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5/22/58

A SURVEY OF LITERATURE ON THE NONGRADED SCHOOL

by

JAMES KELLOGG HUNTER

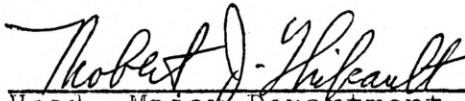
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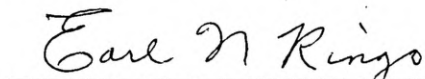
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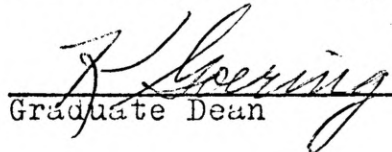
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Graduate Dean

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

August, 1970

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the consensus concerning the nongraded approach to school organization. An effort was made to reduce the vast amount of literature to a concise, comprehensive, overview.

To conduct this research, a review of related literature was made with an attempt to analyse the literature to get a clear picture of the breadth and scope of the nongraded school.

Even though there was a great deal of literature, the author found that very little research has been done on the subject. He found also that there was confusion in terminology and definition of the graded and nongraded schools.

Some of the important conclusions of this study are as follows: (1) standardization of terminology would help to reduce the confusion of educators and the public; (2) evaluation of the effects of the program has been hampered by the lack of sufficient research; (3) the program is nationwide; (4) the majority of the nongraded schools have this organizational structure only in the primary years; (5) many schools that claim to be nongraded actually in the true sense are not.

The recommendations of the author were as follows: (1) Teachers, administrators; and the public would be less confused if the terminology would be standardized; (2) Student achievement should not be the only measure of success or failure of the program; (3) more research into the total program of nongrading should be done.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For many years now the structure of our schools in America has been questioned. Our schools at present are organized vertically into primary, elementary, junior and senior high schools, junior colleges, colleges and graduate schools. These units are further divided into years, semesters, or quarters. If the need arose to adjust the student because of his lack or excess of ability he would be either retained or would be allowed to skip a grade. These were attempts to fit the learner to the structure rather than have the structure fitted for the learner.

Nongrading has been offered as an alternative to this vertical organization. The arguments pro and con of nongrading have been researched and documented since the plan was begun. The purpose of this paper will be to bring out these issues, both pro and con, so the reader and the writer can become aware of the successes and the failures of the system of nongrading.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Nongrading can be defined as "... one without grade failure and/or retention, in the conventional sense; it has individualized instruction with the purpose of permitting youngsters to progress as they -- individually -- show

competence to do so. It permits sufficient flexibility in the instructional program to make instructional adjustments both in terms of intrapersonal variability (differences within an individual) and in terms of interpersonal variability (differences among individuals)." (17)

The nongraded school goes by several names -- ungraded school, primary unit, continuous-progress program, and multi-aged school. No matter what name it bears, the nongraded school in its simplest form is nothing more than a school that has eliminated grade barriers. It focuses attention on how well a child is doing in terms of his own ability and stage of development, not in reference to a particular grade level.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the current problems in education that is being discussed at great length is the problem of a child's readiness to enter school. To date most schools set a chronological age at which a child may start school and barring any unforeseen difficulties that child will advance one year for each year he ages. This study has been made so that the author may better perceive the nongraded organizational approach as a means of individualizing instruction. The problem of this paper will be to determine whether nongrading will do a better job of educating our youth.

PROCEDURE

A review of current literature in the form of periodicals at Montana State College and literature requested from the National Education Association was made in an attempt to reveal the significant arguments both pro and con on the issue of the value of the nongraded school. No experiments or original research has been attempted by the author because of the scope of a professional paper. By concentrating upon a review of the literature, the author was able to consider the broad aspects of nongraded instruction and not limit the study to any single phase.

LIMITATIONS

The review of literature was kept as recent as possible and taken mostly from periodicals rather than hard cover books, since the main arguments in these books have been written in a more condensed form in periodicals by the same authors.

