs skills taught			
Demonstrates the importance of safety			
THEMES-INTERGRATED CURRICULUM- SOCIAL STUDIES AND SCIENCE			
Understands concepts			
Organizes and presents ideas well			
Completes assignments			
FRENCH			
COMPUTERS			

DEVELOPMENTAL READING STAGES

Students who are learning to read progress through a series of developmental stages as described below.

I. READING

- A. Self-Awareness Stage.
- Enjoys listening to literature.
 - Voluntarily chooses to look at books.
 - Participates in choral reading.
 - 'Reads' or retells content of a familiar book using pictures for clues
 - Role-plays reading by attempting to match memory with actual words.
 - Can follow a line of print.
 - Recognizes personal name and some other words of high environmental content.
 - Picks words out of print but is not consistent.
 - Can identify and name most letters.
 - Can give words orally that begin similarly.
 - Can recall words and phrases from a story.
 - Recognizes that print has a fixed meaning.

- B. Bridging Stage
- Picks out individual words and letters consistently.
 - Understands the concept of a word.
 - Reads words in one context but may not be able to read them in another.
 - Reads familiar books by following print rather than pictures

The readiness phase usually continues through November; for some students it will be carried on for a longer period. This is the section which would be mostly used by the Kindergarten class.

- C. Take Off Stage
- Recognizes some phonic generalizations:
 - Rhyming
 - Beginning Sounds
 - Ending Sounds
 - Blends
 - Vowels
 - Attempts simple books
 - Can read familiar words in new print situations.
 - Developing a store of sight words.
 - Reads some things independently.

- D. Independent Stage.
- Can read a simple book appropriate for their age level, never seen before.
 - Reads in word clusters rather than word by word.
 - Reads orally with meaning and expression.
 - Reads using pictures, meaning, phonics and grammar.
 - Reads silently at an appropriate rate.
 - Reads with understanding.
 - Identifies the main idea of a story.
 - Can sequence events in the story.

- E. Skilled Reading Stage.
- Reads for information.
 - Reads at varying and appropriate rates.
 - Read a variety of print forms for pleasure and information.

II. SPELLING

- uses random letters to represent sounds.
- Uses initial consonants to represent whole words.
- Uses initial and final consonants for each word.
- Uses initial, final and medial consonants for each word.
- Uses vowels.
- Is approaching standard spelling.
- Uses standard spelling consistently.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT CODE	
I - INTRODUCED	has been introduced only
D - DEVELOPING	continued instruction and practice being provided
A - ACQUIRED	demonstrates understanding and performance at a level consistent with the widely held expectations for this age
E - EXTENDING	transfers and integrates understanding and performance which go beyond expectations for this age
N - NOT INTRODUCED	the class is not working on this area at this time
C - CONCERN	extra help from home and school required

E. INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT	1ST	2ND	3RD
LANGUAGE ARTS			
Reading:			
Frequently chooses to read books for enjoyment			
Applies phonics knowledge in word attack skills			
Recognizes basic sight vocabulary introduced			
Uses reading skills to make story predictions			
What the child reads (orally) makes sense			
What the child reads (orally) sounds like language (fluency)			
Reads orally with expression and meaning			
Reads grade appropriate material independently			
Listening - is acquiring:			
Skills in following oral directions			
The techniques of a courteous, critical listener			
Speaking - is growing in ability to:			
Express ideas orally			
Speak clearly			
Use correct English			
Writing - is learning to:			
Willing to take risks in writing independently			
Writes for a variety of purposes (various topics and genres)			
Writing demonstrates voice (expresses thought with originality)			
Successfully writes words according to sounds heard			
Spelling approximations are moving toward standard spelling			
Uses standard spelling consistently			
Prints neatly and legibly			
Uses the principles of punctuation			
Uses the principles of capital letters			
Uses the principles of grammar			
Demonstrates the ability to revise, edit, publish			

MATH			
Number Sense and Numeration			
Place Value			
Number Computations			
Addition:			
concept			
facts			
Subtraction:			
concept			
facts			
Multiplication			
concept			
facts			
Division			
concept			
facts			
Problem Solving			
Patterns			
Data Analysis			
Measurement			
Geometry			

COMMENTS

...

...

Additional Parent Comments to the Teacher

As parents you are invited and encouraged to contribute information to the school about your child in the Primary Programme.

COMMENTS:

Date

Parent Signature

Teacher's Signature

Principal's Signature

Parents: Please return this copy and the report card cover to your child's teacher. Thank you.

Student _____

Date _____

Teacher _____

Reporting Period _____

EFFORT CODE

A - always	R - requires frequent reminders
U - usually	S - seldom

A. AESTHETIC AND ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT	1ST	2ND	3RD
Drama			
Music			
Visual Art			
B. EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT			
Demonstrates self confidence			
Copes with new situations			
Demonstrates self-discipline			
Settles down to work promptly			
Works diligently on assignments			
Completes work on time			
Works well in groups- shares and co-operates			
Work well independently			
Is enthusiastic about learning			
Does not hesitate to ask for assistance			
C. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY			
Respects the opinions of others			
Considers the feelings of others			
Cares for personal property			
Cares for the property of others			
Makes responsible choices			
Shares in classroom/school duties			
D. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT			
Participates willingly in all activities			
Demonstrates knowledge of skills taught			
Performs skills taught			
Demonstrates the importance of safety			
THEMES-INTERGRATED CURRICULUM- SOCIAL STUDIES AND SCIENCE			
Understands concepts			
Organizes and presents ideas well			
Completes assignments			
FRENCH			
COMPUTERS			

DEVELOPMENTAL READING STAGES

Students who are learning to read progress through a series of developmental stages as described below.

