A comparative survey of grading systems in eight Atlanta public schools and problems of grade interpretation by school counselors

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A COMPARATIVE SURVEY OF GRADING SYSTEMS IN EIGHT ATLANTA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS AND PROBLEMS OF GRADE INTERPRETATION BY SCHOOL COUNSELORS

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY
WINSTON C. RYAN

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale.---One of the problems in any high school, whether admitted, recognized or unrecognized, squarely faced or procrastinated annually is that of establishing an effective grading system; one that best measures the progress of average to superior students while at the same time making an honest, accurate measurement of those students of less than average capabilities who may or may not be working up to capacity.

Some key problems that might be considered under this broad problem may include the following:

a. Does the school have an effective system of grading that has shown success in the minds of the majority of those concerned over a reliable period of time? There may be some schools that have no consistent system of grading; each teacher may grade his students according to his own methods, but do those methods correspond with the methods of the remainder of the staff? Or does every staff member know, follow, and respect an accepted grading system which in turn has worked for that school over a period of years?

b. Is the overall grading system understood and strictly adhered to by all members of the faculty? Many teachers are never really told the explicit facts about how the grading
system applies to all students. For instance, if a student fails mathematically by achieving an average below that which is passing for that school, is the policy known or accepted that if the student has shown effort, cooperation, and some degree of interest, that he should pass? Or should he be failed according to strict adherence to the rules thereby risking the possibility of squelching all future motivation in a student who tried his utmost but really lacked ability or some other unknown factor?

c. On what kind of scale are the various grading systems based? Are they letter grades like A through F or number grades such as 0.0 through 4.0? What do these letters and numbers mean? What is included in these grades -- tests only or tests plus class participation, deportment, attendance, written work, homework preparation, outside research and projects, popularity or even past performance in other courses or other faculty opinions about the fact that he or she is an "A" or a "D" student?

d. Another question of only slightly less importance would be concerned with the weighting of grades, and this problem becomes more serious in a school with a homogeneous grouping or a track system. Should grades be weighted for those students who take college preparatory courses in comparison to those students who achieve the same grade in courses less prestigious or which require less preparation? Or should everyone be regarded equally in the assignment of
grades thereby concealing the preparation and prestige factor while also encouraging more students to take "easier" courses for the benefit of grade rather than for a learning experience?

e. What is the definition of a particular grade in various schools or even within the same school? Is a "C" an average grade in a homogeneous college preparatory group of fifteen students while at the same time being the average grade for a homogeneous group of "unmotivated" general math students? This would be a particular problem in a school with unweighted grades. Is an "A" grade that is attainable by a class under one teacher and yet quite frequently unattained under another teacher due to one's own definition of grades? What other factors may have effects upon grading systems in Atlanta?

One of the bigger problems in American education, particularly in the past fifty years, has been the marking and evaluating of student achievement. R. L. Thorndike reflected this view back in 1912 when he wrote that human capacities and acts are subject to the following difficulties: (1) absence of imperfections of measurable units; (2) lack of constancy in the facts to be measured; and (3) the extreme complexity of the measurements to be made.

The problem of grading really evolved from the testing movement. Ever since the objective test was introduced by J. M. Rice as early as
1894, marking systems have become issues in educational controversies.1 The testing movement really came into its own following World War I. University groups were developing standardized tests, business concerns prepared a variety of qualification tests for their own use, diagnostic and survey tests began to be developed and marketed, objective tests were being more and more utilized by classroom teachers, and conferences were devoted to the subject of testing and measuring. However, the testing movement of the twenties was largely limited to standardized mental ability and achievement tests.2

The growth of progressive education in the 1930's and 1940's emphasized uniqueness of the individual, mental wholeness and the democratic classroom which led to criticisms of academic narrowness, competitive pressures and common standards of achievement for all pupils, implicit in many marking systems.3

Teachers, administrators and research workers became engaged in the task of evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs and started developing their own instruments as they sought to evaluate study skills, critical thinking, appreciation and interests.

The Eight-Year Study marked another turning point in the testing and evaluation movement. This project was carried on by high schools and colleges throughout the country from 1933 to the early 40's.


3Ebel, Measuring Educational Achievement, p. 397.
for the main purpose of experimenting with curricula made up completely by the high schools. If the graduates of these cooperating high schools achieved in college as effectively as the students from the traditional college-prescribed high school curricula, then more freedom and experimentation could be predicted for the future. In effect, the experiment worked in favor of the high school developed college preparation curricula showing that testing specialists had too long been concerned with the knowledge aspects of education and had placed too little emphasis on intangible outcomes. It also provided the laboratory for present-day specialists in evaluation to study the problem of evaluation in education first hand.

The Evaluation Staff of the Coordinating Committee of the Eight-Year Study and The commission of the Relation of School and College of the Progressive Education Association, in addition to devising tests for all kinds of new courses and units developed by the thirty cooperating schools, taught hundreds of teachers how to devise their own tests. It was believed that the effect of a unique unit of work, designed to bring about certain changes in students, should be measured by test specifically made for that situation. Therefore, teachers were assisted in workshops, at evaluation headquarters and in their own schools in techniques of test construction, in the use of instruments of evaluation and in the interpretation of results.¹

World War II saw the rise of aptitude and personality testing for developing specialists and for fitting the right people to the right job. This movement soon spread into the field of education, thereby laying the foundation for the evaluation movement. Specialists were given freedom to train millions of men and women for military service, thereby bringing about unlimited experimentation in aptitude, mental ability and situational tests, personality instruments, interest inventories, interviews and observation. The results were reported in books, monographs and periodicals which made and continues still to make an impact on education, psychology, personnel management and other areas where the process of evaluation is important.

The 1950's and 1960's have brought back renewed emphasis on basic education and the pursuit of academic excellence accompanied by pleas for more formal evaluations and more stringent academic standards. Gerberich, Greene and Jorgensen feel that:


Evolution of the Problem.—The problem of grading first became real to the writer while teaching in the classroom in an unaccredited school in January, 1965. The grading system was set down where in terms of averages equalling certain letter grades, there was no weight given to academic courses as opposed to other tracks of less difficulty. In addition, many teachers had opposing philosophies of grading. For example, some teachers believed that students in all classes and groupings should be eligible for grades running the A to F gamut; others believed that a C should be the highest grade awarded for a low-ability grouping.

Thus, when these opposing philosophies and the grades that accompanied them filtered into the guidance office, the counselor had to reinterpret all of these philosophies into a meaningful evaluation of the students for purposes of parent-teacher-administration consultation, placement and individual counseling. While these grades were not the only criteria on which the counselor had to depend, nevertheless the problem was no less real and no more resolved.

The counselor and administration within the year called upon a volunteer group made up on counselor, teachers and administration. Together, in a series of meetings, a new weighted system was worked out and has been put into effect this year.

This problem may not have been completely solved, but it at least was recognized as a common one to and by all of the faculty, and

a democratic attempt was made to resolve it.

If this problem as stated in the rationale and problem statement is, at least to some degree recognized, then how can the school counselor better interpret these grades and more easily equate grades from teacher to teacher in order to facilitate better his use of them for purposes of consultation, placement, and better understanding of the individual?

Is the counselor certain that the criteria of the grading system is well constructed, understood, respected and adhered by all concerned: (students, parents, teachers, administrators, pupil personnel services). If so, would it be unnecessary for the counselor to re-translate individual pupil grades from particular teachers in particular courses into what he, the counselor, thinks is meant in terms of achievement by that given grade; for if this is true, then the grading system is perfect and this is not possible; if this is not true, then the counselor is carrying a heavy burden of decision on his shoulders in many cases when he makes recommendations (or refuses to make recommendations) to job employers, college admissions officers, parents and any other people with a need to know what is on the transcript of high school students.

If the counselor makes or refuses recommendations on the basis of what is on a transcript, then he is in turn taking on his own shoulders a responsibility that could well determine the future of many students. Thus, the writer's point is that if a counselor is expected to carry such a heavy burden, then it is the duty and the responsibility of the classroom teacher to award grades to the best of his ability and
to equate them as closely as possible with the criteria set down by the grading system of that school. Thus, all teachers will be in accordance with a common system, and equating of grades from subject to subject will be relative. If the system itself is not accepted by a number of the teachers, then, the writer believes, the system should be altered to meet to the highest democratic degree the needs of all.

This is not to say that we must throw out transcripts if a grading system does not approach perfection. An "all A" transcript just does not lie. But my point is that neither does it tell the whole story of a child, his motivation, personality and potential. The child with "B" ability and "D" transcript in given courses must be detected along with reasons why. His future must not be limited on the basis of something he did not do, but could have done if other motivational factors had been in effect. There must be something more concrete in the grade that will give the counselor more to go on when looking at letters or numbers than just bare achievement. Through research in related literature and interviews with counselors, the writer has attempted to find some more concrete ideas and hypotheses that will squarely face this problem.

If the school counselor agrees with this proposition, then he could share in presenting teachers-in-service training concerning an improved marking system. A committee could be chosen from the staff in concert with the counselor to set up a grading system that is well constructed, understood, respected and adhered to by all concerned.
Contribution to Educational Knowledge.—The problem of equating grades into meaningful criteria for the counselor to use in pupil counseling, parent-teacher consultations, college and job placements is very important to the future of the pupil. A mistake on the part of the counselor in interpreting these grades could very well affect the future of many pupils. Though it is recognized that the counselor will continue to have less than all the answers to this problem, it can nevertheless be tempered by the use of an adequate grading system - a grading system which all teachers understand and follow as closely as possible common criteria which have been written down, interpreted to all by a recognized authority and accepted by its users.

This in turn will minimize the amount of reinterpretations the counselor will have to make, hence, on the number of costly mistakes that could effect a pupil's future.

The contribution this survey hopes to have made has been to determine how teachers award grades, in what criteria they base them, what changes they feel are necessary - and from this data the writer has hypothesized which factors contribute most and least to the effectiveness of grading system bases in Atlanta public high schools.

Secondly, this survey hopes to have determined through a questionnaire and interviews with counselors which problems in the area of equating of grades they acknowledged as of concern to them. With the aid of counselor suggestions as to what is working successfully for them in their schools, together with related literature, I have hypothesized which factors will contribute most to effective equating of
grades between teachers' philosophies and/or weighted grading systems on the part of the counselor in the Atlanta public schools.

Statement of the Problem.—The problem was first to determine the specific bases used by high school teachers for individual grades and grading systems; the criteria, determinants and philosophies behind grades and grading systems.

Limitations of the Study.—The limitations were (1) the reliability of the questionnaire and its answers; (2) the subjectivity of the interviews and responses and (3) the number of people included in the sample.

This survey could not possibly study the area of standardized testing by the counselor as a standard with which to compare the accuracy of teacher grades through its extreme importance was recognized.

The satisfactory-unsatisfactory or pass-fail systems were not considered in this thesis as the problem was meant to deal with grading systems as they exist in the Atlanta public schools and how they may be improved without completely eliminating them.

Also not considered were report cards or other reporting forms as the study was concerned with how grades are determined more so than the fashion in which they are reported.
The questionnaire was validated logically by administering it to a group of former teachers, presently student counselors, to classify any ambiguous wording or terminology. An outside criterion was not used though its importance was recognized.

**Purpose of the Study.**—The purposes of this study were two-fold. The writer was, on the one hand, interested in the grading systems of the eight Atlanta high schools, their make-up, effectiveness and acceptance. Secondly, the writer was interested in finding the counselor's role in the construction of the grading system, problems of interpreting teacher grades, and methods he was using in concert with teachers and administration to improve such a situation if it existed.

Some of the more specific ideas with which the writer was concerned were the following:

I. What are the specific bases for grading systems in the eight Atlanta high schools?

A. Do teachers have anything to do with the establishment of grading systems in the schools? How long has each system been in existence? Is the grading system specifically written down in understandable terms in some form of student or teacher handbook or is it merely verbally understood and therefore subject to varying interpretations and consequent equality?

B. Are all teachers formally orientated on exactly how to interpret and use the grading system? How? At what time? By whom?
C. What exactly are the criteria by which grades are determined? Tests, deportment, projects, class-participation and many others or primarily just a few criteria? Are these criteria specifically weighted according to some degree of importance?

D. Does each school have a track system or homogeneous groupings of some type or not? If so, how are grades equated among groupings? Are all grades in all groupings of equal value or are they weighted according to level of difficulty? How? If no groupings or tracks exist, what policy is used for grading and equating?

E. Is there common understanding and agreement about the criteria of grades within and among the schools? If so, do teachers adhere strictly to these criteria or do they take into consideration other factors such as halo effect, central tendency, personal bias or other external factors which might in turn alter these criteria?

F. How are these grades reported so that one can see to what degree of exactness these criteria can be judged - by percentages, letters corresponding to percentages, rating scales, continua, standard scores, or written letters?

G. Are honor rolls reported? Do they have any motivational value on the part of all levels of student ability? Is everyone given an equal chance at a common honor roll or is there a weighted scale to differentiate among course difficulty or track levels?

H. What do teachers themselves feel about the way in which they report grades? Do they feel any inadequacies in the established
grading system itself? Do they feel inadequacies about the criteria in which they determine their own grades? Do they have any theories about how to make improvements or do they just go along with the system?

I. What instruments do teachers feel help them best evaluate student achievement? Standardized tests, teacher-made tests, written papers and projects, class participation? To what comparative degrees of exactness do these instruments measure actual student achievement in the eyes of teachers?

J. What procedure is followed for the under-achieving student? Does he have to truly earn his grade in terms of course objectives or is he passed merely for effort if he cannot make the grade? Is there a difference in terms of diploma?

II. The grading problem is one that is very real to the counselor, for it is his job to interpret these grades exactly. If however, Miss J gives student A an "A" for English, Mr. B gives student A an "A" for French, and various other teachers give an assortment of other grades for this student, then a counselor may face the following situations:

A. The counselor must know the grading system of each teacher. An "A" from Miss J could mean superior performance on the part of the student while an "A" from Mr. B could mean the person did well on tests only.

B. If a counselor wants to move a student or several students from one grouping to another he must have an accurate picture of all aspects of the curriculum to which the student will be moved. This again will require teacher opinions and grades to determine
the feasibility of such a move.

C. If the student wants a recommendation to a certain college or for a certain job, here again the counselor must interpret not only the grades as they appear on the transcript but also the methods by which these grades were derived by the several or many teachers who compiled these grades.

III. Therefore, the counselor must continue to ask himself:

A. What is a grade? What makes up a particular grade? What set of standards was used by the teacher and the school to determine just what data go into the grade?

B. Who is the teacher? What does the grade he gives to a student tell me about the over-all performance of that student?

C. What kind of course yields a particular grade to a given student? How much preparation does such a course require?

Here, the teacher role is basic for he is most responsible for the content, motivation and success as measured by grades.

Locale of the Study.—This study was conducted in eight Atlanta public high schools. These schools were determined by administrative choice and permission, and teacher-counselor cooperation in responses to the teacher questionnaires and the counselor questionnaire-interviews solicited.

Research Design.—The research was conducted through the use of questionnaires for teachers and counselors. The questionnaires were clarified by administering them to a group of student counselors, all
of whom were former teachers. Any questions that individuals of the group were not able to answer because of ambiguity in construction or language were appropriately changed.

After receiving approval from the Atlanta Public Schools, questionnaires were passed out randomly to ten teachers at faculty meetings in each of the eight schools receiving the survey. The writer first explained the nature of the study and then asked for ten volunteers who would be interested in participating in such a study. One school had twelve volunteers, hence the resulting total of eighty-two teacher questionnaires.

Separate counselor questionnaires were also passed out to the counselors by each school at their respective faculty meetings. Orientation to the questionnaire was given by a short brochure containing the thesis outline rationale, problem statement and purpose of the study.

Of the eighty-two questionnaires disseminated to teachers, seventy-nine were returned for a ninety-six per cent return. The results were tabulated on a per cent basis and plotted in Table form.

Of the eight counselor questionnaires disseminated, all eight were returned for a 100 per cent return. All questions that needed tables for more clear explanation of the data were constructed in Table form.

**Survey of Related Literature.**—An objective viewpoint is attempted.

The writer, in attempting to discuss what recent studies have been made to determine whether teacher grading criteria really does
differ considerably within the same school and among a variety of others, has found new specific studies relating to this problem. However, all available evidence, reveals that this is true in the many schools studied to this date.

In a nation-wide study over thirty years ago, Wrinkle, in trying to determine whether a "B" in one school meant the same as a "B" in another school concluded that after ten years of study, the answer was a definite "no".¹

In the most recent nation-wide study of 129 schools conducted by Terwilliger in 1963, he explored two of the major sources of variability in the employment of marks: (1) school policies affecting the assignment of and use of marks and (2) practices used by individual teachers in marking students. His basic question was "what generality, if any, is there in the meaning of school marks?" His findings as mentioned later, show considerable variations in teacher grading criteria within and among the schools studied.²

In one study done at Atlanta University comparing achievement as measured by teachers marks with standardized test scores, Barksdale found no significant differences between achievement test-scores and teacher-marks in Arithmetic, Algebra I, Algebra II and Plane Geometry.³


His related literature concerning the unreliability of teachers' marks included:

1. H. H. Bixler - that there is a general dissatisfaction with the present marking system but little agreement as to the direction in which to go.

2. Clarence Lovejoy - that some high schools have two grades - one which is passing and as low as 60 or 65, and another for the purpose of a recommendation to college and which may be as high as 80.