CHAPTER II

GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT

Many persons think of the nongraded school as a totally new idea, but it is anything but that. In fact, it has some of the merits of the good one-room rural school. The teacher in the one-room school was taking advantage, if he or she was a good teacher, of an excellent opportunity to follow a highly flexible, almost fluid, style of operation.

The adoption of nongraded units has become a movement, which spread slowly at first but which now has become so strong that no one is able to keep a current and reliable count of the total number.

Reports to the Office of Education at the present time show that the movement is reaching into the secondary school, but so far the increase there is slight. Wormley (25) reports that a survey by the U. S. Department of Education was released in 1965 which indicated that 28% of the Class I school districts either had or were contemplating the nongraded system; but that less than 3% of the Class IV or rural districts had reported having nongraded classes.

SOME OF THE PROBLEMS

The adoption of a nongraded plan involves endless details of planning, initiation, and execution. To begin with, a system must determine whether such a shift is warranted.

Budde (5) encourages those interested in "jumping on the nongraded bandwagon" to reexamine their own programs and evaluate them to be sure that a change of this magnitude is necessary. All planning must include school staff members and the community. Without the support of these people, a program's chances for success are poor.

Before moving to a nongraded plan, school officials must have firm and sound policies for reporting progress, communication between levels, curriculum changes, pupil mobility, record keeping, and teacher qualification.

REPORTING PROGRESS

The nongraded school must have a sound policy for reporting pupil progress to parents. Reporting to parents has always been difficult, of course, whatever system a school follows, but the nature of the nongraded school makes reporting even more difficult. Parents used to a graded system are disturbed by so drastic a change.

In a survey by Goodlad and Anderson (9) of about 550 nongraded schools nearly 50 percent of the respondents replied that conferences with parents had been substituted for or added to the usual "report card" method of communicating with the home about children's progress. An additional 25 per cent indicated that nongrading had been accompanied by a modification of the existing report card. The balance

reported either no change or minor modification in terminology. Many respondents reported hesitancy in giving up the written report card. Some systems combined individual and group conferences with two written report cards each year. Others eliminated the report card except for a final written report in June. Gore (10) reports that one school system maintains a 4-page folder skill card on each child which charts his academic progress. The card lists skills to be mastered during the 6 years of primary and intermediate school, but indicates no target dates. The teacher enters the date a skill is introduced and the date the child masters it. The card is passed from teacher to teacher as a record of the pupil's progress. At the end of the year the child takes home a report of his attainments that makes no mention of a grade assignment for the next year. At the end of his year in kindergarten and at the end of each subsequent year until he is ready for the fourth grade, the Park Forest child receives a slip assigning him to "primary school". Schools use somewhat different ways of reporting pupil progress to parents, although they have moved from report cards focused on the expectancies of single grade levels expressed by figures and letters.

An important part of the changeover from graded to nongraded units is reporting such as parent conferences.

Most authors agree that the report card in the graded school has failed to live up to its purpose -- communication between the school and the home. Too often the report card is used to initiate punishment at home without any intelligent analysis of what is causing the difficulty. Brown (4) states that the problem with most reports is the parents' misunderstanding of the basis upon which the school constructs the card. He goes on to say that modern research has severely condemned the contrivance of non-promotion as a motivational technique. In fact, it is well established that repetition of the grade is of such little value that it probably does more harm than good. One of the successes of the nongraded school is its flexibility in allowing a youngster to spend an indeterminate length of time in a class. Brown (4) believes that the design of the card and the method of distribution need radical reform. He believes that one method is that every school, both graded and ungraded, should immediately abandon the signed and returned report card routine and inaugurate the new "throwaway" type of report card. Once the teacher gives the "throwaway" card to the student, it becomes his responsibility to show it to his parents without having to bring it back, signed. If the student fails to take the card home, this should not, according to Brown, be the concern of the teacher or the

school. This is a personal matter between the youngster and his parents. As a teacher at Fergus County High School in Lewistown, Montana it has been the experience of the author that the "throwaway" report card has made little effect on pupil performance since its inception a year ago. It has helped, however, to cut down on the clerical load of the office staff and complaints by parents have been minimal.