I. READING

A. Self-Awareness Stage.

- Enjoys listening to literature.
- Voluntarily chooses to look at books.
- Participates in choral reading.
- 'Reads' or retells content of a familiar book using pictures for clues
- Role-plays reading by attempting to match memory with actual words.
- Can follow a line of print.
- Recognizes personal name and some other words of high environmental content.
- Pick words out of print but is not consistent.
- Can identify and name most letters.
- Can give words orally that begin similarly.
- Can recall words and phrases from a story.
- Recognizes that print has a fixed meaning.

B. Bridging Stage

- Picks out individual words and letters consistently.
- Understands the concept of a word.
- Reads words in one context but may not be able to read them in another.
- Reads familiar books by following print rather than pictures

The readiness phase usually continues through November; for some students it will be carried on for a longer period. This is the section which would be mostly used by the Kindergarten class.

C. Take Off Stage

- Recognizes some phonic generalizations:
 - Rhyming
 - Beginning Sounds
 - Ending Sounds
 - Blends
 - Vowels
- Attempts simple books
- Can read familiar words in new print situations.
- Developing a store of sight words.
- Reads some things independently.

D. Independent Stage.

- Can read a simple book appropriate for their age level, never seen before.
- Reads in word clusters rather than word by word.
- Reads orally with meaning and expression.
- Reads using pictures, meaning, phonics and grammar.
- Reads silently at an appropriate rate.
- Reads with understanding.
- Identifies the main idea of a story.
- Can sequence events in the story.

E. Skilled Reading Stage.

- Reads for information.
- Reads at varying and appropriate rates.
- Read a variety of print forms for pleasure and information.

II. SPELLING

- uses random letters to represent sounds.
- Uses initial consonants to represent whole words.
- Uses initial and final consonants for each word.
- Uses initial, final and medial consonants for each word.
- Uses vowels.
- Is approaching standard spelling.
- Uses standard spelling consistently.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT CODE	
I - INTRODUCED	- has been introduced only
D - DEVELOPING	- continued instruction and practice being provided
A - ACQUIRED	- demonstrates understanding and performance at a level consistent with the widely held expectations for this age
E - EXTENDING	- transfers and integrates understanding and performance which go beyond expectations for this age
N - NOT INTRODUCED	- the class is not working on this area at this time
C - CONCERN	- extra help from home and school required

E. INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT	1ST	2ND	3RD
LANGUAGE ARTS			
Reading - is developing:			
Fluency			
Expression			
Comprehension			
Sight Vocabulary			
Independence in work attack skills			
Demonstrates knowledge of phonics			
Listening - is acquiring:			
Skills in following oral directions			
The techniques of a courteous, critical listener			
Speaking - is growing in ability to:			
Express ideas orally			
Speak clearly			
Use correct English			
Writing - is learning to:			
Convey thoughts in print (composition)			
Express thoughts in clarity			
Express thoughts with originality			
Use random letters to represent sounds (invented spelling)			
Approach standard spelling			
Use standard spelling consistently			
Print or write neatly and legibly			
Use the principles of punctuation			
Use the the principles of capital letters			
Use the principles of grammar			
Demonstrate the ability to revise, edit, publish			

MATH			
Number Sense and Numeration			
Place Value			
Number Computations			
Addition:			
concept			
facts			
Subtraction:			
concept			
facts			
Multiplication			
concept			
facts			
Division			
concept			
Problem Solving			
Patterns			
Data Analysis			
Measurement			
Geometry			

COMMENTS

_____ demonstrates by her actions that she enjoys coming to school. She is self confident and loves to socialize with her peers. In the area of Language Arts, _____ is at the Independent Reading Stage. _____ is to be commended for the extra effort she has put towards her math. Her absence from school last year made it necessary for many Grade Two concepts to be consolidated before Grade Three material could be introduced.

Suggestions for next term: 1. put forth a concerted effort to settle during whole group activities 2. remain focused when tackling individual assignments at her desk 3. being considerate of others and their feelings- develop the ability to think before she speaks 4. maintain top quality work in her notebooks 5. consistently study her weekly spelling words 6. use punctuation and spelling correctly in her compositions 7. improve processing speed of basic addition and subtraction facts by playing card and dice games 8. Improve ability to make change with money through real life experiences

Additional Parent Comments to the Teacher

As parents you are invited and encouraged to contribute information to the school about your child in the Primary Programme.

COMMENTS:

November, 1993
Date

Parent Signature

Teacher's Signature

Principal's Signature

COMMENTS

_____ is an active child who enjoys her peers. She is often smiling and has a sense of humour. Remaining on task is difficult for _____ as she likes to socialize. _____ enjoys responsibility and is willing to assist about the classroom.

_____ has made steady progress in reading with her sight words, and understanding of phonics both improving. Carefully decoding words is more of a challenge for _____, she tends not to look carefully at the word or use her knowledge of phonics.

_____ enjoys reading and is able to read and comprehend at a level above that which would be expected of a student her age.

Spelling is a challenge for _____ as she spells many high frequency words incorrectly (make, say, when etc). _____ is quick to record her thoughts in print and writes interesting stories. As with spelling, she rushes to print and as a result makes careless errors.

_____ has made commendable progress in math this term, although she continues to be working below the level expected for a child of her age. The greatest area of improvement has been in her ability to add and subtract when regrouping is required. The next area of concentration should be multiplication and division.