3. Ray O. Billet - that male teachers favor boys and female teachers favor girls in awarding grades.

4. C. C. Ross - that yesterday and today marks are often conditioned more by facial contours than by head contents.¹

In a similar Atlanta University study, Lester sought to determine to what degree the test-scores earned by and the teachers marks assigned to a group of twelfth graders are true measures of school achievement. His findings included:

1. That there were no significant differences between achievement test scores in English and mathematics and no significant differences between teachers marks in English and mathematics, and no significant differences between teachers marks in English, mathematics, science and social studies.

2. That there was a significant difference between the statistical relationships of teachers marks though there were no significant differences found to exist between the sta-

Lester's related literature on the unreliability of teachers marks include the following:

1. Gray and others - that school marks are highly subjective and hence, inaccurate.

2. Green and Jorgensen - that teacher marks vary not only from teacher to teacher, but also that the same teachers marks would vary from time to time and from subject to subject.

3. Thomas - that marks should be valid, truly representative of quantities and qualities of pupils' achievements. Reliability (the ability to measure whatever they (marks) actually do measure), must be unquestioned.

4. Carter - that marks assigned by teachers will influence future student careers; thus, the need for reliable teacher marks.

5. Remmers and Gage - that psychological factors, such as fatigue, affect the ability to distinguish between closely allied degrees of merit.

6. Edmondson, Roemer and Bacon - that the lack of uniformity contributes largely to the variability and inaccuracy of

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\(^1\) Burney G. Lester, "A Comparison of Achievement As Measured by Teachers Marks' and Standardized Test Scores for Twelfth Graders" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, School of Education, Atlanta University, 1967), p. 75.
teachers marks.¹

A most important state-wide study of pupil marking policy was conducted in California by Thomas in 1965. Among his findings were: (1) a wide variety of format and content in existing marking policy in California high schools and (2) little attention or interest in pupil marking policy has been shown by state departments of education of the fifty states.¹

The writer has been unable to find any studies relating to problems school counselors have had in interpreting teacher grades within a given school or school system.

The writer will define first the stand taken in this paper on two basic, introductory questions: what is evaluation, and what should be evaluated?

Schwartz and Tiedeman define evaluation as a process of making judgments and decisions about the value of an experience. The process consists of two elements: (1) a goal or objective for the experience to be evaluated must be set, and (2) some measure of amount, status or progress must be made—they go on to say that:

Measurements must be seen in terms of human values and goals. Evaluation, focused upon philosophically and psychologically sound objectives, and based upon the best measurements that can be secured is a key to securing effectiveness in the total educative process. . . .

Evaluation based upon the whim, and fashions of the moment has no place in education . . . . there is no one method or technique of evaluation that is best for measuring the wide variety of objectives found in the usual school program and

choice of technique depends almost entirely on the kind of objective to be measured.¹

What should be evaluated? Bradfield and Moredock have constructed a list of characteristics for which measurement may be desired in Table 1 in the Appendix.² Schwartz and Tiedeman have outlined a five-category chart in Table 2 in the Appendix that takes into consideration not only outward behavior, but also personal and environmental factors which influence behavior and learning. They say, finally, that teachers should not separate the teaching and studying of their students, for to attempt to teach a child without knowing him is to merely teach the subject or book rather than the child itself. However, to know the child and not to use this information is to be wasteful of the school's resources and the students' potentialities.³

The three main questions the writer will cover in the related literature are the following: (1) What factors go into developing an overall grading system? (2) What are the common negative aspects of grading systems as they exist today? (3) What improvements can be made in grading systems in order to make for easier, more accurate and more consistent interpretations on the part of the school counselor?

I. What Factors Go Into Developing An Overall Grading System?

Travers says that establishing a grading system has been a problem in every educational institution. Any group of thoughtful

¹Schwartz and Tiedeman, Evaluating Student Progress, pp. 1-3.
³Schwartz and Tiedeman, Evaluating Student Progress, p. 18.
teachers will agree that no system of grading now in use is fully satisfactory. Thus, in introducing into any school a system of assigning and recording grades, it is necessary to weigh advantages against disadvantages of such a proposal.¹

Schwartz identifies three functions of a grading system:

1. To determine the present status of the student.
2. To identify factors which are responsible for and influence the individual's growth and development.
3. To determine the individual's potentialities for future growth and development.²

Wrinkle has identified six basic criteria that should be used in the evaluation of objectives set up for teaching. Is the objective (1) understandable, (2) stated as a behavior, (3) based upon needs of the learner, (4) socially desirable, (5) achievable, (6) measurable?

Wrinkle also identifies fourteen criteria for evaluating marking and reporting:

1. Have the objectives of the educational program been identified?
2. Are the objectives clearly stated?
3. Are the objectives sufficiently analyzed so that they have specific meaning?
4. Are the objectives understood, accepted and recognized as important by students, teachers and parents?
5. Are the different objectives evaluated and reported separately?
6. Are the different forms provided to serve different purposes?


7. Are the different bases for evaluation utilized which are appropriate to the purposes involved?

8. Can the teacher evaluate the achievement and growth of the student with respect to the objectives which have been set up?

9. Can reports be prepared with reasonable expenditure of time and effort?

10. Do the evaluative procedures make provision for student self-evaluation?

11. Is provision made for the reporting of evidence and comments relative to evaluations?

12. Are the forms so constructed as to facilitate recording?

13. Can evaluations be easily translated into other symbols if they have to be stated in terms of other systems of marking?

14. Do the forms and practices serve the various functions which they are designed to serve? Do they stimulate interest in improvement, facilitate guidance, provide a basis for college entrance examinations and so forth?¹

In a doctoral thesis related to pupil marking policies in the public schools of California, Thomas made nine findings:

1. The increased pressure of college admissions has added interest to the problems of pupil marking.

2. Teacher marks should be periodically perused to insure reasonableness and uniformity.

3. There is a wide variety of format and content to marking policy in California high schools.

4. Strong opinion favors the development of marking policy in committees by administrators and teachers.

5. Little difference has been found in the use or effectiveness of board adopted policy as opposed to written regulations.

6. The departmental structure headed by a chairman has been used effectively in the development of policy and in helping teachers conform to marking policy.

7. The method most commonly used to communicate school marking policy has been faculty handbooks, faculty meetings and department meetings.

8. Little agreement has been noted relative to parts that achievement and ability play in deciding final marks.

9. Little attention or interest in pupil marking policy has been shown by the state departments of education of the fifty states.\footnote{Thomas, Pupil Making, pp. 396-441.}

Ebel has developed nine ideas particularly pertinent to this topic:

1. Marking systems are frequently controversial because the process is difficult, educational philosophies call for different marking systems, and because the task is sometimes disagreeable.

2. The measurement of pupil achievement is essential, and no better means than marks seem likely to appear.

3. Marks must be sound and dependable to effectively serve their purposes of stimulating, directing and rewarding student efforts to learn.

4. It is favorable to encourage student attainment of high marks if the marks are sound, dependable measures of achievement.

5. Poor marking practices are frequently attributable to ambiguous meanings for marks and to lack of sufficient, dependable evidence as a basis for assigning marks.

6. Marking criteria and standards often vary from instructor to instructor and from institution to institution.

7. Girls usually get higher grades than boys of equal ability and achievement.

8. Marks tend to lose their meaning if the school lacks a clear-
ly defined marking system or if it does not require instructors to mark in conformity with the system.

9. The majority of educational institutions in the United States make use of relative marking systems (A, B, C, D, F), thereby replacing presumably absolute marks which make use of percents.¹

What does it matter that marking policies vary widely, even within the same schools? Terwilliger identifies the following three reasons:

1. Marks and rank should be a common language among schools. We should be able to trust that an A is really an A regardless of school.

2. Every year thousands of students fail in higher education. A substantial percentage of these failures are attributable to faculty selection such as screening devices and inaccurate selection procedures and the many varying practices of marking and ranking. Every failure is a loss to society and every student who failed held the place of a girl or boy who may have succeeded.

3. The nation’s secondary schools are largely responsible for these unnecessary heartbreaks and the unnecessary losses to society.²

Concluding this topic is a fitting quotation by DePue:

With all of the doctoring of our system of testing and marking that we have had to do to get reasonable acceptable results out of it, the increasing importance of accurate measurement in all fields of education demands that common sense simplification and overall intelligent synthesis be used in rebuilding it to make it work better.³

Focusing on the main component of any grading system is the grade itself. What are the functions of grades? What are the most com-

¹Ebel, Measuring Educational Achievement, pp. 396-441.


mon types of grades? What are the criteria or determinants of teacher grades?

Wrinkle classifies grade functions into four categories:

1. Administrative -- marks indicate student passing or failure, promotion or retention or whether he should be graduated; they are also used in transferring students between schools, for the purposes of college admission, and by employers in evaluating prospective employees.

2. Guidance -- marks identify areas of special ability and inability for purposes of course enrollment or exclusion and in determining the number of courses in which a student may be enrolled.

3. Information -- marks inform students and parents regarding the students achievement, progress, and success of failure in his schoolwork.

4. Motivation and Discipline -- marks are used to stimulate students toward greater learning effort, for determining eligibility honors such as participation in school activities, athletic teams, extra-curricular club membership and awarding of scholarships.¹

Thorndike found four functions very similar to those of Wrinkle:

1. To help guide the student and parents in future educational plans.

2. To help the school decide on pupil readiness for programs, courses, etcetera.

3. To help higher educational levels to appraise an applicant's acceptability for the program they present.

4. To help prospective employers to decide upon the suitability of a student for job placement requiring academic skills.²

Travers adds that grades must be presented and recorded in as understandable form as possible to the user. The main problem is to

¹Gilchrist, Dutton and Wrinkle, Secondary Education, p. 372.

transform test scores and other forms of achievement into a form which will be easily understood by those concerned about pupil progress.¹

The next logical question that would follow is concerned with the types of grades in use that should lead to this common understanding. The five types of grades most commonly in use today are: (1) letter grades (A, B, C, D, F), (2) number grades per cents, 1.0 - 4.0, (3) multiple grades, (4) rating scales and continua, and (5) written reports.

Letter grades and number grades are the most common types, and multiple grades are combinations of straight achievement results and additional grades for less measurable non-academic evaluations; for example, one grade for history achievement on tests, quizzes and reports, and a separate grade for effort, citizenship of class participation. Rating scales and continua are shown in Tables 3, 4, and 5 in the appendix. Written reports are in the form of letters sent home to parents explaining the general progress or lack of progress the student has made for the marking period. More attention will be given to this topic in Section III of the related literature.

The basis for any type of grade would be the criteria or determinants that make up that grade.

Smith and Adams found that marks are usually assigned on the basis of one or more of the following considerations:

1. Performance of each student in relation to that of the rest of the class (relative marking and grading on the curve).

2. Performance of each student in relation to his capacity

¹Travers, Educational Measurement, p. 196.
perform (growth grading).

3. Performance of each student in relation to a predetermined standard of performance (absolute marking and status of achievement grading).\(^1\)

Findings by Ebel in reference to the above three considerations indicate:

1. It is extremely difficult to determine per cent marks so that they really express absolute levels of achievement.

2. Evidence of the unsoundness of per cent marks obtained by Starch and Elliot early in this century was largely responsible for the shift toward letter marking.

3. Relative marking is as likely as absolute marking to stimulate student effort to achieve.\(^2\)

Smith and Adams summarized the following:

1. Curve grading is more easily interpreted than growth and absolute grading, more easily understood by parents, and measures relative comparison within a group. It also tends toward predetermining grades in advance of measurement though a normal curve cannot be assumed in a group of thirty of less.

2. Growth grading encourages the weak student by positively reinforcing his efforts and it helps prevent loafing on the part of strong students. However, achievement is based on gains which works to the advantage of the lower level student.

3. Percentage or absolute grading presumes a degree of absoluteness that is just not present in educational measurement.\(^3\)

Thorndike asks further questions about the criteria of grades:

1. Is it restricted to the level the student has reached in predetermined outcomes?

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2. Should consideration be given to such factors as student potentialities, attitude, effort, improvement and other skills developed outside of a given course?

His findings relative to the above were:

(1) Define objectives and translate these into behaviors that can be tested. (2) Decide on the relative emphasis to be given to each behavior. (3) Test and measure these behaviors.¹

Terwilliger's survey favored two sets of grading criteria within the school -- (1) achievement with respect to ability in art, music and physical education and (2) achievement with respect to other students in academic subjects.

On the matter of grading non-academic classroom factors such as class behavior, effort, absence and tardiness, Terwilliger found that:

1. An introduction of a standard set of separate character and work habit ratings were favored.

2. Fifty-seven per cent of the subjects of his survey now use these, but forty-three per cent incorporate them with their matter grades.²

II. What Are The Common Negative Aspects Of Grading Systems As They Exist Today?

Travers points out that grades must be presented and recorded into a form which will tell someone else what he needs to know about the progress of a pupil. School counselors and the other pupil personnel service workers are expected to have considerable ability to interpret grades which present pupil information in a technical form.²

¹Smith and Adams, Educational Measurement, p. 196.
²Terwilliger, Secondary School Marking, p. 331
³Travers, Educational Measurement, p. 196.
However, there are many external problems involved in these present and of the two main purposes for writing this paper.

Schwartz gives three arguments why marks are unfavorable to the guidance function in the school:

1. School marks based on the traditional essay examination are too inexact to satisfy the criteria for individual guidance.

2. Marks are of limited guidance value as they are only general statements involving many unanalyzed variables.

3. Marks caused students to compare themselves with each other which leads to unwholesome competition in which the less able students are predestined to lose; this leads them toward frustration and inner rebellion.¹

Gilchrist, Dutton and Wrinkle list six grading fallacies in question form:

1. Can anyone tell what a mark means if it represents the average of the student's achievement?

2. Can any student achieve any mark he wishes by regulating the amount of effort he puts forth?

3. Does the success of the student in later life correspond to his success as indicated by school marks?

4. Should school marks be thought of as wages or paychecks?

5. Does the competitiveness of adult life justify the emphasis given to the competition in school?

6. Can something used as a means over a long period of time not be recognized as an end or value in itself?²

The following factors will be considered as the most common negative aspects of grading systems:

¹Schwartz and Tiedeman, Evaluating Student Progress, p. 391.

1. The ambiguity and inexactness of the criteria to be measured.

2. Disadvantages of the various types of grades.

3. Faults of methods and instruments used to obtain grades.

4. Human errors and limitations; lack of clear-cut objectives.

5. Lack of communication, uniformity and adherence to grading systems within and among schools.

6. Weaknesses in grading systems as related to school policy.

The ambiguity and inexactness of criteria will be described by the examples given in the Graphic Rating Scale in Table 3, the Sioux Falls Rating Scale in Table 4, and the Minnesota Scale of Rating in Table 5 in the appendix.

Froelich summarizes four of the main reasons why rating scales have not experienced a wide degree of usage.

1. They are sometimes prime sources of teacher bias prejudicial to the student.

2. They are often viewed as lacking in preciseness of measurement.

3. They require a school-wide program of acceptance to be of maximum significance in understanding students.

4. An in-service program of education for teachers is needed in the meaningful collection, use and interpretation of observations.¹

The disadvantages of the various types of grades is one of the more obvious and critical problems in grade assignments. As defined by Smith and Adams earlier the three basic methods of grading which we will mention are: (1) relative grading, (2) growth grading, and (3) absolute grading.

Under relative grading (marks that indicate a student's achievement relative to that of his peers), Wrinkle says the number one fallacy is that anyone can tell from a single grade the student's level of achievement and the progress he has made. He adds that no one can be sure what a single grade means unless it represents the measurement of one identified value.¹

Smith and Adams point out that curve grading (1) can place the control of the quality of work done in the hands of the class. (2) The better students are subject to pressure toward setting the curve low. (3) The weak student always has to receive a D or F in order to keep the curve normal.²

Another excellent argument against curve grading is presented by Frensch. He argues that in many of our school systems today we have homogeneous ability groupings and smaller pupil-teacher ratios. Neither situation is really applicable to a bell curve since the latter is based on the law of chance which applies to large numbers of heterogeneous or chance selection.³

The problem confronted in growth grading as pointed out by Travers is that "too often a combination of both systems (status and growth) is used within a single school which renders records uninterpretable".⁴

¹Wrinkle, Improving Marking, p. 36.
²Smith and Adams, Educational Measurement, pp. 196-197.
⁴Travers, Educational Measurement, p. 205.
Thus, a grade of A assigned to a given student in a given course may mislead the counselor if it is taken to indicate substantial progress even if the final level of proficiency was only mediocre. Should a student raising his proficiency level from 20-40 achieve the same grade as a person increasing his from 70-90? Which of the two had to work harder to achieve his twenty point increase?\(^1\)

Other disadvantages are pointed out by Smith and Adams:

1. The student may be misled into believing he is finally sufficiently prepared for advanced work when he in reality is not.

2. A transcript of such a student in the hands of a counselor, admissions officer or teacher could be misleading.

3. Student capacity is difficult to measure. Subject aversion could cause poor scores on tests, but measured capacity can change as the child grows and changes.\(^2\)

Absolute or per cent grading as quoted by Travers is "the commonest and least interpretable type of grade founded on a vague tradition".\(^3\) In order to assign such grades it is usually necessary to know something about the grading practices of the person who assigned them, and such information is frequently unavailable.\(^4\)

Two other disadvantages pointed out by Smith and Adams are:

1. Perfect scores on tests do not mean the objectives of the course have been met one hundred per cent nor do zeros indicate no learning.

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 205.