Hunter (14) summarizes the problem well when she says that the nongraded school faces a unique challenge, because parents wish to know if his son is getting an "A" or an "F" in each particular subject. This is vocabulary to which the parent is accustomed. While it really conveys little educational meaning, at least the parent knows whether he should be proud or humiliated and whether to reward or to punish. Warren (23) on his tour of nongraded schools in the Southwest compared these schools to his own where no grades, no marks, no number symbols, not even a report card had been issued for more than five years. Yet he has found that pupils were better informed of their progress than they had been under the traditional method, parents had greater understanding of their children's educational development, and teachers were delighted with new reporting procedures. He found in his travels that reporting practices of one school were unlike those of another. Even within one school district,

reporting procedures varied. The typical school issued the traditional report card every six weeks, but teachers supplement the A, B, C, D, E, grades by attaching individual anecdotal notations.

Clearly, reporting practices in gradeless schools across the country are multiple and diverse. The faculties of typical schools are attempting to revamp their traditional reporting systems.

CURRICULUM

As a school system experiments with nongrading at different levels it faces the problem of internal coordination. Special problems arise when children leave a nongraded unit to go into a traditional school, or vice versa. Some children may have to be reoriented. The school must anticipate such problems and be ready to meet them.

Experience so far in the nongraded school points to a continuing need for some definition of "level" based on accomplishment, expectancy, to replace "grade". According to Goodlad (8) most nongraded schools "simply seek differentiated progress for learners through subject-matter sequences which are relatively common for all. This is a step forward and, with the weight of educational machinery to be moved, perhaps all that can be reasonably expected for the 1960's."

Many nongraded elementary schools continue to rely on

a series of reading levels as a measure of pupil attainment. The number of levels varies considerably; one school system has 11 levels for the first 3 years; another has 20; most have about 7 or 8. Lewin (16) states that curriculum problems encompass methodology, materials and content. Mathematics, social studies and science are going to have to be reorganized in a different manner with new texts for the nongraded system. In planning for nongrading Berman (3) believes that it is critical that attention be given to the time aspects of curriculum development because of the complexity of the planning process. Old-time lesson plans written in little boxes of the teacher's lesson plan book cannot possibly encompass the diversity and multiplicity of curricular decisions the teacher in the nongraded class must make. Nongradedness requires planning in terms of pupil activities and gives attention to time as it relates to curriculum planning. Berman believes that in nongrading the teacher accepts the principle of the transformation of knowledge. There should also be opportunity for the teacher and the child to play with old and new concepts until a new "synthesis" occurs. The nongraded school also offers the chance for the younger and older children to share in the transforming experience.

Research done by Shearron and Wait (21) indicates that no curriculum change occurred because of nongrading in 17.3%

of the schools contacted, slight change occurred in 48% of of the schools, and 29.3% responded that much change had occurred. The remaining 5.4% did not respond.

Further analysis of the responses indicated that the curriculum change that was going on would probably have gone on even if the change to a nongraded program had not been made. Rhoades (20) points out that the advantages in a nongraded classroom are that the range of instructional levels is reduced, class groups are homogeneous for instructional purposes, and are heterogeneous in all other respects. Homogeneous instructional groups are attained without labels of slow, average, and bright. Reading can be practiced all day in all subject areas since reading material is on the reading level of each class. Pupils are not failed and no emphasis is placed on covering material since pupils are accepted at their own level. Curriculum development can be considered with a realism that is not possible in a rigidly graded school, and the school library is becoming the center of learning activity for the school.

Rhoades (20) asks the question, "Can a nongraded system be successful where there is a high degree of pupil mobility?" There appears to be no reason to doubt that it can. Because instruction is individual, a pupil can enter or resume at any

time and take up his work at his point of attainment. A pupil transferring from another school is assigned to a group on the basis of the usual factors, such as age and past record. His teacher adjusts his program to an analysis of his skills and accomplishments. In secondary school particularly, a pupil who has fallen behind will no longer be frustrated by the lost motion of riding out the close of a school year knowing he has already failed a course and must start over next semester.