_____ continues to have difficulty with the problem solving component of the program.

Suggestions for next term: 1. concentration on multiplication and division 2. problem solving 3. encourage use of phonetic knowledge to decode vocabulary 4. continued review of spelling words 5. encourage her to slow down and form letters neatly and to think through her story ideas before recording them

Additional Parent Comments to the Teacher

As parents you are invited and encouraged to contribute information to the school about your child in the Primary Programme.

COMMENTS:

March 1994
Date

Parent Signature

Teacher's Signature

Principal's Signature

COMMENTS

...

...

Additional Parent Comments to the Teacher

As parents you are invited and encouraged to contribute information to the school about your child in the Primary Programme.

COMMENTS:

Date

Parent Signature

Teacher's Signature

Principal's Signature

Parents: Please return this copy and the report card cover to your child's teacher. Thank you.

Appendix H

Survey for New Report Card

1. What do you like?

2. What would you change to improve the communication?

3. Could this report stand alone without an interview?

4. Would you rather have this style of report card or straight anecdotal?
Why?

Appendix I(a)

Sample Anecdotal Report Card

Student's Name: _____

School: _____ District: _____

Reporting Period: Second Date: March 24, 1993

The goals of the Primary Program are to provide a variety of experiences that foster the child's.

- Aesthetic and Artistic Development
- Emotional and Social Development
- Intellectual Development
- Physical Development
- Social Responsibility

All goals are emphasized throughout the entire Primary Program.

Themes taught this term include: Christmas, Winter, Salmon/Fish, Bears, Friendship/Valentine's Day, Outdoor School, Trees, Farm Animals

___ continues to be a helpful and dependable student. She is both responsible and hard-working. ___ is always eager to try her best at what ever she is asked to do.

During our recent trip to Outdoor School, ___ participated in all activities with great enthusiasm. She displayed an independent and confident manner throughout the trip.

___ continues to make progress in Language Arts. She particularly enjoys rereading familiar books with repetitive passages she has memorized. ___ is also beginning to read short phonetic words. Her reading will improve rapidly as soon as she learns all the consonant sounds. In her Journal, ___ is writing sentences using a combination of sight words and words sounded out phonetically. ___ will further strengthen her English language skills by continuing to work with the E.S.L. teacher next term.

In Mathematics, ___ can write most numerals to 100 from dictation. She also demonstrates an understanding of the addition process, using manipulative materials. ___ needs more time to develop an understanding of the subtraction process.

___ enjoys involvement with the Art and Music activities associated with the classroom themes. In Physical Education, ___ is doing well in developing large muscle skills using balls, hoops and bean bags.

___ has made progress in all aspects of the program this term.

- continuing in the Primary Program
- beginning the Intermediate Program

Appendix I(a-1)

Sample Anecdotal Report Card

Student's Name: _____

School: _____ District: _____

Reporting Period: 1 Date: Nov. 1992

The goals of the Primary Program are to provide a variety of experiences that foster the child's.

- Aesthetic and Artistic Development
- Emotional and Social Development
- Intellectual Development
- Physical Development
- Social Responsibility

All goals are emphasized throughout the entire Primary Program.

Themes taught this term include: Christmas, Winter, Salmon/Fish, Bears, Friendship/Valentine's Day, Outdoor School, Trees, Farm Animals

___ is a good-natured, co-operative and responsible member of the class, She is eager to learn and approaches tasks in a conscientious manner.

___ is making good progress in Language Arts. She knows all o the names of the lower case alphabet letters and can recall half of the consonant sounds. She can also recognize some sight words associated with the classroom activities. In her Journal, ___ is beginning to write simple sentences using sight words copied from the classroom and words she has attempted to sound out phonetically. ___ is also further improving her English language ability during her time with the E.S.L. teacher.

In Mathematics, ___ shows a good understanding of the number system. She counts in sequence to 100 and identifies numbers out of sequence to 100. Using manipulative materials, ___ recognizes, extends and creates patterns and can sort objects according to different characteristics.

___ participates with enthusiasm in all Art, Music and Physical Education activities.

___ has had a good beginning to the school year.

- continuing in the Primary Program
- beginning the Intermediate Program

Appendix I(b)

Sample Anecdotal Report Card

June 11, 1993

___ does not march to the sound of his own drummer. He has his own brass band, which transmogrifies into everything from symphonies to pan pipes and everything in between. He is inquisitive, exuberant, creative, and articulate. His own special "tag line," especially at calender time, was an exultant "Happy Wednesday." each week. We never learned exactly why it was "Happy Wednesday", but each week it could be counted on.

___ is seemingly interested in everything, and asks questions that are sometimes very sophisticated, e.g. His question about rainbows was not why they are colored but why they are arched. Keenly aware of geography, he is aware of the continents and their names, and is quite taken with the concept of islands. He is avid to learn, and said "I'm very happy coming to school. There is so much to learn."

In dramatic play, he liked the dinosaur suit, the white tiger suit, and a black piece of fuzzy material that was, at one time or another, a tail, a headband, a belt and a myriad of other accouterments. He also frequently wore a pair of red sequenced gloves, which conferred magical posers on him. He liked to pretend to be a dog, and played board games and other similar activities with zeal.

___ is quiet secure in himself, and is quite demonstrative in his affection. During the field trip to the pumpkin farm, he constantly reassured a child who parents count not be there that he was his pal, and made sure that the other child was not alone, often taking him by the hand to include him in activities. He is an effervescent, loving child, who sings when he is happy. He is attuned to himself sufficiently to know when he needs to be alone and when he needs to be with others in a group or in a one-to-one-situation.