\(^3\)Travers, *Educational Measurement*, p. 196.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 196.
2. The difficulty of the test is determined by the teacher. By so doing he can almost set the standards for grades for his class.

a) He can grade hard or easy.

b) He can make the next test more or less difficult in order to make grades come out right.¹

In discussing the topic of rating instruments and their faults, Thorndike touches on the crux of the problem:

1. Selection of raters - "Raters cannot give information they do not have and cannot be made to give information they do not wish to give."²

2. Selection of qualities to be rated - A score on a standardized intelligence test is a better indicator of intellectual ability than a supervisor's rating of intellect.

a) A standard must be formed against which to appraise a given rater. What is good? With whom is the individual being compared?

b) Unsatisfactory trait names like citizenship, adjustment, and effort are interpreted in different ways by different teachers.³

Lange says that what is wrong with grading today is:

1. Tests are not testing what students must learn but rather what is nice to learn. Fringe learnings make up the bulk of many tests.

2. Grading and student comparisons form too much of the basis for parent-teacher consultations.

3. Too much teacher time is spent in pseudo-testing rather than on instruction and curriculum improvement.⁴


³Ibid., pp. 374-75.

Drews adds more content to this problem with the following argument:

1. Testing should not be the only method of evaluating intellectual achievement, for this is external.

2. Self-evaluation of the learner is internal and more likely to be helpful than testing alone.
   a) Achievement tests measure only a small part of what is taught in school.
   b) The grade level test is not adequate for all children in a given grade.
   c) Tests indicate certain basic achievements but they do not help educators discover a pupil's higher level tasks - integrative, critical and creative thinking.
   d) A single test is not usually adequate for an entire grade. Children at the top and bottom are penalized by inadequate ceilings and floors.  

Thorndike adds that course quizzes and examinations test only immediate mastery. They do not appraise lasting retention, and they do not always evaluate "large concepts of integration of parts within the total framework of the field." Heavy weighting of one terminal examination can be negated by a bad day or nervousness; therefore, when and how the individual achieved his competence is deemed of no importance.  

Human errors and limitations are certainly ones that can never completely overcome. Since imperfect humans must assign imperfect grades

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1 Elizabeth Drews, "Evaluation of Achievement", The Instructor, Volume LXXV (April, 1966), pp. 20 and 52.
2 Thorndike, Measurement, p. 507.
3 Ibid., pp. 505-06.
4 Ibid., p. 361.
based on imperfect criteria to other imperfect humans, then one can perceive the unending dilemma of grading in the future.

Thorndike points out that "the experiences of life have built in us an assortment of likes and dislikes, qualities of individualized interpretations and characteristics about people - these biases help to form impressions and color all aspects of our reactions to a person."\(^1\)

The biases lead to several weaknesses:

1. The generosity error -- The rater idiosyncracy that assumes that one person is as good as another if not better. This raises the mid-point of a set of ratings giving the majority of a group above average ratings.

2. The halo error -- The tendency to rate in terms of an overall general impression without differentiating specific aspects; he allows his total reaction to a person to color his judgment of each specific trait.\(^2\)

3. Personal bias -- This results when an observer rates all individuals too high or too low.

4. Logical error -- This can result when the teacher misinterprets the criteria or the characteristic to be rated.

5. Errors of central tendency -- When a rater assigns most of his ratings at or near the midpoint of the scale, rarely grading to either extreme of the scale.\(^3\)

Other human weaknesses would become evident in evaluating competence by listening in class discussion, evaluating by observation as in laboratory or workshop activities, and evaluating by visual perusal of the rankbook.


Hadley adds, "Few teachers mark as well as they could or should. Most teacher marks are partly fact and partly fancy."¹

Palmer concludes, "The more confident a teacher is that he is doing a good job of marking, the less likely he is to be aware of the difficulties of marking, the fallibility of his judgments and the personal biases he may be reflecting in his marks."²

A closely related problem is lack of communication, uniformity and adherence to grading systems within and between schools.

Thorndike explains that the interpretation of grades between instructors is quite ill-defined:

1. Rater differences -- one man's "outstanding" is another man's "satisfactory". There is a tremendous variance in the number of A, B, and C grades given out by teachers. Interpretations of numbers, letters or adjectives are subject to wide interpretations.

2. Rater spread -- Some raters are conservative (few A's or F's). Others go the extremes, thereby reducing the comparability of ratings from one rater to another. Some follow formulas such as five per cent A's, twenty-five per cent B's and so on, but vary on these formulas within the school.³

Lack of communication at the administrative level was further evident in a study by Morris:

1. Principals are most often involved in computing class rank, but (a) not all were computed by machine, (b) not all were based on grades 9-12, and (c) no universal concept of sen-

¹Ebel, Measuring Educational Achievement, p. 398.

²Ibid., p. 399.

³Thorndike, Measurement, pp. 360-61.
ior rank in class for admissions purposes is evident.¹

Ebel concludes this section with the point that educational doctrines shift from one philosophy to another and as a result:

1. Some educational leaders promote different philosophies.
2. Some teachers accept varying points of view.
3. Since different philosophies promote different marking systems it is not surprising that differences of opinion, dissatisfaction and proposals for change characterize today's schools.²

III. What Improvements Can Be Made In Grading Systems In Order To Make for Easier, More Accurate and More Consistent Interpretations on the Part of the School Counselor?

Gerberich, Green and Jorgensen agree that:

the teacher must know intimately the characteristics of his pupils if he is to teach them effectively. He must know his instructional goals and purposes if he is to work realistically toward their attainment. He must know the degree to which he has succeeded in bringing about desired changes in his pupils.³

What, then, are some of the suggested methods, policies and criteria with which to carry out these purposes? In the following pages authoritative suggestions will be listed under these headings:

1. Classify and systematize the criteria of teacher grades.
2. Improve and systematize the grading methods of teachers.

²Ebel, Measuring Educational Achievement, p. 398.
3. Clarify school marking policy at the administrative level.

4. Provide in-service training for teachers.

5. Recognize limitations of improvements in any marking system.

Schwartz says that:

marks reach their greatest value when they are supported by objective data, and when they provide information concerning specific strengths and weaknesses of students.¹

Thorndike says that to serve best its purpose, a grade must be as "pure and unbiased a measure of competence in the field as can be obtained."²

He adds that external factors like class contributions and behavior may be matters of concern in a subject, but their effects should be defined and weighted as such at the beginning of the course.³

Froelich and Hoyt classify two basic types of external factors into (1) observer-evaluation exemplified by the rating scale and (2) observer-description which is characterized by the anecdotal record.

The value of the rating scale lies in the meaningfulness of the characteristics being rated and the truthfulness of teacher judgments concerning the degree to which each characteristic is associated with the student being rated. To be most productive a rating scale must:

1. Have each characteristic clearly defined.

2. Have each characteristic readily observable.

3. Have degrees of each characteristic to be defined.

¹Schwartz and Tiedeman, Evaluating Student Progress, p. 392.

²Thorndike, Measurement, p. 504.

³Ibid.
Suggestions for correcting for human errors that are often connected with rating scales are:

1. Personal bias — This error can be minimized when using numbers by changing raw scores to standard scores such as described by Travers in Table 6.

2. Errors of Central Tendency — This error is difficult to correct because the origin lies deep in the rater's own personality. He may not be aware of the wide variation in human characteristics, so little prospect of improving his rating is possible without first correcting this basic discrepancy.

3. Halo effect — If a rater rates all individuals on the first characteristic before rating on the second one, a rating scale can be used with adequate clerical help.

4. Logical error — This can be largely overcome by sharpening the definition of each characteristic, (see Sioux Falls Rating Scale in Table 5 in the appendix), and by providing the opportunity for raters to discuss and agree on the nature of each characteristic.

For the use and interpretation of anecdotal records to be meaningful, the collection of each should be viewed in relationship to everything else known about the student. To construct and use effectively anecdotal records, one should:

1. Keep clearly separated the description of the incident, the interpretation of the incident, and the recommendations for action.

2. In reporting the incident, focus attention on the student and others around him rather than on the situation in which these actions took place.

3. Try to limit the behavioral description to a single incident, keeping it short without eliminating details.

4. Be objective rather than subjective in interpreting the incident.
5. Do not recommend a treatment more specific than is your knowledge and understanding of the student.¹

Thorndike adds that any list of specific behaviors would be most effective when:

1. Judgments are in very simple terms and
2. Provisions for organizing and summarizing specific judgments into one or more broad area scores are made.²

Schwartz has constructed a list of suggested criteria for defining letter grades.

The grade of A means:

1. The objectives of the course are achieved.
2. The instructor has no reservations about the student's achievement level.
3. The student is prepared for high quality advanced work in the subject.
4. The student is highly capable of practical application in the subject where applicable.

The grade of B means:

1. The objectives of the course are achieved.
2. The instructor has minor reservations about the student's achievement level.
3. The student is prepared for above average advanced work in the subject.
4. The student is capable of competent application of the subject where applicable.

The grade of C means:

1. The objectives of the course are minimally achieved where the instructor regards minimum preparation for advanced work in the subject. And/or

¹Froelich and Hyot, Guidance Testing, pp. 239-54.
²Thorndike, Measurement, p. 366.
2. The student has average ability to apply his learning to practical situations where it should be applied.

The grade of D means:

1. The objectives of the course are achieved at a submarginal level as preparation for advanced work in the subject. And/or -
2. The student has low ability to apply his learning in practical situations and little learning to apply the subject where it should be applied.

The grade of F means:

1. The objectives of the course are not achieved at a level which the instructor regards as minimum preparation for advanced work in the field; the student should repeat the course if he plans to take further work. And/or -
2. The student has not shown significant learning for practical application of the subject. Or -
3. The student has failed to complete the course without pre-arrangement. Or -
4. The student withdrew from the course after the final deadline date.¹

Ebel has made a list of thirteen findings which are pertinent and applicable to the improvement of grading criteria and practices.

1. Some marking problems can be simplified by regarding a mark as a measurement rather than as an evaluation.
2. Marks should ordinarily be based exclusively on achievement and should not attempt to indicate attitude, effort or deportment.
3. Marks measuring status tend to be more reliable, more meaningful and educationally more constructive than marks measuring growth.
4. The discouraging effect of consistently low marks can be lessened by providing students with more opportunities to excel than by basic marks on growth.

¹Schwartz and Tiedeman, Evaluating Student Progress, pp. 393-94.
5. The use of multiple marks can improve marking, but may necessitate more effort than the improvement is worth.

6. The more marks available in a system to indicate the various levels of achievement, the more reliable the marks will be, but the less convenient the system may be to use.

7. A return to numerical marks would emphasize their use as measurements and would simplify calculating grade-point averages.

8. The publication of distributions of marks, course by course, is essential to the quality control of the marking system.

9. Relative marking that divides the score scale into equal intervals is an alternative to strict marking on the curve.

10. The system of relative marking that provides for different distributions of marks in homogeneous groupings is possible.

11. Generally, the numerical basis for assigning marks should include such diverse components as class contributions, homework, projects and test scores.

12. The weight carried by each component depends on the variability of component scores.

13. The precise weighting of components on a numerical basis is not crucial to the quality of marks assigned.

Terwilliger, on assigning the relative importance of homework, quizzes, tests, classroom performance and projects, says:

there should be a general set of guidelines which will assist the teacher in a given subject area to plan the evaluation of students so that the skills represented are generally the same as those of the students with other teachers.2

Schwartz lists three over-appraised activities - (1) academic (subject matter) achievement, (2) physical skills, and (3) mental capacity - and five neglected factors - (1) attitudes and opinions, (2) cri-

1Ebel, Measuring Educational Achievement, pp. 396-441.

tical thinking ability, (3) mental health, (4) work and study habits and (5) social skills and group relationships.

He emphasizes that:

It is difficult enough to measure tangibles but there is nothing available for measuring the intangibles of education that are equally important. The key to the measurement of intangibles is to be found in the clear definition of purposes. As we learn to translate goals in terms of expected student behaviors, we can also learn how to measure those behaviors. The history of the measurement movement is a history of how intangibles were made tangible and how yesterday's impossible problems became today's routine practices.¹

Under the improvement and systematizing of grading methods, Click originated a unique example. (See Table 6 in appendix)

This method would utilize a point system with a predetermined number of points for all grading criteria to be used. This system is based on the philosophy that:

1. Marks should provide learning incentive rather than a learning goal.
2. Every activity that indicates ability and application should be part of that mark.
3. Marking should be simplified and time saving.
4. An objective system should include some subjectivity.

Positive effects.

1. Every activity is a means of accruing points dependent upon achievement and industry.
2. All activities are recorded as numbers in themselves and are not weighed in terms of test importance.
3. It encourages independence of effort. Competitiveness can make a difference of a few points a decisive factor.
4. It encourages continuous effort for it removes the feeling that one bad mark or one good mark can make or break one's

¹Schwartz and Tiedeman, Evaluating Student Progress, p. 20.
average for the semester. Each student gets exactly what he earns, clearly differentiating achievement.

5. It encourages consistent homework completion, for a loss of points can result from this neglect.

6. It increases rapport between student and teacher. The knowledge that the score will be converted into a letter grade objectively determined, insures the student of the appropriate grade on his report card.

Advantages.

1. It is no longer necessary to compute percentages and/or scale separate tests, thus saving teachers considerable time.

2. It permits the teacher to see the difficulty of a test so that he would eliminate ambiguously worded questions.

3. It indicates the achievement level of homogeneously grouped classes while permitting the superior child in an average or below average class to receive a grade commensurate with his ability.

Procedure for grading.

1. Total each student's points (by adding machine preferably).

2. Record the raw scores listing every score (even repeated ones) in rank order from highest to lowest.

3. Subtract all negative points determined by late or missing homework assignments, etcetera.

4. Find the middle score of the distribution.

5. Look for breaks in the sequence and determine a scale.

Disadvantages.

1. An estimation of the exact mark a student has earned before a marking period ends (for warning purposes) is difficult, for one must add all of the total points of each student and go through the grading procedure above.

Lindsley developed a system based on grading intermittently. Since psychologists discovered that children and adults, like dogs, make more responses when they are rewarded (reinforced) infrequently rather than frequently, he figured that grading could be based on such a premise. Thus, if only a small portion of the papers each student turned in each semester were graded by the teacher, the conditions of intermittent reinforcement would be met.

**Philosophy.**

If a student is to work on all papers with equal effort and quality, then perhaps he should not know for sure which of these papers will be graded.

**Procedure.**

1. Describe the method to the class, its advantages, disadvantages, justification and history.

2. Assign papers for students to write and decide on their weight in relation to the final grade.

3. Write each student's name on a raffle card or chip.

4. Conduct a weekly raffle to select those names for whom paper grades will be assigned. Announce the names to the class. These papers should be graded that week, but they should not be allowed to know the grade they were given. Do not place the drawn chips back into the box.

5. The teacher should give weekly feedback on the general content covered by the papers.

6. Continue the weekly drawings and repeat steps 4 and 5. Keep all papers turned in, both graded and ungraded. On the next to the last week, write the numbers of the weeks on raffle cards (1 - 14) and have each student whose name has not yet been drawn draw two chips. The numbers will represent the two respective week’s papers that will be graded for those students. All other students will draw until they get a number of a week in which their paper was not graded. This would constitute the latter's second grade and each person would then have two of his fourteen papers graded.
7. If a student misses a week, withdraw his name till the end of the semester drawing mentioned in step 6 to insure that no paper is turned in without a chance of being graded.

8. After the final drawing and grading, hand back all the papers for the semester (these papers should have represented summaries of each week's work), and make them the basis for a final exam.

Advantages.

1. Intermittent grading removes the unnecessary one-to-one ratio of the graded papers to turned in papers.

2. It shifts the production limit from the teacher to the student, who should be responding to the best of his ability.

Disadvantages.

1. Much quality work is likely to go unrecognized.

2. Such a method would require radically new measurement procedures for many teachers.¹

Tacey developed a grading system designed for oral reports:

Philosophy.

Reports should be based more on pupil appraisal than on teacher appraisal, although it should be a combination of both.

Procedure.

1. Make out cards with name of speaker and evaluator, the criteria to be looked for while evaluating and a rating scale with which to evaluate.

2. Evaluators score and pass in to instructor.

3. The instructor doubles each score, adds to his own and divides by three for each speaker.

4. He assembles the scores highest to lowest and determines the grades.

Advantages.

1. The instructor's score serves as an effective brake for students who discover that a high score can as easily be graded a "D" as could a much lower score, thereby encouraging students to be more objective in their scoring.

2. It makes a serious attempt to measure the reaction of the speaker's audience and peers.

Disadvantages.

1. It takes time and clerical work.

2. It brings forth complaints from students who feel their assigned grades were less than they deserved.¹

Travers raw score conversion chart shown in Table 6 has many positive points.

Procedure.

1. A class rank from highest to lowest must first be established.

2. In the table are standard scores applicable for scores in order of rank from number one down to forty-five in a class of up to that size.

3. Find your class size in the table and apply the corresponding score to the ranking you gave each student in your class.

Advantage.

1. It eliminates teacher differences in grading practices.

Disadvantage.

1. Objections usually come from college registrars and other extra-school personnel who favor the use of transcripts mostly because they are accustomed to the latter.²

Findley agrees with the system proposed by Travers but with an additional departmentalized test. He suggests alternate form or objec-

¹William S. Tacey, "Class Reaction as a Basis for Grading," The Speech Teacher, Volume XIV (September, 1965), pp. 224-25.

²Travers, Educational Measurement, pp. 197-991
tive-type tests with each teacher within a department correcting one specific part of the test. Then weigh each component of the test and/or each total test and multiply by the applicable figures in Traver's table.¹

Bauernfiend suggests a method of equating grades within departments.

Procedure.

1. Rank students within each class of a given department on the basis of each student's year's performance.

2. Give a standardized achievement test within each department.

3. Combine the results in a fashion determined by each department.

Advantages.