ROLE OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

The nongraded school does not of itself guarantee or even promise improvement in instructional practice. Responsibility and opportunity for effecting improvement rests with the teacher and administration. Hunter (15) believes that it is the teacher in the nongraded school who makes the decisions and recommendations for each individual student, and these decisions need to be professional. This use of educator decisions, rather than system decisions, is the hallmark of the "truly" nongraded school. "Truly" nongraded does not mean assigning pupils to levels program or grouping learners in different classrooms according to ability and achievement. Rhoades (20) would not agree with this.

No teacher in a nongraded system can fall back on any excuse about what was not taught the year before, because

all teachers are expected to teach each child beginning with each individual's frame of reference. Decisions are difficult to make because the student must be assessed both academically and emotionally and then be recommended to the teacher who could best cope with the student.

Morse (18) believes that teaching in a nongraded school is based on the same learning principles as good teaching in any school. The only difference is that they dare to do it openly. In other words, good teaching any place means going back to a child's frame of reference in all subjects and teaching at his level. But in the graded system, all the class are supposed to be doing long division at the same time regardless of whether they comprehend place value or not. Good teachers don't do this, but are always apprehensive of reprisals from parents and others if they are found out. Education in the non-graded class does not mean a different lesson for each child, but rather an appropriate lesson for each. It was the experience of Gilbert (7) that the morale and the enthusiasm of the teachers in his school using this plan was high. They would not consider returning to the graded organizational plan. The school's social climate was improved because no longer were children harassed by fear of failure, or bored by waiting for others to catch up. Frustration - caused discipline problems were alleviated, and parents have shown

more cooperation.

Shuster (22) says that there should be no illusions that teaching in a nongraded school is easier or less demanding. In fact, the reverse is probably true. To treat each child as an individual in a large class is no small undertaking. It is an almost unbearable responsibility. To meet the demands of the program there is certainly a need for changes in preservice and inservice programs for teachers. He further believes that new information concerning learning, curriculum structure, and child growth and development must be utilized in solving the problems that will develop. In-service education should not attempt to force each teacher into the same mold but should provide for developing teacher competencies in dealing with instructional problems and teaching strategies at each teacher's own level of sophistication. Educational leadership for the nongraded school needs in-service education as much as the teachers themselves, according to Shuster. He states that the in-service principal will need to acquire an understanding of the philosophy of nongrading which, in fact, we might even hope that he has exhibited by the way in which he works with teachers and students. That is, he is cognizant of the individual differences of his staff. He does not force all teachers into the same mold. The principal should provide the kind of working environment which challenges teachers to look at school improvement

objectively. Change will not take place in a closed atmosphere. Openness should prevail between faculty and the administration. While the principal should see that the climate is open, he should also be astute enough to challenge suggestions with sound alternatives, thus provoking deeper insights into the purposes for change.

Principals need to build for themselves, through conferences, inter-school visitation, reading, college seminars, and so forth, a background of understanding of the nongraded school so they can provide the necessary leadership for their staffs and for the community. One of the goals of nongrading is that of teaching the students to program their own learning activities. The principal, too, must program his own learning so that he can give direction to his community and his staff. Good principals will never be accused of standing on the steps of their schools to see which way the crowd is going. Insead, you'll find them out in front leading the crowd. (22)

It is true, of course, that administrative practices sometimes affect the quality of teaching, but the degree to which nongrading removes these obstacles will be another measure of its worth.

THE SCHOOL BUILDING

Carswell (6) sees that there are three dominant considerations in school plant usage for facilitating nongraded programs.

First is the challenge of a wide variety of learning activities requiring modified spaces; second a wide variety of materials and media requiring appropriate housing, plumbing, electricity, and the like; and last a large area for cooperative planning by adults.