___ has a poetic command of language, on one occasion, saying as he was pretending to write, "The sea rolls over the twilight as the clams and other creatures walk backwards." The significance of this lies in the fact that he said such things regularly.

___ needs some assistance in developing his fine motors skills, however he has developed some very good strategies for dealing with this aspect of his development. He is quite creative in his art projects, and repeatedly painted what he called "The Island of the Smog." He liked to work with the patterning blocks, especially making patterns of yellow and black. He also liked playing with a magnifying glass, and had a good concept that it allowed him to see not only things that he would otherwise not see, but that it also allowed him to see familiar objects in a new way.

___ will be an asset to any kindergarten program that he participates in. He is bright, avid for information, eager to learn, and an active contributor to his class.

Appendix J

Guide for Writing Structured Written Reports

Requirements for Reporting

Provincial requirements for reporting on student progress mandate both formal and informal reporting to parents. Together, formal and informal reporting should:

- provide specific, constructive information about the students' strengths, areas of need, and goals;
- fully inform both students and parents about progress; and
- encourage all students to achieve personal excellence.

Policy and legislation on reporting provides the basis for effective communications with parents. For your quick reference, the following summarizes policy and legislation on reporting that is effective September 1994:

- Teachers are required to report on student's progress and behaviour in school.
- Teachers are required to report to parents at least five times during the school year, including three written reports on a form approved by the minister (one of which shall be at the end of the school year) and provide at least two informal reports.
- Teachers of students in Kindergarten to Grade 7 must answer the following three questions when reporting to parents:
 - What is the student able to do?
 - What areas require further attention or development?
 - In what ways can the child's learning be supported?
- Teachers of students in Kindergarten to Grade 7 must describe the child's progress in relation to standards of development.
 - In Kindergarten to Grade 3, teachers must answer (in writing or verbally) the question: *How is the child progressing in relation to the standards of development for his or her age?*
 - In Grades 4 to 7 teachers must use written comments and letter grades to answer a similar question: *How is the child progressing in relation to the areas of learning?*

Progress Reports In Primary (Kindergarten to Grade 3)

In relation to the areas of learning, student progress reports must describe

- (in writing) what the student is able to do, the areas in which the student requires further attention or development, and ways of supporting the student in his or her learning;
- (in writing or verbally) in conjunction with the progress report, oral or written comments must be provided on student's school progress in intellectual, human, and social development with reference to standards of development for students in a similar age range.

Progress Reports In Grades 4 to 7

In relation to the areas of learning, student progress reports for students in Grades 4 through 7 must contain

- authorized symbols, unless the board provides the symbols to parents in a different manner; and
- written comments describing what the student is able to do, the areas in which the student requires further attention or development, and ways of supporting the student in his or her learning.

Making Judgments about Progress

Teachers regularly evaluate students' progress so that they can provide ongoing guidance and feedback to students and plan the next steps in learning. The goals of evaluation are to

- improve teaching and learning,
- develop and enhance each student's abilities,
- fully inform both the students and parents about progress, and
- encourage all students to achieve personal excellence.

- For students enrolled in special education programs designated by the Minister, the School Act states that a board may provide written student progress reports that describe the achievements of the student in relation to the expectations for that student in his or her individual educational program. With this exception, written comments for students with special needs follow the guidelines for structured written reports.

The remainder of this document provides teachers with specific guidelines and suggestions to support the preparation of structured written reports.

Writing Structured Written Reports

This section provides examples of comments excerpted from actual report cards. The comments are drawn from complete reports that describe and comment on a broad range of observations in a balanced way. The examples are organized under four headings:

- Writing About What the Student Is Able to Do
- Writing About Areas That Require Further Attention of Development
- Writing About Ways to Support Learning
- Writing About Standards of Development

Under each of these headings, the examples are organized by Primary (Kindergarten to Grade 3) and Grades 4 to 7.

Writing About What the Student Is Able to Do

The comments in written reports about what a child is able to do should note significant events in a child's growth, development, and learning. The following are examples from report cards of this kind of comment.

Primary (Kindergarten to Grade 3)

Emily

Emily is now able to

- write simple sentences in her stories and in her journal;
- use capitals and punctuation marks correctly (I have included a sample of her writing as she has made strong gains in this area);
- read her own stories and selected passages to the class with more confidence;
- recognize many words and self-correct while reading orally;
- add and subtract numbers to 20.

Angie

Since Angie began school in September, she has learned all the names of the letters of the alphabet and most of the sounds of the letters (consonants and short vowel sounds). Angie spells by matching letters with beginning and final sounds.

Report cards are most effective when they are viewed as one aspect of the ongoing communication process among teachers, parents, and students.

There are many words that teachers can use to convey what students are able to do. These include the following:

- shown
- demonstrates
- can
- is able
- continues to
- is increasing
- works well
- has completed
- is practicing

Jon

Jon has shown much growth in mathematics since the last reporting period. For example, Jon now understands the value of numbers to 10. He can use objects to show numbers up to 10, and count up to 20. He feels very proud of his learning.

Grades 4 to 7

Mike

Mike is a cheerful, positive, and enthusiastic person at school. These personal attributes, along with his strong academic skills, have helped him to make many new friends and to adjust quickly to his new school.

In the short time Mike has been here, he has shown that he can

- read fluently with expression (others enjoy listening to him read);
- understand what he reads (he really enjoyed reading *Gracie Bear*);
- follow directions well (he made a model of fur trading furs from a set of directions);
- read maps, charts, and graphs to locate information.