1. It takes much of the bias out of teacher grades.

2. It helps to make equivalent the grades assigned by all teachers of a given subject.

3. It is of value in giving comparable grades when students have been assigned to sections by ability: fast, average and slow.

4. Equated grades provide behavioral data that are far more predictive of further success in school.²

In homogeneous or ability groupings, Terwilliger offers no specific method or system, but he does say that any proposed system should be flexible and representative of the actual individual differences be-

¹Warren G. Findley, Interview at Atlanta University, November 15, 1967.

tween groupings.¹

Thorndike goes one step further by proposing a nucleus of common testing to provide a basis for determining the number of pupils receiving each grade for each section. An example would be a common final examination such as a standardized test.

For atypical groups, Thorndike makes three suggestions:

1. Difference in group levels may be weighed according to ability.

2. Specific subject grades should be assigned in terms of the population taking that specific subject, not of the total student population.

3. For large general courses handled as a single group (fifty or more) it is most acceptable to use the total class group as the defining population.²

Smith and Adams add that it is best not to have letter grades alone but a note beside each indicating as precisely as possible student performance level. The method used should be easily understood by all who will use the report currently and in the future.³

Schwartz has constructed a list of fifteen good grading practices that teachers might use:

1. Grading systems are worked out cooperatively by all directly involved.

2. They may never require that evaluation be reduced to symbols.

3. They provide for pupil participation in accordance with their level of development.

¹Terwilliger, "Secondary School Marking," p. 34

²Thorndike, Measurement, pp. 513-14.

³Smith and Adams, Educational Measurement, p. 204.
4. They are not stereotyped but involve a wide variety of procedures.

5. They are essentially positive in nature.

6. They involve the use of value judgments arrived at in a democratic atmosphere.

7. They are openly used and openly arrived at.

8. They do not emphasize formulas or distributions.

9. They involve a minimum of clerical records.

10. They are not necessarily tied to a rigid schedule.

11. They accurately reflect all the values of the school.

12. They emphasize the total development of the child.

13. They provide for individual differences without emphasizing them.

14. They do not involve the use of fear or threats.

In addition, he proposes eight reporting techniques that can be used effectively by teachers regardless of the type of grading system:

1. Recognize that a report card is only one element of a total grading system.

2. Precisely identify classroom objectives as a basis for evaluating growth toward certain goals.

3. Assign weights to objectives to keep all classroom activities in their proper perspective.

4. Maintain student folders including examples of student behavior and performance.

5. Help students understand the content of the report card and the basis for its content.

6. Supplement a letter or numerical grade with comments and special parent and/or student conferences.

7. Offer students ample opportunity for self-appraisal.

8. Prepare a supplementary report card for individual classroom use.¹

¹Schwartz and Tiedeman, Evaluating Student Progress, pp. 392-93.
Wrinkle concludes this section with his own list of methods for improving grading:

1. Demonstrate a critical, constructive attitude toward grading.

2. Recognize the functions grading is supposed to serve.

3. Correctly evaluate the extent to which present grading practices serve the functions they are supposed to serve.

4. Identify weaknesses underlying conventional grading.

5. Use the principles of modern educational philosophy and psychology in making grading decisions.

6. Formulate sound guiding principles for use in the development of grading forms and practices.

7. Apply sound criteria in evaluating grading forms and practices.

8. Enumerate and correctly evaluate innovations in grading.


10. Improve grading forms and suggest improved practices.

11. Cooperate with and encourage others in developing improved grading forms and practices.¹

On an administrative level, Thomas makes seven recommendations:

1. Each school or district should have an established marking system for the teachers of the school to follow.

2. This policy should be developed by a committee of teachers and administrators.

3. Marking policy, when developed, should be adopted by the governing board of the district and become part of the board of education policy.

4. Major use of department chairmen and department organization should be used in the development and implementation of marking policy.

5. Marking policy, when developed, should be distributed and explained to each teacher in written form.

6. A frequency distribution of marks assigned, compiled by teacher and department, should be developed each semester. This should be done by or with the department chairman.

7. Pupil marking policy should definitely include:
   a) School philosophy of marking.
   b) Definition of grading criteria.
   c) Methods and techniques for marking grouped classes.
   d) Factors considered in arriving at a final mark.
   e) Use of the failing mark.
   f) The relation of conduct and attendance to the final mark.¹

Barksdale was able to make two important implications as a result of this study:

1. That this high school should study its grading system in order to improve its methods of assigning grades to the pupils.

2. That the faculty should improve the quality and/or quantity of their instruction in order to aid all their pupils to perform at the levels they are expected to reach.²

Thorndike adds that the school must:

1. "Recognize the arbitrary social judgment implied in defining grading systems and make that judgment for our school on the basis of full understanding and rational analysis of the implications of our decision."³

2. Establish general adherence to that definition among the individual faculty members of the school.

¹Thomas, Doctoral Thesis,

²Thorndike, Measurement, p. 512.

³Ibid.
3. Devise techniques to assist teachers in adapting and applying that definition to each class.1

Another common administrative task is the computation of class rank. In a study by Riban conducted to investigate whether equal grade rating discriminated against the superior student in establishment of class rank, the following system was proposed:

1. Remedial courses — grade multiplied by one.
2. General level courses or courses without a prerequisite — grade multiplied by two.
3. College preparatory level courses or courses with a prerequisite — grade multiplied by three.
4. Accelerated level courses or courses with two or more stated prerequisites — grade multiplied by four.

Class rank was computed first the conventional way and then in the proposed way. The results were:

1. Sixty-four per cent of 226 seniors sampled changed rank by twenty or more places, 26 per cent changed rank by fifty places.
2. Of the 241 students raised into the upper quarter, all were in the college curriculum, and thirteen had taken the American College Test with an average of 62.4. Of the 241 who fell out of the upper quarter, 8 had taken the ACT with an average score of 23.5.
3. Under the old system girls tend to rank higher than boys. In the proposed system boys gained a greater proportion of upper quarter ranking, though still remaining in the minority.
4. In scholarships based on straight class rank, the 20 who qualified under the old system still qualified along with an additional eight students.
5. Eight of the twenty-four students who dripped fifty places were in the upper tenth of their class, yet had averaged only slightly more than one college preparatory or accelerated level course in six semester hours of high school work.
Conclusions.

1. The present straight class rank systems discriminate against superior and college bound students.

2. It clearly pays under the old system to excel in moderate level courses and take as few chances as possible in tracks of study.¹

Terwilliger adds that another reasonable request would be to use a standard set of grade levels since some schools base class rank from grades 9 - 12 and others from grades 10 - 12.²

As mentioned in the rationale of this study, the counselor must depend on the accuracy of teacher grades to carry out effectively his task of interpreting these for purposes of class, college and job placement, and the many recommendations that he must make. The difficult part is that the counselor can do very little about this situation. However, one important contribution the counselor can make toward improving the school's grading system is to initiate a program of in-service training on grading. He has in most cases had more preparation in this area than teachers, which seems to be a paradox, with courses in statistics, testing and measurement, and projective techniques. If a grading system really does need improving, the counselor should be the one to initiate action toward constructing a new one in conjunction with administration and faculty. The final part of this study will concern itself with the research needed in establishing such a program.


The counselor must first determine the needs and interest for an in-service program.

Miller lists some of these needs:

1. The interest of the staff in guidance work.
2. The extent of present participation in the guidance program.
3. The competencies teachers already possess.
4. The resources available in and out of school.
5. Will faculty members spend the extra time and energy needed to plan the program?
6. Are outside consultants available to help organize and conduct the program?
7. Are funds available for necessities?
8. Is school time available for a portion of the program?

He next identifies five common blocks to faculty participation in such a program:

1. Resentment of more time added to an already overloaded system.
2. Many teachers are concerned about their jobs. Teachers must acquire tenure, financial security, positive administrative leadership and status in the community.
3. Teachers become frustrated when they do not know what is expected of them. A need exists for a clear understanding of the responsibilities, of administrative policy and of the necessity in getting the program started.
4. By making the program mandatory, it is not founded on the felt needs of the staff and in an atmosphere of cooperative planning.
5. Schools create a lack of enthusiasm by not granting a portion of school time for in-service training.

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Thorndike says that "an educational program for raters should be set up or required; teachers must be sold on the importance of making good ratings and taught how to use all necessary rating instruments."\(^1\)

Miller proposes the elements necessary for an in-service education program:

1. It is concerned with the problems of its participants rather than its leaders.
2. It is one where the participants come prepared to participate.
3. It is one in which the leaders are prepared to carry out their functions in an efficient yet democratic manner.
4. It uses democratic discussion and leaders who can bring into the open the points of view of its participants.
5. The groups are small, yet they are kept informed of the activities of other groups.
6. It takes the time to evaluate itself as it proceeds and improves its own procedures of working together.
7. The final session commits itself to carrying out conference decisions in a practical school situation.\(^2\)

In conclusion, limitations of any grading system may be attributed to human errors such as personal bias, central tendency, halo-effect, logical error and generosity error. Further limitations exist in the inability to measure some criteria for exactness such as traits of personality, citizenship and cooperation. Even absolute grading is not as absolute, as once was believed.

\(^1\)Thorndike, Measurement, p. 377.

This review has not identified every problem that exists in the grading system and has by no means sought to solve all of these problems, but has indicated that many problems do exist and will continue to exist until many people initiate, organize and practice the many needed reforms that grading systems are now calling for.

As Ebel has said:

. . . for all these reasons, no system of marking is likely to be found that will make the process of marking easy and painless and generally satisfactory. This is not to say that present marking practices are beyond improvement. It is to say that no new marking system, however cleverly devised and conscientiously followed, is likely to solve the basic problems of marking. The real need is not for some new system. Good systems already exist.¹

Thus, our problem in reality is to make what we already have work better.

Terwilliger concludes that a true revolution in marking is needed. We should be concerned with the standardization and justification of grading and move away from the blind adherence to tradition which guides our present policies.

. . . students stand to gain. Daily decisions are made in which high school grades play a crucial role. These are not trivial, for placement programs, acceptance or rejection at college, or whether students become employed or jobless depends on them. Thus, secondary schools must provide an evaluation of students which will allow such decisions to be made as fairly and intelligently as possible.²

¹Ebel, Measuring Educational Achievement, p. 398.
CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

After completing the outline for the subject of the study, interpreting teacher grades and school grading systems on the part of the counselor, the writer became concerned with the methods by which he could obtain the necessary data to complete the study.

Fitting appropriate questions to the purposes of the study was the first step taken. The questionnaire seemed to be the best instrument to accomplish this task. The writer constructed most of the questions for the questionnaire, but several ideas for the instrument came from a similar study done by Terwilliger in 1963.

After validating the questionnaire by administering it to a group of prospective counselors all of whom were former teachers and making all corrections for questions about which they were at all confused, the writer was ready to begin the study.

The study was begun after receiving permission from the Research Committee of the Atlanta Public Schools. Next, permission to carry on the study in the individual junior high schools and high schools was sought from the principal of each school. Eight of the ten principals gave their permission; thus, the original ten-school study was changed to an eight-school study.

Teacher questionnaires were given to ten volunteer teachers from each of the eight schools studied at faculty meetings where all
teachers were available and had equal opportunities for volunteering. A total of 82 questionnaires were handed out and 79 returned making a 96 per cent return.

In addition, the counselor in charge of placement--college vocation or class, were given counselor questionnaires at the faculty meetings. All questionnaires were returned for a 100 per cent return. Personal interviews were had with seven of the eight counselors, each lasting about a half hour. The writer cleared up any of the ambiguous answers on the questionnaire and asked for additional questions that might delve more deeply into the thesis problem.

The cooperation of teachers and counselors was excellent and the results follow.

Types of criteria for determining grades

The various types of criteria used by teachers in determining grades are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who</td>
<td>Favor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. On what criterion or criteria</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do you assign grades?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Results of tests and quizzes</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Class participation</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Homework preparation</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Other</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 tends to indicate that nearly all of the teachers surveyed favor tests, quizzes and class participation as part of the criteria for grading students, while over two-thirds also consider homework preparation.

More than one-third use some combination of fourteen additional criteria, none of which was mentioned by more than 8.87 per cent of the sample. Among these criteria listed under "other" above mentioned in highest to lowest rank order were effort, growth observed, attitude, attendance, special arrangements, native ability, project workbooks, classwork, class conduct, cooperativeness, notebooks, dress, extracredit reports, and aggressiveness.

One must conclude that with at least seventeen types of criteria being used by teachers in the Atlanta Public Schools, there must be a considerable variation in the weight placed on these criteria and the method in which they are used by teachers to award grades.

Status of the grading system

Results of whether the school grading system is written down and the extent to which teachers adhere to it are presented in Table 2. Table 2 indicates that the schools of nearly seven of every ten teachers surveyed have grading systems written down in some form. Less than one of four replied that his grading system is not written down.

Of the 55 respondents who reported written grading systems, a slight majority adhere to them quite rigidly, a minority adheres sometimes and a clear minority of respondents adhere rarely. Three respondents who answered "yes" did not reply to this second part of the question.
TABLE 2

STATUS OF THE SCHOOL GRADING SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th></th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is the grading system in your school written down?</td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Is it adhered to closely by teachers much of the time?</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Sometimes?</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Rarely?</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. No Response</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One might conclude from Table 2 that (a) not all grading systems are written down; (b) that only slightly more than half of the teachers surveyed adhered rigidly to the grading system; (c) that well over one-third of the respondents adhere to their grading systems only sometimes or rarely.

One might imply from these conclusions that (a) when grading systems are not written down, they cannot be as clear and concise as is necessary; hence, they cannot be adhered to as closely as they should be, (b) that with more than one-third of the responding teachers adhering only sometimes or rarely to their grading systems, there must be considerable variation in the interpretation of grades among teachers within each school and among the eight schools studied.
Status of orientation to school grading system

The types of orientation teachers receive concerning their school grading system are presented in Table 3.

**TABLE 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. How did you find out about your school grading system?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. During orientation?</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. From a student or teacher's handbook?</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Did you use a verbally understood but unwritten system for grading?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Did you use a more personalized grading system?</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. No response</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in Table 3 indicate that (a) a minority of teachers have been heretofore informed about their grading system from an orientation program; (b) that nearly half of the responding teachers were informed about their grading system from a teacher's handbook; (c) that a clear minority of teachers was informed verbally only; (d) that about twenty per cent were either not informed at all or for reasons of their own used personal methods of grading.

One concludes from these findings that at least one in five respondents is either dissatisfied with the present grading system in
in the schools or is not using it because of the lack of information provided by the school.

Teachers' distribution of high and low grades

The extent to which teachers give all track levels an equal chance at high and low grades is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**

TEACHER FEELINGS ABOUT THE DISTRIBUTION OF HIGH AND LOW GRADES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you give all track levels an equal chance at high or low grades?</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If No:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Do you believe that only high track groupings deserve &quot;A's&quot;?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Do you believe that if a person tried hard in a lower track grouping but fails mathematically that he should be passed anyway?</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Does an A in your class in an upper group count for the same weight in the overall grading system as an A in a lower group?</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Did not respond to a, b and c above</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 indicates that a great majority of teachers believe that all students should be eligible for high or low grades regardless
of grouping.

Since only the "No" respondents, or 17.70 per cent of the teachers questioned were asked to answer parts a, b and c, no definite conclusions can be drawn from these.

However, one might imply that teachers do believe that a student should pass those courses in which he puts forth effort regardless of whether or not his numerical average is passing.

Tests that measure student behavioral change

Types of test that teachers best believe measure student changes in behavior are presented in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. What types of test best measures the behavior a teacher wants to measure?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Essay tests?</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Standardized tests?</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Objective tests?</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Applied or performance tests?</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Physical skill tests?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 indicates that a clear minority of teachers indicated an interest in the use of standardized tests while about thirty per cent favor the use of essay tests, and over thirty-five per cent favor objective tests.
The majority of teachers in this sample favor a testing program that allows the student to apply his knowledge in practical circumstances either mentally, physically or both. One might imply from these findings and conclusion that the use of essay, objective and standardized test is used less frequently in the classrooms of the Atlanta Public Schools.

The methods of grading teacher-made tests

The methods of grading teacher-made test by teachers are presented in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. How do you grade teacher-made tests?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. On the curve or scale basis</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Percentage of 100 basis</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Letter grades only</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Combination of above</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Satisfactory, very satisfactory or unsatisfactory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Point system based on accumulation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 indicates that only a minority of teachers grade on the curve or scale basis, but when one looks more deeply into the table a curve system still seems to exist elsewhere. For instance, letter
Grades only (c, in table) have to be determined in relation to what each child achieves in comparison to a particular group. In addition, a point system (f, in table) based on accumulation has to be computed in terms of a particular group; hence, this is also curve grading. Satisfactory, very satisfactory and unsatisfactory could be either curve grading or absolute grading as could item d, the combination of a, b and c.

Thus, based on these findings, one concludes that (a) there is no clear-cut basis of grading teacher-made tests and (b) that a teacher may vary his grading methods from one day to the next.

The status of school honor rolls

Results of whether or not the Atlanta Public Schools have honor rolls are presented in Table 7.

This table indicates that all but one school surveyed has an honor roll. A third of the teachers indicated that the honor roll in their school is weighed according to curriculum. Less than one quarter of the teachers considered an honor roll as a motivating factor to the college-bound only, and a minority of teachers considered it a motivating factor to the student body as a whole. Less than half of the teachers indicated that all of the student body was eligible for honor roll consideration. Since only about sixty per cent of the teachers responded to the two questions concerning their opinion of a weighted or unweighted honor roll and the results were otherwise close, no conclusive evidence can be drawn from these latter two findings.