A number of new buildings designed for greater flexibility of school programs have utilized the folding wall. Some of these buildings are round, and walls between the segments of the "pie" can be opened or closed according to the learning activities designed for the children housed therein. There are rectangular buildings with similar kinds of interiors. These walls are relatively expensive, usually quite soundproof, but sometimes difficult to handle easily. Some of these folding walls are slatted, but these are not soundproof. Regardless of the ease of operation or the quality of the soundproofing, folding walls may be a great help or they may not be. Anderson (1) submits that provision must be made so that the structure implies flexible grouping and subgrouping of pupils as well as facilitate an adaptable, flexible curriculum with a greater range of materials and instructional approaches. Morse (18) describes the "School of Tomorrow" as an overgrown country school; where the pupils are not segregated by age or grade within the five primary levels. The students are housed in a huge dome-shaped building with

one large, unwallled area. There are 7,850 square feet of circular area which contains movable furniture for flexibility. Centrally located, are curtains made of lead to diminish the noise of classes in singing, dancing, and orchestra. The one-way windows allow observation of the students without disturbing the class routine. Wall to wall carpeting throughout is conducive to a quiet classroom; room dividers are available for forming specialized groups. Lunches roll out on conveyer belts. This school opened in 1966 and is considered the prototype for future American schools. This may not be the school we as educators desire for our situations, but it points out the fantastic changes that have happened and are continuing to happen right now.

RESULTS OF RESEARCH

It is too early to say flatly that the nongraded method is a success, or a failure. Not many truly nongraded schools exist. We need much more information on what has been accomplished. Wormley (25) reports that Melbourne, Florida, has extended their nongraded system up through senior high, and they have cut drop-outs to a mere 4% compared to a national average of 30%. This is an example of one of the "fringe" benefits of the nongraded school. Student achievement should not be the only gauge by which we judge the success or failure of this plan.

Goodlad (8) points out that it is educationally known that pupil achievement covers a wide range. Only 10 to 15 percent of a class are at grade level in all subjects at midyear. Most vary from subject to subject and level to level. Thus differences can hardly be accommodated within traditional grade lines. Teachers become grade minded in their perception of children.

The Stanford Achievement Test on word meaning, paragraph meaning, spelling, word study skills, arithmetic computation, and arithmetic concepts was given to a group of pupils who had gone three years to a nongraded school and a group of pupils who had gone three years to a graded school. Williams (24) gave the test and the results of the testing showed no significant difference between pupil achievement in graded and nongraded schools except for paragraph meaning. The difference in paragraph meaning favored the graded school. The mean difference between the highest pairs in the two schools was only .03, while the mean difference between the ten lowest pairs was .73. The mean difference in total achievement between the high scoring pupils in the nongraded school was .32, in favor of the nongraded pupils, and between the low scoring pupils in the graded school and the low scoring pupils in the nongraded school was 2.64, in favor of the graded pupils.

The findings suggested that the nongraded organization favors the brighter pupils, and the graded organization the lower achieving pupils. The better performance of the low achievers in the graded school can be attributed, in part, to the pupil-teacher ratio. In the graded school, the ratio was on the average twenty-seven pupils per teacher; in the nongraded school, forty-five per teacher. She states that there does not appear to be a significant relationship between school organization and pupil achievement.

Hillisen, et al (12) ran a controlled experiment evaluating the effects of a nongraded organization on pupil achievement. The method employed was one of having all first grade students entering the Washington Elementary School for the academic year 1960 - 61 randomly assigned to either experimental (N=26) or control groups (N=26). Subjects identified as a part of the experimental program included only those initially assigned to these groups. Transfers or new entries were randomly assigned to experimental or control groups but were not included in the evaluation. All teachers, whether assigned to experimental or control groups, were selected for participation on the basis of their excellence in teaching. All teachers participated in work shops in preparation for the nongraded program; all received the assistance of the reading consultant in selecting materials, carrying on

their programs, and the observation and assessment of pupils for placement in reading groups. The procedure undertaken was that nongrading for the experimental group proceeded on a year by year basis; children were permitted to move from reading level to reading level as their level of performance dictated. Pupils in the control group were placed in one of the three reading level groups within a conventional graded program and instruction was adapted to the ability levels of the groups. The effects of the nongraded organization on pupil achievement was evaluated at the end of the third semester of the experimental period by use of three achievement tests; Lee Clark Reading Test, and the paragraph meaning and word meaning tests of the Primary Battery of the Stanford Achievement Test. The results of these tests were:

<u>Test</u>	Experimental Group N=26	Control Group N=26
Lee Clark	3.19	2.81
Word Meaning	3.33	2.86
Paragraph Meaning	3.27	2.90

The total experiment on nongraded systems was to cover a three-year period. The experimental period has now been

completed. In general, the evaluation of the effects of the nongraded organization on pupil achievement in reading at the end of the three-year period as measured by standard reading tests indicated that those in the experimental group measure higher in paragraph meaning, word meaning, reading and language.

One claim of the nongraded school is that it increases above grade level performance on the part of readers due to those factors that will aid readiness and therefore decrease below grade level performance. In the experiment cited above, just twice as many in the experimental group were above the median on a composite reading score. In the control group 20% more of the youngsters were below the median on a composite reading score.

Some definite findings of the National Education Association, published in 1968, show that of all principals reporting (both teaching and supervising), the nongraded plan was being used by them at various school levels as follows: first year, 11.2%; second year, 10.7%; third year, 9.6%; fourth year, 3.6%; fifth year, 3.1%; and sixth year, 3.3%.

At a later point in the questionnaire, principals were asked to report on whether or not they had used the nongraded plan and to indicate their evaluation of the plan. Seven in ten had not used the plan in the upper grades.

In this same report (19), of those using the plan in the primary grades, 55.4% rated it as very valuable; 5.6% as of no value; and 39.1% were not sure of its value.

Of those with experience with the nongraded organization in the upper grades, 35.6% rated it as very valuable; 9.0% as of no value; and 55.3% were not sure of its value.

Partly because the concept itself is difficult to define and is subject to various interpretations, and partly because research has not yet developed appropriate research technology, and partly because excellent examples of non-gradedness are too few, there is as yet very little research evidence on which the profession can base its decisions. Anderson (1) contends that further difficulty results from the tendency of researchers to rely heavily upon inappropriate research designs. Goodlad (8) has discussed this problem in some detail, along with commentary on specific studies published up to 1962. Unfortunately, most of the studies published since that date are marred by the same design problems, and it may be some years before more appropriate research studies become available. He states further that a common problem in research using the "control-group - vs. - experimental-group" design is that the researchers fail to indicate the specific, functional ways in which the two groups actually differ from each other. Presumably, the control (graded) group is being treated in

ways that differ significantly from the definition of non-gradedness as applied to the experimental group. Presumably, too, the experimental group is being treated according to the definition. However, one reads many research reports in vain for this type of information. Anderson further contends that the study made by Hopkins (13) and another study conducted and reported earlier in this paper by Williams (24) show certain administrative differences between the experimental and control groups. Sometimes teachers in the so-called graded schools, in fact, made virtually the same adjustments to the individual differences in their classes as, supposedly (though no evidence is furnished), did the teachers of the so-called nongraded schools. He further points out the reference made to 45 pupils per teacher and the graded class average of 27 as proof of nonvalidity. He concludes that it seems doubtful that a better understanding of nongradedness can be gained by studies of this sort, whatever their conclusions.

Barnickle, and Lindberg (2) in a report for Naperville, Illinois, report a different problem. The article describes the difficulties encountered when the parents of four boys, all capable of completing the primary unit in two years, preferred that they not be accelerated (as were 25 others), and therefore "withdrew" their sons from the program.

Gross (11) believes that the basic problems in improving

instruction can be resolved only by a "package approach" in which nongradedness is merely one major component.

Several writers have listed reasons why some observers do not consider the nongraded school as desirable. Anderson (1) listed these allegations and made his comment on each.

The following is a list of the allegations and his comments:

1. Nongradedness leads to soft pedagogy; it lacks fixed standards and requirements.

Comment: This is probably true in the early stages, but as we grow more skilled in curriculum development, appropriate standards for each type of child are likely to emerge. Nongradedness may, indeed, lead us away from soft pedagogy by enabling all youngsters to master what they study.