Courtney

Courtney has shown some important progress since our last meeting to discuss her Individual Education Plan (IEP). In mathematics, she worked confidently and hard to master the skills during our unit on factors and multiples. She can now answer most questions correctly in her daily work.

Nikki

In Science, Nikki developed a three-dimensional display and written report to tell about her concerns for the environment. Her work showed that she can

- identify and explain issues;
- locate and use effectively information from many sources;
- display information accurately using graphs and charts;
- express her opinions strongly in writing;
- use a word processor to present her work in a published form;
- present her ideas artistically.

Writing About Areas That Require Further Attention or Development

Parents need to know not only what their child is able to do but what he or she is currently working on that may require further attention or development. Teachers should tell parents about areas of concern in a meeting or phone call before sending them a written report. This information should state the problem areas clearly, provide specific examples as appropriate, and describe the support that is needed to help the student improve in these areas. The following are examples of reporting of this kind:

Primary (Grades K to 3)

Heather

As we have discussed, I am concerned about Heather's reading. Most children in her age range are reading books with lots of print and few pictures. Heather is reading mainly picture books with four or five words on a page. Her understanding continues to be based largely on the illustrations.

Each day, I listen to Heather read orally for five to ten minutes and I have regularly tape-recorded Heather's reading since September. I noticed that she can recognize a greater number of words by sight. I will send the tape home so that you can hear how her reading has developed over the past few months.

At home, you could support Heather's reading development by reading to her each night and by encouraging her to read a passage of her choice to you.

Carlos

Parents are reassured when the written comments relate what the child needs to learn to future learning goals and include ways to support the child's learning. For example:

As discussed during our ongoing telephone conversations:

- I am concerned about his writing. He does not include sufficient detail so that his writing seems minimal in effort.
- I believe he has the ability to accomplish much more.
- It appears easier for him to focus on the writing task if he selects his own topic.
- Having him write for an audience that he knows is one way to encourage him to put more effort into his writing. We are currently setting up pen pals with a neighbouring school, which will give him a real audience for his writing.
- He and I will keep you informed about his progress through his learning log, which he takes home once a week.

Future development (new areas of learning)

- is working towards
- is developing
- is beginning to
- is continuing to
- is increasing
- is practising
- is given opportunities to
- is becoming
- provide experiences that interest him or her by
- provide experiences that challenge him or her by
- challenge and expand his or her
- the success he or she experiences in _____ will be strengthened further by

The following are suggested wordings to use when a student requires further attention or development:

Further attention (areas where student may be experiencing difficulty)

- needs an adult to help with
- needs guidance from an adult
- requires more time and practice
- needs reminders to
- avoids work that requires
- finds _____ challenging
- is working at
- needs practice with
- is a concern
- requires ongoing support
- is receiving help from the learning assistance teacher in

Sara

Sara continues to work on addition and subtraction with regrouping using bundles of sticks or beans. For example: $36 - 19 = \underline{\quad}$. Most children in her age range are able to recall these basic facts without beans or sticks to help them count. I have prepared some activity sheets for her to use on a daily basis. As discussed at the conference, continued practice at home using objects will assist Sara in understanding this skill. She tells me she has a wonderful Lego collection that she can use for addition and subtraction practice.

Katerin

All parents want to know that their child is being challenged, even if the child is meeting or exceeding expectations; they want to see what he or she will be learning next:

Katerin has shown natural leadership qualities. We are challenging her to build on this strength and to take a leadership role in various school projects, such as introducing guest speakers and organizing the puppet show. She is very excited about playing the lead role in our spring drama production.

Grades 4 to 7

Yari

Parents like to know what area needs attention and what actions should be taken.

Math continues to be difficult for Yari. We are currently reviewing the adding and subtracting of fractions. I encourage him to pay close attention to the examples done together in class, but he needs to spend some time at home for extra practice. He also needs to complete all math homework assignments in order to do the required practice in adding and subtracting fractions.

Lyla

Parents are interested in the sources that teacher's use to assess the work of their children. For example:

I am sending Lyla's writing portfolio along with this report. For this term her portfolio includes a mystery story, a report on a novel (*Amish Adventure*), a letter to the Prime Minister, and several paragraphs on topics covered in social studies and science. When she and I reviewed her work we noted the following:

- she is growing in her ability to write effectively for different purposes (to tell a story, to explain, to summarize ideas);
- she could make her ideas clearer if she added more specific details and examples;
- I see improvement in the variety of kinds of sentences she is now using (last term I mentioned this was a concern);

- she knows the correct format for business letters and how to write a paragraph that is about one thing.
- she needs to check her work more carefully for spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Kim

It is important to let parents know when the student recognizes an area requiring further attention and is determined to act on it.

Kim is struggling to improve her spelling skills. Although she does very well on our daily activities and tests for spelling, in her daily work she misspells many high-frequency words (common words that people use a lot in writing such as *beautiful, course, and remembered*). Keeping a small dictionary at hand in her desk and learning to use the spell-checker on the word processor will be two ways of managing this difficulty in addition to the work we do with spelling patterns each week. Kim tries really hard to overcome problems in this area. Impressive attitude, Kim!

Rod

Parents are reassured when the written comments include specific and practical ways to support the child's learning. For example:

Rod seems to have difficulty organizing his work (remembering to put on the date, his name, and the topic). Often his good ideas get lost because he misplaces some of his work. As a result, he seldom gets his assignments done on time. I am encouraging him to check over his assignments for details before he hands them in. Rod and I have agreed that he must start to take more responsibility for his work. We have agreed to the following:

- Rod will try to improve the organization of his work by using the checklist we made together.
- Rod will start to bring home a book each day that has a list of his assignments for you to look over.