However, one can conclude that there is no standard method for weighing honor rolls.
TABLE 7
THE STATUS OF SCHOOL HONOR ROLLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Does your school have an honor roll?</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Yes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Is the honor roll weighed according to curriculum?</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Does the honor roll motivate all students?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Does the honor roll motivate college-bound students only?</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Are all students considered for the honor roll?</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Do you favor a weighted honor roll?</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Do you favor an unweighted honor roll?</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One can imply that there is no general agreement as to whether or not an honor roll should be weighted as determined by the closeness of tallies in items e and f in Table 7 and also by the high number of non-respondents.

On an optional question, of which only twenty-two of seventy-nine teachers responded, they were asked to mention any additional factors that might affect their method of grading.
Of the twenty-two respondents, sixteen mentioned home and community environment as important factors in grading students. Three teachers mentioned the ability to apply school learning, but this had been covered in previous questions such as number five. Two teachers mentioned the fact that EMR students must pass regardless of work completed and two mentioned giving considerations to students who work part-time while attending school.

No definite conclusions can be drawn because of the paucity of responses, but one might imply that home and community factors have some bearing on the grades teachers award to students.

On another optional question, number 9, only thirteen of a possible seventy-nine teachers responded when asked to give their personal feelings about grading systems in general. No more than three responses were given for any one answer. Three teachers believe that criteria among teachers should be standard throughout the school, two believe in weighted grades for different ability levels. Other responses included that grades should not become ends in themselves, that a pass-fail system should be established, that student grades should not be altered without the teacher's approval, and the opinion that percentage grading on the basis of one hundred is a fallacy. No conclusions or implications could be determined from this inconclusive data. On the final question, number 10, twenty-six teachers responded to the five criteria they deemed paramount in determining final grades for students.

Eighteen of the twenty-six considered classroom participation as important, sixteen considered tests and quizzes, twelve considered
growth, nine completion of assignments. Native ability and attendance both had eight responses, student behavior was mentioned by three and research by three teachers.

The only conclusions that one could draw from this data would be to compare the findings with those of number one, a question yielding very similar data. Interestingly enough, class participation ranked highest on both questions, tests and quizzes were tied for first place on number one and a close second on number ten. Effort was ranked third on number ten and fourth on number one. Homework was third on number one and fourth on number ten.

Below this point, the small number of responses on question ten would make any further comparisons meaningless. No conclusions could be drawn from this data, but one might support more conclusively the conclusions drawn from Table 1.

**Teacher homework grading**

The time teachers spend in correcting student homework for quality is presented in Table 8. This table indicates that (a) nearly thirty per cent of teachers grade homework on a daily basis; (b) that nearly forty per cent grade homework once or twice per week; (c) that a minority of teachers grade homework twice per month or not at all.

One concludes from this data that the majority of teachers do not correct homework assignments more than once or twice per week.

One might imply that teachers could not attribute a lack of time to tedious paper correction as an excuse for improving their grading methods and criteria.
TABLE 8
THE STATUS OF TEACHER HOMEWORK GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. How often do you grade home-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work for quality?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Daily</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Once or twice per week</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Once every two weeks</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Once per month?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Seldom or not at all</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. No response</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status of interest in an in-service grading program

The extent of teacher interest in an in-service grading program is presented in Table 9. This table indicates (a) that a minority of teachers would be interested in an in-service grading program if it were given completely on their own time; (b) that over half would be interested if some school time were allotted for such a purpose; (c) that a clear minority would like to participate actively under the leadership of a counselor, psychologist or psychometrist (d) that a slightly higher minority would be interested actively under the leadership of faculty-administrative personnel cooperatively; (e) that a minority would be interested only as a listener-observer; (f) that only a small number of teachers would not be interested at all.

One might conclude from this data that a substantial majority of teachers surveyed favor an in-service grading program. One might
TABLE 9

THE EXTENT OF TEACHER INTEREST IN IN-SERVICE GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Would you be interested in participating in an in-service grading program?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. As an active member of the school system, after school hours?</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Actively, but with some school time allotted for meetings?</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. As an active member under the leadership of the school counselor or psychologist?</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. As an active member under cooperative faculty and administrative leadership?</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Only as a listener-observer?</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Not interested</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Did not respond</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

imply that there is no real agreement as to whom should conduct an in-service program on grading.

Teacher attitudes concerning school grades

Teacher attitudes concerning the status of school grades are presented in Table 10. This table indicates that a minority of teachers feel that school grades should be abolished and (a) a very clear minority consider grades a necessary evil; (b) that a substantial majority consider grades as a moderately important criterion; (c) that a minority
of teachers consider grades as of major importance.

TABLE 10

TEACHER ATTITUDES CONCERNING SCHOOL GRADES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. What is your general attitude concerning school grades?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Should abolish</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. A necessary evil</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Of moderate importance</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Of major importance</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One concludes from these findings that the great majority of teachers are in favor of retaining grades in some form.

Grading as part of the teacher's duties

The extent to which teachers consider grading as part of their school duties is presented in Table 11. This table indicates (a) that only a few teachers feel that grading is not a necessary part of the teacher's job; (b) that a clear minority feel that grading is a minor part of a teaching job; (c) that more than half feel that grading is of moderate importance; (d) that about thirty per cent feel grading is a job of major importance.

These findings indicate that teachers on the whole consider grading a necessary part of their work.
### TABLE 11
GRADING AS PART OF THE TEACHERS' DUTIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. Of what importance is grading as part of your job?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. None</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Minor importance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Moderate importance</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Major importance</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher preferences of methods of evaluation

The methods teachers prefer for determining grades are presented in Table 12.

### TABLE 12
EVALUATION METHODS PREFERRED BY TEACHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. What method of evaluation do you use in determining grades?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. General evaluation only</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Emphasis on evaluation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Evaluation and performance</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Emphasis on performance</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Performance only</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. No response</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12 indicates (a) that a great majority of the respondents determine grades through a combination of evaluation and performance; (b) that more than twenty per cent emphasized performance; (c) that a clear minority emphasized evaluation.

One might conclude from these findings the same as was concluded from the findings of Table 5—that teachers in general favor student performance and their ability to apply knowledge as being more important than the evaluation and results of paper work and testing alone.

How classroom behavior affects course grades

The extent to which teachers consider classroom behavior when assigning grades is presented in Table 13.

TABLE 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. What consideration do you give to classroom behavior in determining course grades?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Not at all</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. To a minor degree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. To a moderate degree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. To a major degree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 indicates that an overwhelming majority of teachers
do not assign grades to approximate some predetermined distribution while a very clear minority do use such a method.

One concludes from these findings that teachers as a whole do not favor a system in which grade distributions are limited. One might imply from this conclusion that teachers favor making all grades available to all students regardless of ability grouping or the curriculum in which they are enrolled. This tends to support conclusion number four which says that if most teachers favor giving all students an equal chance at high or low grades, then courses should be weighed according to difficulty.

Table 13 also indicates (a) that a minority of teachers say behavior in no way affects a student's grade; (b) that more than one-third say that behavior is considered to a minor degree; (c) that slightly less than one-third say that behavior plays a moderate role in the assignment of grades; (d) that a minority says that behavior is a major part of a student's grade.

One concludes from this data that over eighty per cent of the respondents consider behavior in some way as a determinant in assigning grades. Slightly less than half consider behavior as from moderate to major importance in assigning grades.

One might imply from these conclusions that many grades are being assigned subjectively based partially on a student's behavior in the classroom.

Consideration by teachers given to student

The extent to which teachers consider work done by students in previous grading periods in awarding grades is presented in Table 14.
### TABLE 14

**TEACHER CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO STUDENT WORK DONE IN PREVIOUS MARKING PERIODS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. How much consideration do you give to work done in previous marking periods when assigning grades?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. No consideration</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Minor consideration</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Moderate consideration</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Major consideration</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. No response</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 indicates (a) that more than forty per cent of teachers give no consideration to work done in previous grading periods when assigning grades; (b) that more than twenty per cent give minor consideration; (c) that more than twenty per cent give moderate consideration; and (d) that a clear minority give major consideration to the problem.

One concludes from these findings that the majority of teachers surveyed are affected to some degree by work done in previous marking periods by their students, and that about one-third are affected from a moderate to a major degree.

One might imply the same here as with the behavior question in Table 13, that "many grades are being based partially on reputation." This grading is a subjective consideration that tends to bias a student's
grade which should be as objective an evaluation as possible.

Relationship among teachers' grading criteria

The extent to which teachers' grading criteria compare among themselves is presented in Table 15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How closely do your grading criteria compare with the other teachers in your school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Very closely</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Only minor differences</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Noticeably different</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Use own personal criteria</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. No response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 indicates (a) that about thirty per cent of teachers feel that their grading criteria compare very closely with those of their colleagues; (b) that about one-third feel that they differ only slightly; (c) that a clear minority feel there is a noticeable difference; (d) that a minority use their own personal criteria.

One might conclude from these findings that a decided majority of teachers feel that their criteria for grading compare quite closely to those of their colleagues. However, about one-third of all respondents use noticeably different grading criteria than their colleagues.
for awarding grades.

One might imply from these conclusions that there is a need to close the gap between equated and non-equated grading criteria among all of the schools in the Atlanta school system.

Question 20 indicates that about seven of every ten teachers surveyed use some kind of formula to weigh the criteria they use in assigning final grades. It indicates that more than one of five do not use any specific formula. One might conclude from these findings that the great majority of teachers have individual formulas for weighing the criteria they use in assigning final grades.

One might imply from this conclusion that not all of the individual teacher formulas for assigning grades are alike and that such individualized formulas do not lend themselves to an equated system of grading.

Methods for computing the school grading system

The types of grades that comprise the grading systems in the Atlanta Public Schools are presented in Table 16.

In the Counselor Questionnaire, Table 16 indicates (a) that all of the schools surveyed use grading systems where letters represent numbers (70-77 = D, 93-100 = A, etcetera); (b) that none of the schools use 0.0 to 4.0 systems except as the method to convert the accumulated letter grades into the final senior class rank averages; (c) that none of the schools surveyed use systems of grading that include pass-fail or written parent letters to report the students' progress.

One might conclude from these findings that, on the surface, grading systems in the Atlanta Public Schools are alike, but when more...
TABLE 16

METHODS OF COMPUTING THE SCHOOL GRADING SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. On what grading method is your school grading system based?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Letter grades corresponding to numerical groupings (93-100 = A)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 0.0 - 4.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Pass or fail</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Written report</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

closely scrutinized many differences become manifest.

One might imply from this conclusion that the importance of a grading system is not in whether all schools use letter grades corresponding to numerical groupings, but rather how similarly the schools and their respective teachers arrive at the composition, criteria and methods that determine the respective letter grades.

Question number two of the Counselor Questionnaire asked if each grade regardless of base has certain criteria to be upheld in addition to test achievement such as homework preparation, class participation and attendance. Six counselors replied "yes", one said "no" and one did not respond. One might conclude from these findings that the greater majority of schools in this sample consider multiple criteria for determining grades.
In question number three, counselors were asked if they had any responsibilities in setting up their school's present grading system. Seven replied "no" and one said "yes". When asked who was mainly responsible for constructing the grading system, three indicated a volunteer committee, two said the administration was responsible, two said "other" but did not explain and one did not respond.

One concludes from these findings that the great majority of counselors surveyed had no part in constructing the grading system in their respective schools. This could be partly attributable to the fact that the grading systems were already established when the present counselors were hired.

In question number four, counselors were asked if homogeneous groupings or tracks are provided for by school policy. Seven replied "yes" and one said "no". Since the three questions, a, b, and c under number four were to be answered by all "no" respondents, no conclusive evidence could be drawn from only one respondent. One might conclude from the original question, however, that most of the Atlanta Public Schools have established a need for ability groupings.

Problems most pressing to counselors in regard to the interpretation of the grading system

Grade interpretation problems of concern to counselors are presented in Table 17. This table indicates (a) that most of the counselors feel that the difference in teacher interpretations of what each grade means is a problem to counselors; (b) the fact that all but one of the schools surveyed have ability groupings would tend to explain the zero response for a need for ability groupings; (c) at least three
of the eight counselors indicated a need for a weighted system of grading; (d) only one counselor indicated that no written grading system was a problem; however, since about seventy per cent of the grading systems were indicated as being written, this would tend to explain the lack of responses.

TABLE 17
PROBLEMS OF GRADE INTERPRETATION OF CONCERN TO COUNSELORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Which one or more of the following items would you say represents a problem to you in your school setting concerning interpretation of the grading system?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Difference in teacher interpretations of what each grade means, hence, need to retranslate in your own mind.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. No track system or ability grouping</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. No weighted system to equate grades between higher and lower grades ability and course groupings or tracks.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. No written grading system but only verbally understood; hence, differences in degrees of adherence by teachers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One concludes from these findings that nearly all counselors surveyed feel that interpreting teacher grades is a real problem.

One might imply from these findings that there is a noticeable interest on the part of counselors for a weighted grading system.
Methods of determining senior class rank

The methods by which senior class rank is determined are presented in Table 18.

TABLE 18

METHODS OF DETERMINING SENIOR CLASS RANK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. How is senior class rank determined in your school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. By the principal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. By hand or machine computation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. With respect to weighted grades according to difficulty of courses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Without regard to type of courses taken throughout high school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Based on grades 9 - 12, 10 - 12, or _________</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. No response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 tends to indicate that the findings are inconclusive. The fact that part "e" got half of the eight tallies and still failed to give any specific findings was a fault of the questionnaire. Applicable answers were supposed to be underlined and none were; hence, one does not know if the four tallies apply to grades 9-12 or 10-12.

The fact that this question was poorly constructed and inadequately answered leads to the conclusion that no findings, conclu-
sions, implications or recommendations can be determined.

For question number Seven A, counselors were asked for which curricula or grade students rank in class is computed. Six counselors replied that class rank is computed for all senior students regardless of classification or groupings. One counselor replied that only students in the academic curriculum had their class rank computed. One counselor did not respond.

One could conclude from these findings that most schools surveyed assign all senior students in rank order when determining final grade status of the students.

For question number Seven B, counselors were asked what types of final grades were included in determining rank in class. Five counselors of the eight replied that only academic course grades are used to determine senior class rank. Three counselors replied that all course grades are included in determining senior rank in class.

One might conclude from these findings that there is no standard method of determining what types of course grades should be included when determining senior class rank in the Atlanta Public Schools.

In response to question Seven C, counselors were asked how class rank is computed in their respective schools. The purpose of this question was to find out how exact the schools try to make their senior class rank. Since exact rank is computed in most schools, quartiles and deciles can be easily computed thereafter.

Seven indicated by exact rank, one indicated both exact rank and by quartile, and one counselor did not respond.
For question Eight, counselors were asked if there are any school policies regulating the distribution of grades. All eight counselors answered "no." It appears that teachers are free, as far as the School Board and administration are concerned, to assign any grade distributions they feel is fair.

For question Nine, counselors were asked what school-wide policies, if any, govern the lowering of final grades. Three counselors responded "no." Five counselors did not respond.

One could conclude from these findings, nothing really meaningful, but one might imply that (a) many counselors are not sure what administrative policies govern the lowering of final grades; and (b) that if there is any school-wide policy governing the lowering of final grades of a teacher by the teacher or a grading committee after the grade has been recorded, they are either unknown or unpublicized to most counselors.

Question number ten asked counselors if there is provision for review and/or revision of grades by school principals or department chairmen. Four counselors responded "yes," three said "no" and one did not respond. One concludes from these findings that there is no standard policy in the Atlanta Public Schools for review and/or revision of grades by school principals or department chairmen.

Variations in criteria as a problem for counselors in interpreting teacher grades

The types of problems encountered by counselors in interpreting teacher grades because of varying criteria are presented in Table 19. This table indicates (a) that the majority of counselors consider a lack
of time as a major reason for not giving more consideration to the problem of grade interpretation; (b) that the only time most counselors are

TABLE 19

VARIATIONS IN CRITERIA AS A PROBLEM FOR COUNSELORS IN INTERPRETING TEACHER GRADES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What problems have you had in interpreting some teacher grades due to varying criteria?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Not enough time to put into the problem; therefore, have not given it as much thought as it deserves.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Only really consider problem when a student brings a grade complaint to the counselor.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Problem when new teachers not acquainted with system assign grades without an orientation and who may differ from most other teachers.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. A problem when teachers let conduct and other personality characteristics bias their grades.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. When grades on the permanent record card are out of line with what is normal for that student in particular subjects.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. When a grading system is not systematized, written or explained in an orientation program.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Problem when particular teachers use their own personal methods for grading without regard to the methods used by others.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
able to consider the grade interpretation problem is when a student discusses dissatisfaction of a teacher's grade to the counselor; (c) that moderate acquaintance with the grade interpretation problem comes from new teachers not formally acquainted with the school grading system, written or otherwise; (d) that moderate acquaintance with the grade interpretation problem comes from teachers who are believed to allow conduct and other intangibles influence their grades; (e) that the grade interpretation problem is often considered when certain grades are out of line with other similar subject grades on the permanent record card; (f) that two counselors mentioned the lack of a systematized method of grading in the school, unwritten and unexplained to teachers in an orientation program; (g) that two counselors mentioned a problem when particular teachers use their own personal methods of grading without regard to the methods used by other teachers.

One might conclude from Table 19 (a) counselors need more time to work with a grading problem that is considered of at least moderate importance to all seven counselors interviewed; (b) that counselors need to acquaint themselves more closely with the permanent records and grades of their students as well as the grading methods of their teachers.