2. It places an impossible burden on the teacher.

Comment: Quite true, especially if we persist in having self-contained classrooms! The burden will lift as we find ways of sharing teaching responsibilities.

3. It replaces grade requirements by reading levels.

Comment: Only in the primitive stages and where nongradedness is not well understood.

4. It results in a lack of information on pupil progress to parents.

Comment: Only when the teachers are lazy, foolish, or incompetent in their reporting.

5. It is difficult to put into practice, because teachers are inadequately and insufficiently prepared.

Comment: True. Therefore, let's start a revolution in teacher education!

6. It does not have minimal standards for all children.

Comment: It is better to have standards for each child, is it not?

7. Its curriculum sequence tends to lack specificity and order.

Comment: Again, if true it may be just as well! What we need, it must be admitted, is a far more adequate curriculum. The graded curriculum is scarcely the ideal.

8. It is only an improved means to an unimproved end.

Comment: This sounds like double-talk, but if the end is individual fulfillment then non-gradedness is a better way to get there.

9. It does not guarantee that improved teaching will result.

Comment: No organization provides such a guarantee. To improve teaching is a very difficult task.

10. It suffers from widespread use and even abuse of the term "nongraded".

Comment: Amen!

11. There is some difficulty in aligning graded with nongraded schools (for example, a primary unit and a graded intermediate program).

Comment: This is true only if the graded unit continues to deal with youngsters in an inappropriate way. And even so, it is no problem for the children; the annoyance is only to the grade-minded teachers.

12. Teachers and parents are so conditioned to the graded structure that they continue "grademindedness".

Comment: Yes, but over time this is a disease that can be cured.

13. Extensive records must be kept for each child.

Comment: Some teachers may regard this as a disadvantage but they are wrong!

14. Planning new methods of reporting to parents demands much time and work from the already heavily burdened faculty.

Comment: Very true. Administration must make better provision for supporting services (for example, substitute teacher help) and for re-training teachers in the technology of reporting.

Anderson (1) further comments:

"As one considers the complaints that are raised against nongraded plans, he notes that often the critic displays an ingenuous faith in organizational structure as panacea. Would that it were so easy! If all it took to modernize and improve school offerings was an edict to abolish the graded plan, we could all have been in Educational Heaven long ago!"

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY

This study has been concerned with a survey of literature related to the nongraded school. It was undertaken with the belief that if more is known about this organizational structure that a clearer more concise perception of the pros and cons can be developed. An attempt was made to learn about the current status of the nongraded structure, how widespread and to what extent it has improved academic improvement. The literature was analyzed by the author in an effort to obtain a clear, concise picture of the overall situation.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the research conducted regarding the nongraded approach to educational organization the following conclusions can be made:

1. The nongraded organizational structure is a nationwide innovation.
2. An evaluation of the effects of the program has been hampered by the lack of sufficient research.
3. The majority of the nongraded schools have this organizational structure only in the primary years.
4. Standardization of terminology would help to stop confusion in the minds of educators and the public about the program.

5. Many schools that claim to be nongraded actually in the true sense are not.

6. Teachers and administrators have not been adequately prepared in most instances to make the change.

7. More work must be done in the areas of reporting procedures and curriculum.

8. Student achievement should not be the only measure of success or failure of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made as a result of this study:

1. Follow-up studies should be made to determine the value of nongrading programs.

2. New curriculums should be developed to provide a more realistic program to get away from the graded level of school organization.

3. More research should be done in all areas of the nongraded approach, especially in the area of pupil achievement.

4. Teacher-training institutions should better prepare their students to be able to provide their classrooms with competent instruction in the nongraded atmosphere.

5. An effort should be made to involve the total community in the transition from graded to nongraded.

6. Educators and reasearchers should standardize the terms used for nongrading into one common term.

7. It should be remembered that pupil achievement should not be the only gauge by which we judge the success or failure of the system, be it graded or nongraded.

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