Laura

It is helpful to parents if they know about the next step in their child's development.

Laura can read and understand stories and articles that are short, simple, with few new words. To help Laura read more advanced material, she is:

- receiving extra practice in figuring out unfamiliar words by using other words and pictures as clues and phonics
- reading for different purposes; adjusting her speed when she reads to follow directions compared to when she scans (looks over rapidly but thoroughly) to locate specific information



The following are some of the words that teachers can use to write about ways in which the learning is being supported:

- to continue to support
- to develop a variety of strategies
- to provide opportunities
- the plan for _____ is
- we will continue to
- his or her goals for continued growth in this area are
- my goals for _____ are
- it would support _____'s _____ if he or she
- the goal _____ set for himself or herself:

- being challenged to read between the lines
- locating and using information from several different sources to complete research projects

Writing About Ways to Support the Student's Learning

Setting goals is important for all students. While some of these goals are set by teachers, there should be some goals that students select as important for themselves. Some teachers are also including parents in such goal setting.

Reporting on a child's future learning goals tells the parent what the child will be working on next. Linking those goals to areas that need further work or development lets parents see the natural progression that learning takes from what the child knows to new learning. This area of the report should, as appropriate, be developed with the child. Here are some examples:

Primary (Grades K-3)

Inder

Inder agrees that one of his personal goals will be "to learn more about big numbers". I will continue to work daily with Inder on counting and reading numbers higher than 15. You might help by having him tell you how much items cost or weigh when you are shopping together.

Jay

Jay is easily distracted. Through discussion, one of the goals Jay and I have set together is for Jay to move to a space where he can work on his own when he finds it difficult to concentrate.

Jane

Here is a goal that Jane set for herself for next term: "I want to start to learn how to write instead of printing". I will support her interest in learning handwriting by setting time aside for handwriting practice. In addition to handwriting with the whole class, there is a handwriting center in our classroom where Jane often works. Jane wants you to notice her handwriting in her journal so I have included two samples with this report. One is from a month ago, and one is dated last week. We would like you to notice her growth in this short time.



Grades 4 to 7

Tara

Tara has set two goals for herself

1. To keep up with Math by getting extra help as needed from her teacher at school and from Mom when she is at home.
2. To pass her work in on time.

I would also suggest that Tara work on trying to keep her work more carefully sequenced and organized. One of the problems she faced with spelling and reading was that she could not find her work and when she did, she had difficulty following it.

Jeremy

In a conference, Jeremy and I have discussed ways to help him improve the organization of his work. One of the ways is for him to keep a daily assignment book to record his homework assignments. This will help him to remember deadlines, especially with assignments such as long-term research projects. Before he leaves class each day, I will check to see that he has his assignment book and has recorded homework assignments. It would support Jeremy's learning if you would check that he completes his homework and that he returns the book each day.

Jessica

Jessica needs to know her addition and multiplication facts by heart. To support this goal:

- I will give Jessica practice drills each day to improve her accuracy and speed.
- Jessica will take a drill sheet home each night to practice.
- you could support her learning of the basic facts by using flash cards with her each night.

Mark

In our three-way conference, we agreed to the following goals for Mark for next term in science.

- a) Mark will use science materials independently to investigate science questions.
- b) Mark will generate more than one hypothesis to explain his findings.

These goals will be supported by:

- my encouraging his independence during his experiments.
- Mark asking his partner for help before asking the teacher.
- Mark handing in his experiments with at least two hypotheses listed.

Supporting Learning, Understanding and Assessing the Progress of Children in the Primary Program contains the standards of development ("widely held expectations") for student growth and development and should be used when providing this information to parents. It includes:

- standards of development (widely held expectations) of children's learning from birth to thirteen years of age.
- responses to specific parents' questions.
- many suggestions for ways in which parents can help their children learn (e.g., page 39 can be copied for use with the home reading program. It goes back and forth with the child in a Ziploc bag. Copies of pages 52 and 53 can be pasted into the covers of journals to highlight developmental skills in writing).

Writing About Standards of Development

Teachers make judgements about student performance relative to standards of development for children in similar age range, provincial curriculum standards, provincial performance standards, and specific standards and expectations for individual classroom activities. Teachers are guided by the specific standards and then apply their professional knowledge, experience, skills and training when evaluating student's performance. Teachers then communicate their evaluation to parents through the reporting process.

Primary (Grades K-3)

The school act includes a new ministerial order (1994) that requires teachers in the Primary Program to provide parents of students with oral or written comments on the child's progress in intellectual development and human and social development with reference to the standards of development for children in a similar age range.

Teachers must therefore provide information about the extent to which the child is developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are typical or characteristic of children in a similar age range by answering the question:

How is the child progressing in relation to the standards of development for his or her age range?

The standards of development provide frames of reference that illustrate general patterns of learning over time. These standards can be found in the *Supporting Learning Understanding and Assessing the Progress of Children in the Primary Program*, the curriculum sections of the Primary Program Foundation Document, and the provincial curriculum guides for each subject area. As well, parents and teachers will soon have access to a new publication entitled the *Parents Guide to Standards in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics*.

Teachers should follow these guidelines when reporting the standards of development:

- Refer to the goals of the Primary Program.
- Comment on the core areas of reading, writing, and mathematics in each formal report. Convey standards of development orally (e.g., during a parent conference) or in writing (e.g., on the report card or any locally approved form).
- Explain where a particular child is in his or her learning without drawing comparisons with other children in the class. Instead, discuss the standards of development in a much broader context than a single classroom (i.e., all children of a similar age-range).

