

THE USE OF CUMULATIVE RECORDS  
FOR GUIDANCE PURPOSES

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The use of child accounting records for purposes of pupil guidance and counseling has increased materially during the past decade. Naturally the use of pupil records varies with the scope of programs of guidance and counseling, but authorities are agreed that whatever the program, counseling is markedly more effective when based upon objective pupil records. Full time counselors make extensive use of pupil records.

The list of uses presented below includes the more typical uses. Child accounting records help counselors to:

1. Assist pupils in the solution of personal problems.
2. Understand better the motives and action of pupils.
3. Advise pupils in personal and social conduct.
4. Assist pupils to transfer to different school units.
5. Assist pupils to choose an appropriate course of study.
6. Assist pupils to solve disciplinary difficulties.
7. Advise pupils to solve difficulties of study habits.
8. Advise pupils concerning choice of, training for, and placement in occupations.
9. Contribute effective follow-up services.
10. Utilize supplementary tests and records.

The list does not include many of the services that are made possible by the use of supplementary records, but it does give a very fair idea of the scope and importance of child accounting data in the field of counseling and guidance.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

### Importance of the Study

It was the purpose of this study to develop criteria for teachers in the effective use of cumulative records for guidance in the classroom.

In order to prepare teachers for their diversified responsibilities, formal preparation for teaching now includes study in many areas. Yet there are some important aspects of the educational program with which many teachers are unfamiliar. Speaking of the inadequacy of teacher training in the area of guidance, Umstatted stated:

The teacher is one indispensable factor in any plan for the guidance of pupils. A chief weakness in the elaborate plans found in some schools for what is called personnel work is the inability of the classroom teacher to understand the significance of the guidance viewpoint or to use the techniques involved. Too often teachers have little opportunity to learn this phase of their work.<sup>1</sup>

It seems apparent that if teachers are expected to assume an important role in the guidance program, they will need to become acquainted with the principles and techniques of guidance work. Actually the field of guidance is very broad in scope. Cumulative records should be considered as one of the many tools which may be effectively used in the guidance program.

### Need for the Study

Since much time is spent in preparing and maintaining cumulative records, teachers should be prepared to understand how records can be effectively used in the classroom. Many writers in the field appear to agree with Traxler who

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<sup>1</sup>Umstatted, James Greenleaf, Secondary School Teaching. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1937, p. 54.

stated, "It is imperative that a system of personnel records be associated with a program of teachers' education in the use of these records."<sup>1</sup> A teacher education program might well include a form of in-service training or further academic preparation. It was felt however, that a prepared guide for teachers on this phase of guidance would be a more convenient and immediate means of reaching all teachers.

Due to the lack of standardization in the type of cumulative records maintained the teacher needs to familiarize himself with the system of personnel records in his particular school. In consideration of the need for teacher preparation in the use of cumulative records as a guidance tool, this project has been prepared.

#### Definition of Terms Used

Guidance: The word guidance, used in this study, is defined in the broad terms expressed by many writers in the current literature. It refers to the attempt to aid students in making optimum life adjustments. This includes the ability to solve problems, make intelligent decisions, increase self-insight, develop skills in associating with others, and plan for the future.

Cumulative Record: For the purpose of this study, the definition of cumulative record applies to the system of records as maintained at the particular school for which the guide is prepared. It should be understood that cumulative records may vary among the schools.

The cumulative record consists of two main parts, the cumulative card and the cumulative folder. A cumulative card and cumulative folder are maintained

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<sup>1</sup>Traxler, Arthur E. Techniques of Guidance. New York: Harper and Brothers 1945, p. 203.

for each student in school. A separate card is kept for the elementary school and the junior high school records. The records provide for information concerning the pupil's family and home background, scholastic capacity and achievement, subject marks, health and significant growth and behavior.

The cumulative folder identifies information which is not provided for on the cumulative card. The envelope-type of folder contains observations of pupil behavior as originally recorded by teachers, administrators, parental notes for absences, pupil data sheets, copies of special reports to parents, score and profile page from standard tests, and other miscellaneous items of information.

In summary, the cumulative record is a permanent, comprehensive, perpetual record of the pupil background, individual characteristics, progress and achievement.

#### METHODS OF SECURING DATA

##### Sources of Data

The first step of this study was one of reviewing available written material on this subject. The Kansas State Library contained some resource material on the subject; other resource material was obtained from the Kansas City, Missouri Public Library. The next step was securing information concerning the current practices of using cumulative records in the elementary, junior high, and senior high schools in the Kansas City, Missouri Public School District, by interviewing teachers and principals of the local district.

### Presentation of Data

After all interviews were completed, the facts, along with other observations were studied and evaluated. Then the more essential data were selected and compiled into this report.