One might imply from these findings (a) that not all new teachers in the Atlanta Public Schools are formally orientated on the grading system of their particular schools; (b) that teachers differ considerably on the criteria by which they award grades; and (c) that teachers differ on the method in which they evaluate grading criteria even when the criteria are the same.
Counselor methods concerning underachievers

Types of counselor action in regard to discovery of underachievers are presented in Table 20.

**TABLE 20**

COUNSELOR METHODS CONCERNING UNDERACHIEVERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. What do you do when you notice that a student is an underachiever?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Have a student conference</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Confer with teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Indicate schedule change if necessary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Call parent conference</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Counsel for underlying courses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Arrange for tutorial services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Give achievement test to substantiate ability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Regroup if necessary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Give student literature on importance of grades</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Compare related course grades to see if they are out of line with each other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Let student originate problem</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20 tends to indicate (a) that most counselors surveyed call in underachievers for a conference; (b) that most counselors sur-
veyed compare related course grades and compare achievement test scores with teacher grades; (c) that four of the seven counselors would do nothing about student underachievement unless a student first showed concern; (d) that four of the seven counselors would confer with the appropriate teachers if student underachievement were concerned; (e) that one or two responses were given for such considerations as schedule change, parent conference, personal counseling, tutorial service, regrouping and disseminating appropriate literature.

One concludes from Table 20 (a) that most teachers work on the problems of underachievers when such students bring the problem to them; (b) that when the problem of underachievement is presented to a counselor by a student, the counselor (1) confers with the student about the problem itself in addition to underlying causes; (2) compares related course grades to see if they are out of line with each other, sometimes uses achievement tests for comparison; (3) confers with appropriate teachers to confirm and work out reasons and resolutions for the discrepancy.

Counselor action concerning the placement of students

Methods of action taken by counselors in placing students in college, jobs and school groupings are presented in Table 21. This table indicates (a) that the three most frequent considerations in making recommendations are: (1) teacher grades, (2) achievement test scores, and teacher recommendations; (b) that moderate consideration is given to (1) a student with a desire for a job or to attend college, (2) the present ability grouping the student, and
(3) student attendance, the latter particularly in job placement.

One concludes from these findings that counselors rely most heavily on teacher grades and teacher recommendations as well as achievement test scores for placing students in college, jobs and in-school groupings.

**TABLE 21**

**COUNSELOR ACTION CONCERNING PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. At what does a counselor look on a student's permanent record card before placing him in a job, in college or class group?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Must be convinced that a student desires college or a particular job</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Grades</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I. Q.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Achievement test scores</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Curriculum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Ability grouping</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Type of job or college</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Consult teacher for recommendations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Attendance, particularly for jobs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One might imply from these findings that attendance and desire for success are important determinants of counselor recommendations for college, job placement and higher school groupings.
Counselor suggestions for improvements in grading systems

Suggestions counselors make for improving the status of grading systems in the Atlanta Public Schools are presented in Table 22.

**TABLE 22**

COUNSELOR SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN GRADING SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. What suggestions would counselors make for the improvement of your grading system or grading systems in general as they pertain to the counselor?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Weighted grades for different ability groupings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. In-service grading for teachers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Orientation for explanation of grading system</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Written grading system printed in handbook and adhered to closely by teachers.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Make grading system clear to students so they can defend themselves against unfair grades.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Pass a final examination or have minimum course requirements for each course before being eligible for next higher level in respective courses.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Should be better grouping system. Many misplaced ability group students can never be regrouped and suffer as a result.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 22—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. What suggestions would counselors make for the improvement of your grading system or grading systems in general as they pertain to the counselor?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. With varying teacher criteria, a new counselor would have nothing definite or concrete from which to interpret various teacher grades.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Kuder Preference Tests or interest inventories should be used early enough to gain insight on a student’s interests; hence, aid him to be placed into appropriate courses that will do justice to his ability and his grades.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. That the 1.0 - 4.0 system of converting senior class rank does not distinguish between those students who had high A's, B's and C's and low A's, B's and C's; hence, exact rank is in fact inexact.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Pass-fail system with recommendations. Permission to pass but not do advanced work without teacher recommendation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22 tends to indicate (a) that most counselors would favor a weighted system of grading, an in-service and orientation program on grading and a handbook for teachers with the grading system fully explained within; (b) that three of the seven have little advice on the grading interpretation problem for a new incoming counselor; (c) that the responses indicated in e, f, g, i, j, k, l and m consisted of two or less responses.
One concludes from these findings that though the four improvements—a weighted system of grading, in-service grading program, grading orientation program, and teacher handbook—were suggested by the writer, there was almost unanimous agreement that these improvements be made. The only respondent who varied from the weighted system suggested a double honor roll but did not give any specific details.

One might imply from these findings that counselors would have an interest in becoming more informed about their grading system for the purpose of orientating any new counselors moving into the system as well as improving their own task of interpreting teacher grades.

**Findings for Counselors.**
1. The majority of counselors indicate a lack of time as a major problem for not giving more consideration to the problem of grade interpretation.

2. Most counselors consider the grade interpretation problem only when a student reveals dissatisfaction with teacher grades to them.

3. Moderate acquaintance with the problem is indicated by counselors when grades on the student permanent record are out of line with what seems normal for that student in particular subjects.

4. Most counselors indicate a conference with underachievers upon detection.

5. Most counselors indicate comparison of related course grades and that they compare achievement test scores with teacher grades.

6. The majority of counselors would do nothing about the grade interpretation problem unless a student initiated the action.
7. The majority of counselors would confer with appropriate teachers about the grading problem.

8. Most frequent considerations counselors give when making recommendations are teacher grades, achievement test scores and teacher recommendations.

9. Counselor suggestions for the improvement of grading systems indicate overwhelming interest in (a) weighted grades for different ability groupings, (b) in-service grading for teachers, (c) an orientation for a more thorough explanation of the grading system, and (d) a written grading system printed in a handbook.

10. All schools surveyed have grading systems where letters represent numbers (70-77 = D, 93-100 = A).

11. Most counselors indicated that grades are determined by more than just the results of tests.

12. Most counselors surveyed had no role in establishing the grading system in their respective schools.

13. Most of the Atlanta Public Schools have homogeneous groupings.

14. Most counselors surveyed indicated that teacher interpretations of what each grade means presents a problem to them; that there is a need for the counselor to retranslate unequated teacher grades.

15. Most counselors indicated that student rank in class is computed for all students regardless of grouping or curriculum.

16. Most counselors indicated academic classes only included in determining rank in class.

17. Most counselors indicated that class rank is computed into exact rank.
18. All counselors indicated no school policy for regulating the distribution of grades.

19. Four of the eight counselors indicated a policy of provision for review and/or revision of grades by school principals, or department chairmen.

Findings for Teachers.--The findings of this study seem to indicate the following:

1. Nearly all of the teachers surveyed included tests, quizzes and class participation as part of their criteria for grading students, while most also consider homework preparation. More than one-third use a combination of fourteen other criteria.

2. Not all grading systems are written down; that only slightly more than half of all teachers surveyed adhere rigidly to their grading systems.

3. Less than one-third of all teachers surveyed were informed about their grading system through an orientation program; that less than half were informed through a teacher handbook; that a clear minority was informed verbally only; that a minority was either not informed at all or changed over to a more personalized method of grading.

4. The overwhelming majority of teachers surveyed make it possible for all students regardless of grouping to make high or low grades; that a minority does not give all ability levels and equal chance at high or low grades.

5. The great majority of teachers surveyed favor tests that allow students to apply their knowledge or express it orally; that
about one in three favors the objective test; that a substantial minority favor essay tests; that a minority favor standardized tests.

6. (a) A clear minority of teachers surveyed grades on a scale basis; (b) that a clear minority use general letter grades to the exclusion of exact number grades; (c) that about four of ten grade on an absolute or percentage of one hundred basis; (d) that slightly more than four of ten use a combination of curve, letter and absolute grading.

7. (a) One of every three sampled schools uses a weighted system for its honor roll students; (b) that a high minority believe that the existence of an honor roll motivates the total body of students to achieve; (c) that a minority of the sample believe that honor rolls motivate only the college bound students; (d) that a substantial minority indicated that all students are eligible for the school honor roll; (e) that better than one of three favor a weighted system for different ability groupings competing for the same honor roll; (f) that groupings competing for the same honor roll favor an unweighted system.

8. Sixteen of twenty-two respondents felt that community and home environment are vital factors to be considered in awarding grades.

9. Clearly a high minority of teachers surveyed grade homework on a daily basis; (b) that a high minority grade homework once or twice per week; (c) that a minority grade homework sometimes or not at all.

10. (a) That a clear minority of teachers surveyed would be interested in an in-service grading program if given on his own time outside of school hours; (b) that a majority would be interested if
some school time were allotted for in-service grading; (c) that a minority would participate actively under the leadership of a counselor, psychologist or psychometrist; (d) that a minority would be interested actively under the leadership of faculty-administrative personnel cooperatively; (e) that a minority would be interested only as a listener-observer; (f) that a clear minority would not be interested.

11. (a) That a minority of teachers surveyed feel that school grades should be abolished; (b) that a clear minority considered them a necessary evil; (c) that a substantial majority considered grades of moderate importance; (d) that a minority considered them of major importance.

12. (a) That a clear minority of teachers surveyed feel that grading is not a necessary part of the teacher's job; (b) that a clear minority feel that it is a minor part of his job; (c) that better than half feel that grading is of moderate importance; (d) that a high minority feel that it is a job of major importance.

13. (a) A high majority of teachers determine grades through a combination of evaluation and performance; (b) a minority emphasized performance; (c) a clear minority emphasized evaluation.

14. (a) A very high majority of teachers do not assign grades to approximate some predetermined distribution.

15. A minority of teachers replied that classroom behavior does not affect a student's grade; (b) a high minority replied that behavior is considered a minor part of a grade; (c) a high minority replied that behavior is of moderate importance in the awarding of grades; (d) a clear minority replied that behavior is a major part of a student's grade.
CHAPTER III

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Rationale.--One of the problems in any high school, whether admitted or unadmitted, recognized or unrecognized, squarely faced or procrastinated annually is that of establishing an effective grading system; one that best measures the progress of average to superior students while at the same time making an honest, accurate measurement of those students of less than average capabilities who may or may not be working up to capacity.

Evolution of the Problem.--The problem of grading first became real to the writer while teaching in the classroom in an unaccredited school in January, 1965. The grading system was set down where in terms of averages equalling certain letter grades, there was no weight given to academic courses as opposed to other tracks of less difficulty. In addition, many teachers had opposing philosophies of grading.

Thus, when these opposing philosophies and the grades that accompanied them filtered into the guidance office, the counselor had to reinterpret all of these philosophies into a meaningful evaluation of the students for purposes of parent-teacher-administration consultation, placement and individual counseling. While these grades were not the only criteria on which the counselor had to depend, nevertheless the problem was no less real and no more resolved.
Contribution to Educational Knowledge.—The contribution this survey hopes to have made has been to determine how teachers award grades, on what criteria they base them, what changes they feel are necessary - and from this data the writer has hypothesized which factors contribute most and least to the effectiveness of grading system bases in Atlanta public high schools.

Secondly this survey hopes to have determined through a questionnaire and interviews with counselors which problems in the area of equating of grades they acknowledged as of concern to them. With the aid of counselor suggestions as to what is working successfully for them in their schools, together with related literature, the writer has hypothesized which factors will contribute most to effective equating of grades between teachers' philosophies and/or weighting grading systems on the part of the counselor in the Atlanta public high schools.

Statement of the Problem.—The problem was first to determine the specific bases used by high school teachers for individual grades and grading systems; what were the criteria, determinants, and philosophies behind grades and grading systems.

Secondly, how could the school counselors better interpret these grades and more easily equate grades from teacher to teacher in order to facilitate his use of them for purposes of consultation, placement and better understanding of the individual.

Limitations of the Study.—The limitations were: (1) reliability of the questionnaire and its answers; (2) the subjectivity of the interviews and responses and (3) the number of people included in the
sample. This survey could not possibly study the area of standardized
testing by the counselor as a standard with which to compare the ac-
curacy of teacher grades, though its extreme importance was recognized.

The satisfactory-unsatisfactory or pass-fail systems were not
considered in this thesis as the problem was meant to deal with grading
systems as they exist in the Atlanta public high schools and how they
may be improved without completely eliminating them.

The questionnaire was validated logically by administering
it to a group of former teachers, presently student counselors, to
clarify any ambiguous wording or terminology. An outside criterion
was not used though its importance was recognized. Also not con-
sidered were report cards or other reporting forms as the study was
concerned more with how grades are determined than the fashion in which
they are reported.

Purpose of the Study.--The purposes of this study were two-fold.
The writer was, on the one hand, interested in the grading systems of
the eight Atlanta high schools, their make-up, effectiveness and accept-
ance. Secondly the writer was interested in finding the counselor's
role in the construction of the grading system, problems of interpre-
ting teacher grades, and methods that he was using in concert with
teachers and administration to improve such a situation if it existed.

Locale of the Study.--This study was conducted in eight Atlanta
public high schools. These schools were determined by administrative
choice and permission, and teacher-counselor cooperation in responses
to the teacher questionnaires and the counselor questionnaire-inter-
views solicited.
Recapitulation of Research Design.—The research was conducted through the use of the teacher and counselor questionnaires. The questionnaires were clarified by administering them to a group of student counselors, all of whom were former teachers. Any questions that individuals of the group were not able to answer because of ambiguity in construction or language were appropriately changed.

After receiving approval from the Atlanta Public School System, questionnaires were passed out randomly to ten teachers at faculty meetings in each of the eight schools surveyed. The writer first explained the nature of the study and then asked for ten volunteers who would be interested in participating in such a study. One school had twelve volunteers; hence, the resulting total of eighty-two teacher questionnaires.

Separate counselor questionnaires were also passed out to counselors of each school at their respective faculty meetings. Orientation to the questionnaire was given by a short brochure containing the thesis outline rationale, problem statement and purpose of the study. Of the eighty-two questionnaires disseminated to teachers, seventy-nine were returned for a ninety-six per cent return. The results were tabulated on a per cent basis and plotted in table form. Of the eight counselor questionnaires disseminated, all eight were returned for a 100 per cent return. All questions that needed tables for more clear explanation of the data were constructed in table form.
Summary of Related Literature.—The literature reviewed has been concerned with answering three basic questions:

I. What factors go into developing an overall grading system?

Schwartz says that an adequate grading system should (a) determine the present status of the student; (b) identify factors responsible for an influential to the individual's growth and development; and (c) determine the individual's potentialities for future growth and development.

Wrinkle adds that if one wants to get an objective look at a grading system, he must determine whether the objectives of the educational program have been identified — whether they are clearly stated — if they have specific meaning — if they are understood, accepted and recognized as important to students, teachers and parents. He must determine if different objectives are evaluated and reported separately. He must determine whether the teacher can evaluate the growth and achievement of the student with respect to the established objectives. He must inquire into provisions for student self-evaluation. Finally, he must determine whether evaluations can be translated into other symbols for necessary transfer.

Thomas adds that in a proper grading system, teacher marks should be periodically perused to insure reasonableness and uniformity.
Secondly, strong opinion favors the development of marking policy in committee by faculty and administration. Thirdly, departmental structure headed by a chairman has been used effectively in the development of policy and in helping teachers conform to marking policy. Finally, the method most commonly used to communicate school marking policy has been faculty handbooks, faculty meetings and department meetings.

Ebel comments that grading systems are essential because no better means than marks seem likely to appear. Marks must be sound and dependable to serve effectively their purposes of stimulating, directing and rewarding student efforts to learn.

Terwilliger says that in grading systems collectively: marks and rank should be a common language among schools; that an "A" is really an "A" regardless of school.

Depue adds to Terwilliger's comment that:

The increasing importance of accurate measurement in all fields of education demands that common sense simplification and overall intelligent synthesis be used in rebuilding it to make it work better.

Wrinkle says that administratively, marks indicate student passing or failure, promotion or retention or whether he should be graduated; that they be used in transferring students between schools, for purposes of college admission, and by employers in evaluating prospective employees.

For guidance purposes, marks identify areas of special ability and inability for purposes of course enrollment or exclusion and in determining the number of courses in which a student may be enrolled.
For information purposes, marks inform students and parents regarding the achievement, progress, and success or failure in his schoolwork.

For motivation and discipline purposes, marks are used to stimulate students toward greater learning effort, for determining eligibility honors such as participation in school activities, athletic teams, extra-curricular club membership and awarding of scholarships.

Thorndike emphasizes that grades help guide the student and parents in future educational plans. Secondly, grades help the school decide on pupil readiness for programs, courses, etcetera. Thirdly, grades help higher educational levels to appraise an applicant's acceptability for the program they present. Grades also help prospective employers to decide upon the suitability of a student for job placement requiring academic skills.

Travers cautiously adds that grades must be presented and recorded in as understandable form as possible to the user. The main problem is to transform test scores and other forms of achievement into a form which will be easily understood by those concerned about pupil progress.

Smith and Adams point out that in most grading systems grades are usually assigned on the basis of (1) performance of each student in relation to that of the rest of the class (relative marking and grading on the curve), (2) performance of each student in relation to a predetermined standard of performance (absolute marking and status or achievement grading) and (3) performance of each student in relation to his capacity to perform (growth grading). They add that the reason for the existence of several types of grading is that curve grading is
more easily interpreted than growth and absolute grading, more easily understood by parents, and measures relative comparison within a group. It also tends toward predetermining grades in advance of measurement though a normal curve cannot be assumed in a group of thirty or less. Growth grading encourages the weak student by positively reinforcing his efforts and it helps prevent loafing on the part of strong students. However, achievement is based on gains which works to the advantage of the lower level student.