The following are some examples of reporting on a Primary child's progress in relation to standards of development for his or her age. Please note that these comments could be presented orally or in writing.

Jason

This comment commends Jason for reaching one standard of performance in learning to read, and then suggests a new goal for further development.

Jason has made some progress in his understanding of reading. He can identify all the letters of the alphabet, which is characteristic of a child his age. But overall, he has not yet reached the level of reading development that is typical for this age range (5-7). We will continue to support Jason so that he becomes aware that all the print around him and in books has meaning. You might help Jason by printing notes addressed to him.

Jasminder

This comment helps the parent recognize that independent reading is a standard characteristic of children in Jasminder's age group.

Jasminder has made gains in her learning this year. However, at this time she is not comfortable working independently with the reading material that most children in her age range (5-7) are able to read.

She

- understands how to hold a book;
- understands that print is read from left to right;
- can recall the story that has been read to her; and
- realizes that printed words have meaning.

In order to further her progress in this area, we will support her by having her listen to part of a story and try to complete it on her own.

Minh Yen

This comment describes Minh Yen's qualities that account for her reaching a comprehensive set of standards that are typical of a child in her age range.

Minh Yen has become a self-directed and thoughtful learner. She likes to try out new ideas and seldom requires help with her work. She initiates and completes projects on her own. She approaches school and learning in a serious way. As we discussed last week, her development in all of the goal areas is characteristic of the standards of development for a child in her age range.

There are many ways in which educators can use Supporting Learning to help them report on student progress. For example, the publication can be

- presented at parent workshops;
- used as a resource for the parent weekly newsletter to address specific issues regarding philosophy, standards of development, and curriculum;
- quoted on posters displayed around the school (e.g., on a parent information board);
- used as the basis for brochures on the standards of development (widely held expectations) (see pp. 17-29 and 50-55) for distribution to parents;
- placed on parent/teacher resource shelves in the school library or in classrooms so that parents can sign them out during the year;
- used in conjunction with parent/child/teacher conferences (e.g., page 12 can be sent home before a conference so that parents can use the suggestions for conference preparation).

Jeffrey

This comment explains to the parent the relationship of Jeffrey's success in one area to his confidence in learning and the meeting of expectations in all areas:

Jeffrey demonstrates outstanding artistic ability. His extensive portfolio illustrates the variety and quality of the projects he has completed. The success he experiences in this subject has buoyed his confidence in other areas of the Primary Program. At this time Jeffrey easily fulfils the expectations for learning for children in his age range.

Evelyn

This comment indicates the school's intention to continually attend to the needs of a learner who surpasses the expectations for her age range.

Evelyn has experienced success in all aspects of the Primary Program and has surpassed the standards of development for children in her age range. Discussing goals for her has two aspects: continuing to develop and extend her skills in all areas of the Primary Program and supporting her wide range of interests. A personal goal that Evelyn has set for herself is to write a novelette on horses. She intends to use the computer for this project.

Grades 4 to 7

Teachers in Grades 4 to 7 are required to provide letter grades that indicate a student's level of academic achievement or performance as it relates to the established standards set out for each course or grade. Teachers may elaborate on this information in the structured written report.

Teachers must therefore provide information about the extent to which the child is developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are typical or characteristic of children as required by the course or grade by answering the question:

To what extent is the student meeting the standards for the particular area of learning?

The standards for courses or required studies can be found in provincial curriculum guides, provincial performance standards as described in the provincial reference sets for the following core areas: communication (reading, writing, and oral language), problem solving, and numeracy. Teachers and parents will soon have access to a new publication entitled *The Parent Guide to Standards in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics*.

Teachers should follow these guidelines when reporting the standards of development:

- Refer to the child's intellectual and human and social development. (These two areas encompass all five of the Primary Program goals.)
- Comment on the core areas of reading, writing, and mathematics in each formal report. Convey standards of development orally (e.g., during a parent conference) or in writing (e.g., on the report card or any locally approved form).
- Explain where a particular child is in his or her learning without drawing comparisons with other children in the class. Instead, discuss the standards of development in a much broader context than a single classroom (i.e., all children of a similar age range).

Teachers should follow these guidelines when reporting the standards set out for each course or grade:

- Refer to the goals of the Intermediate Program.
- Comment on the areas of learning.
- Explain where a particular child is in his or her learning in relation to the provincial curriculum standards for the subject or grade.

The following are some examples of written comments for grades 4 to 7 students that refer to progress in relation to the standards for the areas of learning.

Joey

The following comment describes a student who needs to be challenged in one area and supported in another.

Joey understands place value in whole numbers and decimals. He is able to estimate and calculate the answers to multiplication and division questions. He has learned how to divide and multiply decimals by a one digit whole number (e.g. $32.76 \div 6$). Math is a particularly strong area for Joey. He is exceeding the expectations in mathematics for a student in his grade.

Joey is a willing writer. He enjoys recording his thoughts in writing. However, spelling continues to be a problem. His written work has many spelling errors that do not seem to concern him. I do not want to dampen his enthusiasm for writing, but at the same time I want to see improvement in his spelling. In this area, he is not reaching the expectations for a student in his grade.

Corey

Corey has satisfactorily met the standards of achievement in all required studies for Grade 6. She enjoys school and gives a consistent, serious effort in all her work. The willingness she shows to take on challenging projects is impressive. Corey is to be congratulated for her hard work.

Amy

The following comment helps the parent understand the effort the child is making in her attempts to meet the standard.