### Review of Literature

A portion of the material concerning cumulative records could be found in the Kansas State College Library. Several reports found in periodicals were the most useful. Traxler, Strang, Erickson, Umstattd and Hamrin covered the literature very well. Many interesting viewpoints of the above authors were compiled into this report.

### Teacher Interviews

Since there is little agreement among leaders in the field as to who should perform the guidance activities, it is recommended that all teachers acquaint themselves with various aspects of the guidance program. A closer cooperation between the teacher and the counselor must be attained if the guidance program is to maximally benefit from their services.

More teachers need to develop or be motivated to develop a greater interest and enthusiasm for guidance in classroom teaching. The writer in preparing this report made a thorough survey of the literature in this subject area and gathered information from local teachers in the Kansas City, Missouri Public School District through interviews. Some of the teachers considered keeping the cumulative record up to date just another task added to their duties. These teachers were not familiar with the principles and techniques of the guidance program.



Another group of teachers indicated that they responded vigorously to the guidance program. This group of teachers included guidance subjects in their summer school curriculum. Many principals felt the need for a good guidance program at the elementary level, but considered time allotment to keep good records a major problem.

The over-crowded conditions in many schools create a problem of keeping records and transferring pertinent data to individual cards. Through interviews with some of the principals the writer learned that it was very common practice in some schools in the local district to have students transfer from one school to another three times in a given semester. By so doing information pertaining to a student transferring that often was never recorded by each principal.

#### Study of Available Cumulative Records

Records are not only useful but essential in evaluating the work of the school as a whole. While they should have some uniform characteristics for comparative purposes, a school expresses its individuality in part through the form of its records. Educational objectives in general, and of the school in particular, should serve as the basis for their use in such evaluation. Many evidences of individual pupil and school progress should be easily available.

Specific examples of records useful in guidance and counseling in the Kansas City, Missouri Public School District include the following data:

1. Subject grades for elementary school and high school.
2. Test records which include general ability, achievement, reading comprehensives and some aptitude tests.
3. Personal ratings in elementary school: participation in group activity, attitude toward school regulations, appearance,

dependability, emotional stability, initiative and cooperativeness.

4. Personal ratings in high school: work habits, responsibility, self-control and getting along with others.
5. Confidential information for students with whom there have been more contacts.
6. Attendance record.
7. Health record.
8. Hobbies and extra-curricular activities.
9. Vocational and college choices.

Objective data about individuals are essential to effective guidance, but there is a danger that a program in which such data have a leading place will become confused and obscured by a multitude of unrelated trivia. A single datum, no matter how objective and valid, is of little value; it is only when data are brought together and related, both laterally and chronologically, that they become meaningful. The device by means of which different kinds of information are brought together and organized is a comprehensive individual cumulative record.

The steps which were followed in the preparation of this report have been presented in this chapter. The writer gained insight into the problem by talks with teachers of the Kansas City, Missouri Public School District and through the study of the literature of the field. Many teachers revealed an interest in learning more about the value and the use of cumulative records for guidance purposes.

## EARLY USES OF SCHOOL RECORDS

### Few Records in the Early Schools

Record keeping in early schools was a matter of keeping track of the pupils, both as to attendance and as to achievement. One can assume fairly enough that neither task was performed very well. Since attendance was not compulsory and the home was little concerned, there was not much need for the record. Since the determination of achievement remained so largely a subjective matter, and as the particular school reader the pupil happened to be in could be remembered by the teacher and the pupil, there was little use for a record. In those days of teacher procession, it might be lost anyway; if so, pupil standing could easily be determined when he came to school by the simple expedient of "trying him out".

### Horace Mann and the Movement to Improve Records

As school systems became better developed, efforts were directed towards improving the attendance register. Horace Mann<sup>1</sup>, over 100 years ago, spoke of examining "hundreds of different forms" then in use. Without doubt he crystallized the thinking and practice of his day when in 1838 the state board of education in Massachusetts authorized him to prepare a permanent school register in book form designed for a five-year period for different sized schools. Its preparation was a cooperative effort, many of the "best teachers and educationists in the country offering suggestions and approval".

Horace Mann was undoubtedly farseeing in his day in his conception of an improved report, as he was in so many other educational matters. In it

<sup>1</sup>"Ninth Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education",  
Common School Journal, April 16, 1846, p 120.

he saw many values: (1) it efficiently prevented irregularity in attendance; (2) it allowed more accurate statistical reports; (3) it enabled the teacher to note the mental and moral progress of each student; (4) it contained the entire school history of the child; (5) it furnished each pupil a means of self-comparison; (6) it became "a powerful incentive to good and dissuasion from evil"; and (7) it fastened "the delinquency of absence upon the particular offenders".