Thorndike suggests that teachers maintain an adequate grading system by (1) defining objectives and translating these into behaviors that can be tested, (2) decide on the relative emphasis to be given to each student behavior and (3) test and measure these behaviors.

Terwilliger concludes this section with the matter of grading non-academic classroom factors. In a state-wide study done in Texas, he concluded that an introduction of a standard set of separate character and work habit ratings were favored.

II. What are the common negative aspects of grading systems as they exist today?

Schwartz mentions three negative factors including lack of preciseness, variability and fostering of unwholesome competitiveness among students in which the less able students are predestined to lose.

Gilchrist, Dutton and Wrinkle include six fallacies of grading consisting of questions: Can anyone tell what a mark means if it represents the average of the students' achievement? Can a student achieve any marks by regulating his personal effort? Does success in school life as indicated by school marks correspond to his success in
later life? Should school marks be thought of as paychecks? Does the competitiveness of adult life justify the emphasis given to the competition in school? Can something used as a means over a long period of time not be recognized as an end or value in itself?

One specific negative aspect of grading systems is the ambiguity and inexactness of the criteria to be measured. Rating scales as shown in Tables 3, 4 and 5 of the appendix exhibit examples of this aspect.

Froelich summarizes four main reasons for avoidance of rating scales. These include their usage as sources of teacher bias, their lack of preciseness, their need for school-wide acceptance and in-service teacher training.

A second negative aspect of grading is concerned with the disadvantages of the various types of grades.

Wrinkle emphasizes that the number one fallacy is that anyone can tell from a single grade the student's level of achievement.

Smith and Adams say that the problem with curve grading is that it can place the control of the quality of work done in the hands of the class. Secondly, the better students may be subject to pressure toward setting the curve low. Finally, the weak student always has to receive a "D" or "F" in order to keep the curve normal.

Fensch adds that in today's predominant ability groupings and smaller pupil-teacher ratios, neither situation is really applicable to a bell curve which is based on the law of chance.

Concerning growth grading, Travers mentions that "too often a combination of both systems (status and growth) is used within a
single school which renders records uninterpretable.

Smith and Adams add that the student may get the idea he is sufficiently prepared for advanced work when he is not; that such a student transcript could be misleading to the counselor. They add that perfect scores do not mean that the course objectives have been met one hundred per cent nor do zeros indicate no learning. Finally, the difficulty of the test is determined by the teacher; hence, he can set the standards for grades for his class.

A third negative aspect of grading systems concerns faults of rating instruments. The human rater, of course, is not perfect, nor perfectible. Thorndike says that "raters cannot give information they do not have and cannot be made to give information they do not wish to give." He adds that unsatisfactory trait names like citizenship, adjustment and effort are interpreted in different ways by different teachers.

Thorndike discusses five other human errors especially as they relate to rating scales.

The generosity error appears when the rater assumes that one person is as good as another if not better. This raises the mid-point of a set of ratings giving the majority of a group above average ratings.

The halo error is the tendency to rate in terms of an overall general impression without differentiating specific aspects; he allows his total reaction to a person to color his judgment of each specific trait. Personal bias results when an observer rates all individuals too high or too low.

Logical error results when the teacher misinterprets the cri-
teria or the characteristic to be rated.

Errors of central tendency appear when a rater assigns most of his ratings at or near the midpoint of the scale, rarely grading to either extreme of the scale.

Testing as a rating instrument is criticized by Lange in that tests are not testing essentials but rather fringe learnings.

Drews adds that testing should not be the only method of evaluating intellectual achievement, for this is external. Self-evaluation of the learner is internal and more likely to be helpful than testing alone.

Another negative aspect of grading involves the interpretation of grades between and among instructors. Thorndike separates the problem into (a) rater differences and (b) rater spread.

Rater differences appear when one man's "outstanding" is another man's "satisfactory". There is a tremendous variance in interpretations of numbers, letters and adjectives among raters. Rater spread exists when the raters are conservative (few "A's" or "F's"). Others go to extremes thereby reducing the comparability of ratings from one rater to another.

A final negative factor in grading systems exists at the administrative level and is concerned specifically with the lack of communication among schools.

A study by Morris concluded that principals are most often involved in computing class rank, but (a) not all were computed by machine; (b) not all were based on grades 9 - 12; and (c) no universal concept of senior rank in class for admissions purposes is evident.
Ebel concludes this section by pointing out that some educational leaders promote different philosophies, and some teachers accept varying points of view. Since different philosophies promote different marking systems, it is not surprising that differences of opinion and proposals for change characterize today's schools.

III. What improvements can be made in grading systems in order to make for easier, more accurate and more consistent interpretations on the part of the school counselor?

Gerberich, Greene and Jorgensen say that:

The teacher must know intimately the characteristics of his pupils if he is to teach them effectively. He must know his instructional goals and purposes if he is to work realistically toward their attainment. He must know the degree to which he has succeeded in bringing about desired changes in his pupils.

Suggestions for classifying and systematizing teacher grades are made by Schwartz as he concludes that marks reach their greatest value when they are supported by objective data.

Thorndike adds that external factors like behavior be matters of concern, but that their effects be defined and weighed as such at the beginning of the course.

On correcting for human errors, Froelich and Hoyt suggest that (a) personal bias can be minimized when using numbers by changing raw scores to standard scores, (b) errors of central tendency are difficult to correct for their origin lies deep in the raters' own personality; thus, the self must be changed first, and (c) Halo effect can be minimized by rating all individuals on the first characteristic before rating on the second one. Logical error can be largely overcome
by sharpening the definition of each characteristic.

To construct and use effectively anecdotal records, Froelich and Hoyt suggest (a) separation of description and interpretation of an incident; (b) focus attention on the student rather than on the situation; (c) limit the description of behavior to a single incident; (d) be objective in interpreting the incident, and (e) do not recommend treatment beyond your boundaries of knowledge.

In regard to the defining of grades, Schwartz has originated a list of letter grade definitions:

The grade "A" means -

1. The objectives of the course are achieved.
2. The instructor has no reservations about the student's achievement level.
3. The student is prepared to high quality advanced work in the subject.
4. The student is highly capable of practical application in the subject where applicable.

The grade of "B" means -

1. The objectives of the course are achieved.
2. The instructor has minor reservations about the student's achievement level.
3. The student is prepared for above average advanced work in the subject.
4. The student is capable of competent application of the subject where applicable.

The grade of "C" means -

1. The objectives of the course are minimally achieved where the instructor regards minimum preparation for advanced work in the subject. And/or
2. The student has average ability to apply his learning to practical situations where it should be applied.

The grade of "D" means -

1. The objectives of the course are achieved at a submarginal level as preparation for advanced work in the subject. And/or
2. The student has low ability to apply his learning in practical situations and little learning to apply the subject where it should be applied.

The grade of "F" means -

1. The objectives of the course are not achieved at a level which the instructor regards as minimum preparation for advanced work in the field; the student should repeat the course if he plans to take further work. And/or

2. The student has not shown significant learning for practical application of the subject. Or -

3. The student has failed to complete the course without prearrangement. Or -

4. The student withdrew from the course after the final deadline date.

Ebel has compiled a generalized list of conclusions that pertain to the improvement of grading criteria and practices. Like Thorndike, he believes that marks should be based on achievement only. Other conclusions include (a) using marks as measurements rather than as evaluations; (b) that status grading is more reliable than growth grading; (c) that the use of multiple marks can improve grading; (d) that the publication of distributions of marks is essential to the quality control of the marking system; (e) that relative marking that divides the score scale into equal intervals is an alternative to strict marking on the curve, and (f) that each component of a mark carry a weight dependent upon the variability of the component scores.

Terwilliger, on assigning the relative importance of homework, quizzes, tests, classroom performance and projects, says that:

There should be a general set of guidelines which will assist the teacher in a given subject area to plan the evaluation of students so that the skills represented are generally the same as those of the students with other teachers.
Glick, on the systematizing of grading criteria suggests the use of a point system with predetermined number of points for all grading criteria to be used.

Lindsley suggests that a system of grading intermittently based on reinforcement will allow a student to work on all papers with equal effort.

Tacey originated a method of grading oral reports which is based more on pupil appraisal than on teacher appraisal, although a combination of both.

Travers suggests a conversion of raw score points to standard scores in rank order. Continue, with a scale to determine the final distribution of grades.

Findley suggests a system similar to that of Travers but with the use of an additional departmentalized test. Then each teacher within a department should correct one specific part of the test.

On equating grades within departments, Bauernfiend suggests the following operation: (1) rank students within each class of a given department on the basis of each student's year's performance, (2) give a standardized achievement test within each department and (3) combine the results in a fashion determined by each department.

Thorndike suggests the following unique grading method for atypical groups. Weight group levels according to ability. Secondly, assign specific grades in terms of the population taking that specific subject, not of the total school population. Finally, for a large general course handled as a single group (fifty or more), use the total class group as the defining population.
Schwartz advises teachers on the following good grading practices:

Grading systems should be worked out cooperatively by all involved directly, that they be positive in nature, openly used and openly arrived at. They should not emphasize formulas or distributions, nor should they stereotype but rather involve a wide variety of procedures. They should involve a minimum of clerical records and not be necessarily tied to a rigid schedule. They should reflect all the values of the school and emphasize the total development of the child.

Wrinkle adds to and reinforces Schwartz suggestions with the following ideals: Teachers should demonstrate a critical, constructive attitude toward grading while recognizing the functions grading is supposed to serve. They must evaluate their present practices, identifying weaknesses and formulate newer, more sound guiding principles in making grading decisions. They must propose desirable grading procedures, improve grading forms and suggest improved practices.

Grading system improvement on an administrative level is suggested in a study by Thomas. He advises that each school or district establish a definite written marking system developed in committee by faculty and administration. When this policy becomes developed it should be adopted by the governing board of the district and become part of the board of education. Development and implementation of marking policy should make major use of departments, especially chairmen. Marking policy should be distributed and explained to each teacher in written form. Like Ebel, Thomas suggests annual grade frequency distributions for quality control. Grading should include (a) school philosophy and marking, (b) definition of grading criteria, (c) methods
for marking grouped classes, (d) factors relating to final marks and (e) use of the failing mark.

Thorndike adds that the school must recognize the arbitrary social judgment implied in defining grading systems and make that judgment for our school on the basis of full understanding and rational analysis of the implications of our decision. Secondly, it must establish general adherence to that definition among the individual faculty members of the school. Finally, it must devise techniques to assist teachers in adapting and applying that definition to each class.

Concerning the improvement in the computation of senior class rank, Riban suggests that courses be weighted according to ability level. In this case, remedial courses would have a multiplier of one, general level courses a multiplier of two, college preparation courses a multiplier of three and accelerated level a multiplier of four.

Terwilliger adds that a standard set of grades should be used to compute class rank; either nine through twelve or ten through twelve.

Finally, an in-service grading program would be a necessary part of improving any grading system. Miller suggests, however, that in-service programs be based on the needs of teachers. To determine these needs, the program director, in the case of the counselor, should explore (a) the interest of the staff in guidance work, (b) the extent of present participation, (c) present teacher competencies, (d) school and other resources available, (e) time needed to organize and conduct the program, (f) availability of outside consultants, (g) funds available for necessities and (l) school time available for the program.

The in-service program in operation would concern itself, ac-
according to Miller, with (a) problems of its participants rather than its leaders, (b) participants who come prepared to participate, (c) leaders prepared to carry out their functions democratically, (d) democratic discussion among leaders and participants, (e) small, informed, communicative activity groups, (f) evaluation and improvement of procedures and (g) carrying out conference decisions in a practical school situation.

Conclusions for Counselors.—From this study the writer concludes:

1. Teachers need more time to work with a grading problem that is considered of at least moderate importance to all seven counselors interviewed.

2. Counselors need to acquaint themselves more closely with the permanent records and grades of their students as well as the grading methods of teachers in their respective schools.

3. When a student grading problem is presented to the counselor, the counselor (a) counsels for the underlying problems, (b) considers the total permanent record card for discrepancies in student achievement ability, and (c) confers with the appropriate teachers to confirm the problem and attempts to resolve the problem.

4. Counselors rely most heavily on teacher grades and teacher recommendations as well as achievement test scores for placing students in college, jobs and school groupings.

5. Most counselors favor changes in the grading system with emphasis on weighted grades, an orientation program, in-service grading and a written handbook containing specifics of the grading system.
6. All of the Atlanta public schools have similar grading systems in respect to letters representing numbers and most are alike in converting accumulated letter grades on a 1.0 - 4.0 basis into the final senior class rank average.

7. The majority of schools consider multiple criteria for determining grades.

8. The majority of school counselors questioned had no part in constructing the grading system in their respective schools.

9. Most of the Atlanta public schools have established a need for ability groupings.

10. The seniors in most Atlanta public schools are included in rank order when determining final grade status of the students.

11. There is no standardized method of determining what types of course grades should be included when determining senior class rank in the Atlanta public schools.

12. Since exact rank is computed in most schools, quartiles and deciles can be easily computed thereafter.

13. There is no standard policy in the Atlanta public schools for review and/or revision of grades by school principals or department chairmen.

14. Atlanta public school teachers are free to assign any distribution of grades they feel is fair.

Implications for Counselors.—These implications are as follows:

1. Teachers differ considerably on the criteria by which they award grades.
2. Teachers differ on the method in which they evaluate criteria even when the criteria are the same.

3. If counselors rely as heavily as indicated on teacher grades and teacher recommendations, that teachers try to improve their knowledge and use of proper grading methods and criteria.

4. Though the basic Atlanta Public School grading systems are similar on the surface, the underlying criteria and individual methods differ more noticeably.

5. If ability groupings in the Atlanta Public Schools is prevalent, that its retention is an indication that it works more effectively than the heterogeneous method.

6. Counselors who overwhelmingly favor establishment of a weighted system must be dissatisfied with the effectiveness of the present grading system.

7. If there is any school-wide policy governing the lowering of final grades of a teacher by anyone after the grades are recorded, they are either unknown or unpublished.

8. The importance of a grading system is not in whether all schools use letter grades corresponding to numerical groupings, but rather how similarly the schools and their respective teachers arrive at the composition, criteria and methods that determine the respective letter grades.

9. There is a noticeable interest on the part of counselors for a weighted grading system.

10. Many counselors are not sure what administrative policies govern the lowering of final grades.
11. If there is any school-wide policy governing the lowering of final grades of a teacher by the teacher or a grading committee after the grade has been recorded, they are either unknown or unpublicized to most counselors.

12. Not all new teachers in the Atlanta public schools are formally orientated on the grading systems of their particular school.

13. New teachers in the Atlanta public schools differ considerably on the criteria by which they award grades.

14. Teachers differ on the method in which they evaluate grading criteria even when the criteria are the same.

15. Attendance and student desire for success are important determinants of counselor recommendations for college, job placement and higher school groupings.

16. Counselors would have an interest in becoming more informed about their grading system for the purpose of orientating any new counselors moving into the system as well as improving their own task of interpreting teacher grades.

**Recommendations For Counselors.**—These recommendations are as follows:

1. Counselors be given more time; hence, more clerical help and/or less non-counseling duties to work with the grading interpretation problem which is considered of no less than moderate importance to all counselors interviewed.

2. Counselors give more of their additional time to researching and acquainting themselves with the permanent records of their students.

3. Counselors should detect and inquire into any permanent
record card if discrepancies exist; that counselors notify appropriate students and teachers in order to rectify such a situation if it exists.

4. If counselors rely as heavily as indicated on teacher grades and teacher recommendations, then the counselors remain informed, up to date and in close contact with the teacher and with the methods used for grading by teachers within their school systems.

4. The counselor should work in concert with the grading committee to consider the following in the future: (a) provision for minimum course requirements and/or final examination, (b) an improved system of ability grouping and provision for regrouping if necessary, (c) use of interest inventories to help with the placement of students into the proper curriculum and/or ability grouping, (d) an improved and systematic method of determining senior class rank, (e) a pass-fail system requiring teacher recommendations for advanced work.

6. Counselors, in confidence, compare teacher grades with achievement test scores through the use of scattergrams; that counselors construct local norms and compare with national norms; then confidentially discuss the results with individual students.

7. Educationally mentally retarded classes not be included in the regular grading systems or as part of the standard senior class rank.

8. Senior class rank in the Atlanta Public Schools be determined by one grade level range, either nine through twelve or ten through twelve.

9. The Atlanta Public Schools adopt one standard method for determining senior class rank, either academic courses only or all
courses collectively.

10. Schools continue to report exact class rank, but in addition, compute also deciles and quartiles that would aid the counselor in his clerical duties and which would make perusal of individual permanent records more convenient for purposes of recommendations and consultation.

11. Standard policies for the review and revision of final grades by school principals and department chairmen should be established.

12. Standard rules for lowering final grades should be established in the Atlanta public schools.

Conclusions for Teachers.—The writer concludes the following for teachers:

1. At least seventeen criteria are being used by teachers in the Atlanta public schools.

2. Not all grading systems in the Atlanta public schools are written down.

3. At least one of five teachers is either dissatisfied with the present school grading system or is not using it because of lack of information.

4. If most teachers favor giving all students an equal chance at high or low grades, then courses should be weighted according to difficulty.

5. The majority of responding teachers indicated satisfaction with a test system that allows the student to apply his knowledge in practical situations mentally and/or physically.
6. There is no clear-cut method of grading teacher-made tests.

7. There is no standard method for weighting honor rolls and no general agreement among teachers as to whether or not they should be weighted.

8. The majority of teachers do not correct homework assignments more than once or twice per week.

9. The overwhelming majority of teachers indicate an interest in an in-service grading program.

10. The majority of teachers indicated that they are in favor of retaining grades in some form.

11. The majority of teachers indicated the process of grading as a teacher responsibility is a necessary part of a teacher's work.