Amy continues to make satisfactory progress in reading. During this term, she has consistently gotten better in her reading and is more fluent and expressive when she reads aloud. She is choosing longer, more difficult books and is trying hard to read and understand them. Amy is just meeting the standard expected in reading by a student in Grade five.

The following are some of the words that teachers can use when reporting on student progress in terms of standards of development.

- is typical in the age range
- like many children of his or her age
- development is characteristic of many children in his or her age group
- surpasses the widely held expectations
- not comfortable working independently with the mathematics materials and ideas that one would expect of children in his or her age range
- fulfils the expectation for learning within his or her age range
- will take longer to reach
- is not meeting the expectation
- at this time his or her achievement in _____ is not within the widely held expectations of his or her age range. I am confident that with ongoing support and encouragement from home and school, he or she will meet the expectations in _____

Resources

British Columbia, Ministry of Education. *Assessment and Evaluation Resource Package (Primary)*. Victoria: Ministry of Education, B.C., 1992.

British Columbia, Ministry of Education. *The Parent Guide to Standards in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics*. (Available Spring, 1994.)

British Columbia, Ministry of Education. *The Primary Program Resource Document*. Victoria: Ministry of Education, B.C., 1992. See the assessment and evaluation blockline masters in the appendix on page 345.

British Columbia Primary Teachers' Association. *Evaluation Techniques and Resources, Book II*. Vancouver: BCPTA, 1992. See especially sections 10.1 to 10.72.

British Columbia, Ministry of Education. *Evolving Writing Across Curriculum: Using the Reference Set to Support Learning*. Victoria: Ministry of Education, B.C., 1992.

British Columbia, Ministry of Education. *Evolving Reading Across Curriculum: Using the Reference Set to Support Learning and Enhance Communication*. Victoria: Ministry of Education, B.C., 1994.

British Columbia, Ministry of Education. *Assessment Handbook, Series: Student-Centred Conferences, Portfolio Assessment, Student Self-Assessment, Performance Assessment*. Victoria: Ministry of Education, B.C., 1994.

David

This comment provides specific information about why the child is not meeting expectations.

David's progress in writing is below expectations for his grade level. He is able to write about his immediate personal experiences and interests but has difficulty expanding ideas and including details. David's writing lacks a flow (the ideas are not organized or joined together smoothly). The sentences he uses tend to be short and simple. David still spells most words phonetically and often misspells simple, common words. David will need support in writing in order to make progress towards the standards for his grade.

Writing Clear, Concise Reports

Reports must use direct, plain language. As well, they should

- be concise, informative, and professional in tone;
- be considerate of the parent audience, recognizing that parents vary widely in their educational experiences and familiarity with educational terms;
- anticipate the questions parents may have about their child's growth and progress;
- express information in straightforward (plain) language that is easy to understand.

The following are some principles of plain language. The examples were taken from comments made on actual report cards.

Avoid jargon.

Many words and expressions that teachers commonly use professionally are unfamiliar to parents and therefore should be avoided. Use words with which most readers are familiar. For example, the following comment is unnecessarily difficult: "This is enhancing the development of fine motor skills critical for printing and writing." The following is a more straightforward alternative: "This will help him develop the physical skills he needs to print and write."

Sometimes it is difficult to avoid the use of a particular word. In these cases provide an example. For example, if you need to use "high-frequency words", put something like the following in parentheses: (common words that people use a lot in writing such as *beautiful, course, and remembered*).

Be concise.

Use only as many words as needed to make your message clear. Use simple, direct words and short, clear sentences. In the following examples, suggested rewordings are provided in parentheses.

"If Darren could choose a passage, or a book he would like to read to you or read it to him, this would support Darren's development in reading." (Have Darren choose a paragraph or a book to read to you, or read it to him. This will help his reading development.)

19

"Khila is a very conscientious student who doesn't like to miss school lest she should miss an assignment or a new concept being taught." (Khila is very conscientious and doesn't like to miss school.)

Use the active voice.

The active voice is more direct and effective than the passive voice; for example:

"When writing, he *is encouraged* to talk about his topic before beginning" ("We encourage him to discuss his topic before beginning to write.")

"The report was sent home with Amelia." ("I sent the report home with Amelia.")

Use point form where possible.

Present your thoughts in point form rather than paragraphs where possible. A list is the most direct way of presenting ideas and helps the reader move quickly and easily from point to point.

Often a simple word can be used to replace a more complex one or even a whole phrase. Here are some examples:

Instead of	Try using
a majority of	most
a number of	many, several
as a means to	for, to
assist, facilitate	help
communicate	talk to, call, write to
constitutes	is, forms, makes up
due to the fact that	because, since
endeavour	try
exhibit a tendency	tend
factor	reason, cause
for the purpose of	for
in the course of	during
in the near future	soon
it will be necessary to	when you must

20

Preparing Formal Written Reports

In the formal reporting period ensure that you have:

- presented the comments in either paragraph or point form (Checklists may be useful for organizing or managing assessment and evaluation data, but they are inappropriate for formal reports);
- included information about what the child is able to do, areas requiring further attention or development, and ways to support the child in his or her learning;
- described growth and achievement in the areas of learning;
- addressed the core areas of reading, writing, and mathematics;
- addressed the standards of development or the standards of achievement in relation to the areas of learning;
- used clear concise, jargon-free language;
- been both constructive and honest;
- been specific;
- made it personal by including illustrative examples;
- indicated learning goals the student will focus on for the next term;
- referred to, where applicable, progress towards goals set in the previous term;
- indicated, where appropriate, ways that student and parent(s) can support the learning;
- referred to or included samples of the child's self-evaluation;
- kept the written report to about one page in length.