12. Most teachers do not favor a system of grading that limits the distribution of any grade.

13. The overwhelming majority of teachers consider behavior to at least some degree in assigning grades.

14. Better than half of all responding teachers give at least some consideration to work done by students in previous marking periods before assigning grades for the present marking period.

15. A decided majority of responding teachers indicated that their grading criteria compares quite closely to those of their colleagues.

16. About one of three teachers indicated noticeably different grading criteria from their colleagues for awarding grades.

17. Teachers on the whole indicated individual formulas for weighting the criteria they use in assigning grades.
Implications for Teachers.—These implications are as follows:

1. A considerably variation exists in the weight placed on teachers' grading criteria and in the methods in which they are used by teachers to award grades.

2. Unwritten grading systems cannot be easily explained clearly as is necessary; hence, teachers cannot adhere to them as closely as is necessary.

3. The lack of clear-cut grading practices on teacher-made tests causes an inconsistent grading system; hence, one that is or could be unfair.

4. If some school time were allotted for in-service grading, there would be substantial interest by at least forty per cent of responding teachers.

5. If some school time were allotted for in-service grading, the majority of teachers would not feel a need to overburden their work schedules with paper correcting duties.

6. Teachers feel that performance and the ability to apply knowledge are most important to them than the results of written work alone.

7. Teacher grades cannot be completely objective if classroom behavior is considered before assigning final grades.

8. Teacher grades cannot be completely objective if consideration is given to work done in previous grading periods by students before assigning grades for the present grading period.

9. If individual teacher formulas corresponding to grading
criteria and their weights differ, then the values attached to individual grades must vary considerably; hence, grades are not apt to be equated among teachers within the school system.

10. Teachers believe that a student should pass those courses in which he puts forth effort regardless of whether or not his numerical average is passing.

11. The use of essay, objective and standardized tests is diminishing in importance in the classroom of the Atlanta Public Schools.

12. An inconsistent method of grading teacher-made tests can cause an inconsistent grading system; hence, one that could be unfair and inaccurate.

13. There is no general agreement as to whether or not an honor roll should be weighted.

14. The home and community environment are factors that are considered by teachers before awarding final grades.

15. The majority of teachers could not attribute a lack of time to tedious paper correction as an excuse for not improving their grading criteria and methods.

16. There is no real agreement concerning who should conduct an in-service grading process.

17. Too many grades are being assigned subjectively, based partially on a student's behavior in the classroom.

18. Too many grades are being based partially on "reputation grading." That this is a subjective consideration that tends to bias a student's grade which should be as objective an evaluation as possible.
19. There is a need to close the gap between equated and non-equated grading criteria among teachers not only within individual schools but among all of the schools in the Atlanta Public School System.

20. Not all of the individual teacher formulas used to weight the criteria used in assigning final grades are alike and that these individual formulas do not lend themselves to an equated system of grading.

Recommendations for Teachers.--The following recommendations are given for teachers:

1. Tests, quizzes, class participation and homework continue to be used as the main determinants or criteria of grades.

2. Specific, predetermined weights be placed on the value of each criterion.

3. Any additional criteria be determined by a grading committee that includes teachers, counselor and administration, preferably on a volunteer basis. (a) That the grading committee be chosen as soon as possible, and that this committee meet periodically to review present policies, accept and research new advice and ideas and consider and seek changes or alternatives in the system that seem necessary.

4. Criteria and their weighting system be explained in a preschool teacher orientation program and written in a form of handbook. That in addition, proper explanation of the grading system be made to students and interested parents by a qualified individual.

5. Periodic meetings be held in which new ideas could evolve concerning grading and to insure that all teachers are following the system and are in agreement with it.
6. A weighted system of grading be set up for the different track or ability levels in the Atlanta Public Schools; that all schools use the same system simultaneously.

7. The importance of tests be reduced in determining grades. That more appraisal be attached to the neglected factors of (a) attitudes and opinions, (b) critical thinking ability, (c) mental health, (d) work and study habits and (e) social skills and group relationships.

8. Teacher purposes be defined and translated in terms of expected student behaviors, and decide on a method in which to measure these behaviors. Rating scales would be a suggestion for the letter recommendation.

9. A form of self-evaluation be used as part of the regular grading program.

10. One standard method of grading departmental tests be worked out democratically by department chairmen, and the grading committee in all of the Atlanta Public Schools.

11. A weighted honor roll be established in the school system according to track and/or ability levels.

12. Ability groupings become established within each school curriculum so that each child can be allowed to work at his own level of ability.

13. Educationally mentally retarded classes be established below a certain level, ideally eighty.

14. Teachers find and use a more effective, less time-consuming method of correcting papers to allow them additional time for other educational problems such as grading.
15. An in-service grading program be established; that some school time be alloted to such a program; that the leader of such a program be duly qualified and agreeable to the majority of the participants and/or grading committee.

16. Grades be more thoroughly defined and more closely equated among teachers and grading systems.

17. Predetermined grade distributions be discouraged as a method of grading in order that all students may have an equal chance at high or low grades within a weighted system.

18. A separate grade for intangibles like conduct, effort and citizenship be given apart from measureable grades, preferably in the form of rating scales.

19. "Reputation grading" be discouraged as part of grading methods.

20. Individual grading formulas be reorganized through the grading committee into standardized formulas, departmentally, throughout the school system.
APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COUNSELORS

1. Is The Grading System In Your School Based On:
   
a. Letter grades corresponding to numerical groupings (eg. 79-77 = D, 78-84 = C, etc.)? Yes ___  No ___
   
b. Are they based on 0.0 to 4.0; hence, numerically only? Yes ___  No ___
   
c. Pass or fail system? Yes ___  No ___
   
d. Written report? Yes ___  No ___

2. Does Each Grade Regardless Of Base Have Certain Criteria To Be Upheld In Addition To Test Achievement (eg. homework preparation, class participation, reports, research projects, attendance, etc.)? Yes ___  No ___

3. Do You Or Did You Have Any Responsibilities In Setting Up The Present Grading System In Your School? Yes ___  No ___
   
   Was It Made Up Primarily By:

   a. A chosen or volunteer committee of staff members? Yes ___  No ___
   
b. The administration? Yes ___  No ___
   
c. Other committees or combinations of above? Yes ___  No ___
   
d. If "Other", state: ____________________________ ____________________________

4. Are Homogeneous Groupings Or Tracks Provided For By School Policy? Yes ___  No ___
   
   If "No":

   a. Is your grading system weighted or unweighted in terms of ability or track grouping? Yes ___  No ___
   
b. Do you think a weighted system is best in equating high ability and lower ability groupings and courses? Yes ___  No ___  Do you think an unweighted system either does or would work best in your school? Yes ___  No ___
   
c. Does your school have special policies related to grading in courses where ability groupings exist? Yes ___  No ___
   
   If YES, state briefly:

   ____________________________ ____________________________

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5. Which one or more of the following items would you say represents a problem to you in your school setting concerning interpretation of the grading system?
   a. Difference in teacher interpretations of what each grade means; hence, need to retranslate in your own mind.
   b. No track system or ability grouping.
   c. No weighted system to equate grades between higher and lower ability and course groupings or tracks.

6. How is senior class rank determined in your school?
   a. By the principal
   b. By hand or machine computation
   c. Based on grades 9-12, 10-12, or ______
   d. With respect to weighted grades according to difficulty of courses or without regard to type of courses taken throughout high school.

7. For which students is rank in class computed?
   a. All
   b. College preparatory only
   c. Other

8. What types of final grades are included in determining rank in class?
   a. All
   b. Academic only
   c. Subjects requiring outside preparation
   d. Other

9. How is class rank computed?
   a. Exact rank
   b. Percentile
   c. Decile
   d. Quartile

10. Is there any school policy that regulates the distribution of grades (eg. 5% A's; 20% B's, etc.) given by individual teachers?
    Yes ___  No ___

11. What school-wide policy, if any, governs lowering of final grades?

12. Is there provision for review and/or revision of grades by school principals or department chairmen? Yes ___  No ___

13. Give briefly specific problems or suggestions concerning the interpretation and use of grades
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

1. On What Criterion Or Criteria Do You Assign Grades?
   a. Results of tests and quizzes
   b. Class Participation
   c. Homework preparation
   d. Other

2. Is The Grading System In Your School Written Down? Yes ___ No ___

3. Did You Find Out About Your School Grading System:
   a. During orientation? Yes ___ No ___
   b. From a student or teacher's handbook? Yes ___ No ___
   c. Verbally understood but unwritten? Yes ___ No ___
   d. Did you use a more personalized grading system? Yes ___ No ___

4. Do You Give All Track Levels An Equal Chance At High Or Low Grades? Yes ___ No ___
   If NO:
   a. Do you believe that only high track groupings deserve A's?
   b. Do you believe that if a person tries hard in a lower track grouping, but fails mathematically, that he should pass?

5. In Your Class, Which Kind Of Test Do You Feel Measures Best The Types Of Behavior You Want Evaluated?
   a. Essay tests
   b. Standardized tests
   c. Objective tests
   d. Oral or applied performance tests
   e. Other

6. Does Your School Have An Honor Roll? Yes ___ No ___
   If YES:
   a. Is it based on a weighted system? Yes ___ No ___
   b. Does its existence help motivate all groupings of students or just the college bound? Yes ___ No ___
   c. Are all students, regardless of grouping, eligible for it? Yes ___ No ___
   d. If you had your choice, would you rather have an honor roll based on weighted grades? _____ unweighted grades?
7. Are There Any Other Factors Not Mentioned In Previous Questions That Might Affect The Grades You Give Such As Community Factors, etc.? List Any You Can Think Of.

________________________________________________________________________________________

8. Give Any Information You Feel Is Pertinent To This Questionnaire That Has Not Been Covered By Previous Questions, Such As Personal Feelings About Your School's Grading System Or Systems In General.

________________________________________________________________________________________

9. Give 5 Criteria That You Would Deem Paramount In Deciding On Final Grades For Your Students And Courses.
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   4. 
   5. 

10. With What Frequency Do You Typically Grade Homework For Quality?
    a. Daily ______
    b. One time per week ______
    c. Once every two weeks ______
    d. Once a month ______
    e. Seldom or not at all ______

11. If An In-Service Course On Grading Were Given In Your School, Would You Be Interested In Participating?
    a. As an active member after school hours? ______
    b. As an active member with some school time allotted for meetings? ______
    c. As an active member under leadership of the school counselor, Psychologist or Psychometrist? ______
    d. Not interested ______

12. Which Of The Following Statements Best Represents Your General Attitude Toward School Grades?
    a. Should abolish ______
    b. Necessary evil ______
    c. Moderate importance ______
    d. Major importance ______

13. Which Of The Following Best Describes The Importance You Attach To Grading As Part Of The Job Of The Teacher?
    a. None ______
    b. Minor importance ______
    c. Moderate importance ______
    d. Major importance ______
14. Do You Assign Grades To Approximate Some Predetermined Distribution? Yes ____ No ____

15. What Consideration Do You Give To Classroom Behavior In Determining Course Grades? eg. causes classroom distractions, responds frequently, etc.
   a. Minor ______
   b. Moderate ______
   c. Major ______
   d. Sole ______
   e. None ______

16. What Consideration Do You Give To Work Done In Previous Grading Periods When Assigning Grades For A Period Just Ending?
   a. Minor ______
   b. Moderate ______
   c. Major ______
   d. Sole ______
   e. None ______

17. How Closely Do The Criteria You Use For Grading Your Own Students Compare With The Criteria Used By Other Teachers In Your Own School Or System?
   a. Very closely ______
   b. Only minor differences ______
   c. Noticeably different ______
   d. All seem to use own personal unknown criteria ______

18. Do You Use Some Kind Of Formula To Weight The Factors (homework, tests, etc.) Which You Consider In Assigning Grades? Yes ____ No ____
TABLE 1

PHENOMENA TABLE

(Phenomena is defined here as a collective symbol to encompass all measurable characteristics that teachers and other educational personnel wish to measure)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTER</th>
<th>ABILITY (in)</th>
<th>APTITUDE (in)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Clerical tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRITICAL THINKING</td>
<td>ATTITUDES (in)</td>
<td>KNOWLEDGE (in)</td>
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<td>Chemistry</td>
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<td>DEXTERITY</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>Contemporary affairs</td>
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<td>EFFORT</td>
<td>Minority groups</td>
<td>Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAIN</td>
<td>et cetera</td>
<td>et cetera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUP</td>
<td>ABSTRACT THINKING</td>
<td>SKILL (in)</td>
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<tr>
<td>STRUCTURE</td>
<td>Achievement in</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANDWRITING</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Typing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTELLIGENCE</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>Woodwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>et cetera</td>
<td>et cetera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENTAL AGE</td>
<td>UNDERSTANDING (for)</td>
<td>INTERESTS (in)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADJUSTMENT</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGGRESSIVENESS</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONALITY</td>
<td>Physical Science</td>
<td>Vocations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITY</td>
<td>et cetera</td>
<td>et cetera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEECH</td>
<td>STUDY HABITS</td>
<td>VOCABULARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READINESS (for)</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. PHYSICAL FACTORS</th>
<th>II. HEALTH HABITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech</td>
<td>Eating habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>Sleeping habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Personal hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Conditions</td>
<td>Complexion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Coordination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personality Adjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressiveness or submissive tendencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group (peer) relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aptitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV. EDUCATIONAL FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past achievement - areas of superiority and weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitability of Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special successes or failures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas of activity chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitability of instructional materials and methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study and work habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-student relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-school relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY BACKGROUND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and social characteristics and influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward child, school, society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic and social status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status of parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home duties and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEIGHBORHOOD FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical location and characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment (full and/or part-time opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INSTRUCTIONS: Place a check mark on the line at the point which best describes the student. The descriptive statement under the line indicate variations in the characteristic being considered. You need not check only at these points. If you wish you may place your check any place between these points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTIC</th>
<th>RATING SCALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indolent-</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>does not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effort-</td>
<td>complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs</td>
<td>required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>much</td>
<td>work-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prodding-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUMMARY OF RATINGS ON INDUSTRIOUSNESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating*</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT # 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT # 2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT # 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Put the number of person making rating in column. Identify this person by recording his number and name below.

1. Miss Smith
2. Miss Wells
3. Mr. Young
4. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>INFERIOR</th>
<th>BELOW AVERAGE</th>
<th>AVERAGE</th>
<th>ABOVE AVERAGE</th>
<th>SUPERIOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELIABILITY</td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td>Thoroughly dependable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability.</td>
<td>Neglects promises, obligations, appointments.</td>
<td>Often needs supervision.</td>
<td>Reliable on most occasions.</td>
<td>Willingness to assume obligations. Keeps appointments.</td>
<td> </td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness.</td>
<td>Dishonest</td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to get along without supervision.</td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty.</td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperability</td>
<td>Disagreeable.</td>
<td>Slow to respond.</td>
<td>Usually agreeable.</td>
<td>Happy in teamwork. Always agreeable.</td>
<td>Eager to do more than required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptable, tactful, agreeable, cheerful.</td>
<td>Antagonistic.</td>
<td>Not willing to help.</td>
<td>Generally willing to help.</td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEADERSHIP</td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence.</td>
<td>Shuns responsibility.</td>
<td>Prefers plans of others.</td>
<td>Will take responsibility if asked. Leads in minor activities.</td>
<td>Often shows initiative. Arouses enthusiasm.</td>
<td>Good judgment. Accepted by others as genuine leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative.</td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good judgment.</td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprising.</td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respected - has a following.</td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
<td> </td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# TABLE 5

## THE MINNESOTA SCALE OF RATING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>COOPERATION</th>
<th>PERSONAL APPEARANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Careless.</td>
<td>Reliable and</td>
<td>Poorly groomed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not dependable.</td>
<td>punctual.</td>
<td>Clothes unbecoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often tardy or</td>
<td>Makes up time</td>
<td>or inappropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>absent</td>
<td>lost by absence.</td>
<td>Poor posture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stimulated by</td>
<td>Reasonably well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>responsibility and</td>
<td>groomed. Clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>carries it well.</td>
<td>becoming and appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always on time.</td>
<td>Fairly good posture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tries to get the</td>
<td>Immaculate; clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>easiest job.</td>
<td>show discriminating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Antagonizes others.</td>
<td>taste. Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>posture. Impresses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>people favorably.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 6
TRAVERS' CONVERSION TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Standardized Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>62</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 7
GLICK'S CONVERSION TABLE
RAW SCORES CONVERTED TO LETTERS FOR FOUR DIFFERENT YEARS OR CLASSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Mark</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>251 to 225</td>
<td>254 to 229</td>
<td>311 to 290</td>
<td>502 to 460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>217 to 192</td>
<td>218 to 193</td>
<td>277 to 239</td>
<td>326 to 385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>185 to 140</td>
<td>188 to 154</td>
<td>230 to 192</td>
<td>374 to 290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>130 to 95</td>
<td>149 to 125</td>
<td>186 to 121</td>
<td>279 to 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>74 to 47</td>
<td>114 to 54</td>
<td>105 to 50</td>
<td>150 to 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Periodicals


Unpublished Materials


Interview

Findley, Warren G. Interview at Atlanta University, November 15, 1967.
VITA

RYAN, WINSTON CHURCHILL

Education: A.B., University of New Hampshire, (History), 1962; Summer Session, 1966, Plymouth State College (extension), 1966-67; Atlanta University NDEA Guidance and Counseling Institute, 1967-68.


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Member: Sigma Beta Fraternity
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