Since he was a state school official, values with which he was directly concerned naturally pertained to the administration of attendance; other values he foresaw as pertaining more immediately to the teacher and the pupil.

About the same time, Henry Barnard, in Connecticut, developed much the same type of register. He too considered it important, and lectured on "School Records and Reports" at meetings of teachers. Other state officials and city superintendents applied the same idea. Soon the attendance record became, as Moehlman has pointed out, "the real index of school efficiency". Schools were compared with each other, largely on the basis of school attendance. However, there was no common agreement as to the method of computing attendance. That was to come later.

The National Education Association, organized in 1857, gave frequent heated consideration to matters of school attendance and child accounting. Schools could not be compared as to efficiency without some measure of uniformity. Committees to achieve this were appointed in 1860, 1874, 1881, and 1891. Little tangible action resulted.

## INFLUENCE OF THE SCIENTIFIC MOVEMENT

## Defects in Records Revealed by Studies

Perhaps the most significant stimulus to adequate and uniform school records came about as the direct result of the scientific movement in education. The need for better survey techniques and tests and measurements became apparent, for the study of both school systems and individual pupils. Significant among studies pertaining to pupils in which adequate records were necessary were Thorndike's "Elimination of Pupils from School" (1907) and Ayres' "Laggards in our Schools" (1909). In each of these, accurate comparative school data were highly essential but in many instances were inadequate and inaccurate. Ayres' study of retardation and elimination in city school systems particularly called attention to the paucity of school records and recommended more attention to them in the following language:

Little or no effort has been made to preserve original records, to reduce duplication, to save time and energy or to secure accuracy and accessibility.

Worst of all, different principals and superintendents have introduced isolated and disconnected practices from which significant facts for the whole system cannot be deduced. There have been many day books and blotters but no ledger accounts.

If existing conditions are to be bettered and our school systems made more efficient we must have a better knowledge of conditions and their significance. To accomplish this we must have better records.

Dutton and Snedden<sup>1</sup> writing in 1908 indicated four defects of existing records: (1) lack of cumulative record material; (2) undeveloped character of units of measure; (3) duplication of material, much of it unorganized; (4) lack of uniformity of standards for comparison.

#### National Education Association Committees

The result of these several studies stimulated the appointment of a committee by the National Education Association on Records and Reports, which reported in 1912. This report was undoubtedly of much value in standardizing a number of terms and procedures<sup>2</sup>; and yet its chief emphasis remained upon attendance.

The scientific movement in education grew apace during the next dozen years. More and more comparative measures of city school systems became increasingly essential in the development of the measurement and survey movements.

One direct outcome was the appointment in 1925 of an additional committee of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association. It indicated that an acceptable local system of school records should have the following characteristics: (1) They should make for uniformity and comparability. (2) The amount of data recorded should be no more than is needed and used, with all information exact. (3) The various records of a school system should be coordinated and unified.

The committee recommended the following types of pupil records: (1) teachers daily register book; (2) pupils' general cumulative record; (3) pupils'

<sup>1</sup>Dutton, Samuel Train and David Snedden. The Administration of Public Education in the United States. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1908. 541 pp.

<sup>2</sup>National Education Association, "Report of Committee on Uniform Records and Reports", Bulletin No. 3, Washington, United States Bureau of Education, 1912.

health and physical records; (4) guidance record; (5) pupils' psychological clinic record; (6) principal's office record.

The following standards were recommended in order to make the procedure of the record keeping and report making easily routinized. Records should be: (1) cumulative; (2) uniform (when used for comparative purposes) (3) durable; (4) non-repetitive; (5) properly organized; (6) complete; (7) available by those who would use them; (8) visible; and (9) separately provided for elementary and secondary pupils where needed and justifiable.

### CUMULATIVE RECORDS IN THE MODERN SCHOOL

#### A New Approach

The modern school is increasing its emphasis upon fitting its program to the individual child in the light of his needs, aptitudes, and interests. Both curricular and individual analysis, a two way procedure, are essential to this process. Modern school organization is such that the pupil passes from one school to another and from one teacher to another. Under this system it is manifestly impossible for teachers to remember all the information essential to adequate and desirable individual and group progress.

The 1925 committee of the National Education Association called attention to the need of a cumulative pupil record....one which follows the pupil as he progresses through the school. The cumulative record system attempts to preserve such data as seem worth preserving and provides at the same time for an adequate organization and administration therefor.

### Values

Unique values accruing from cumulative pupil personnel records have been summarized as follows:

1. They are essential to insure the continuity of the guidance program of the school.
2. Provide necessary data for advising parents and suggesting adjustments which should be made in the interest of the school and home life of the pupil.
3. Provide data for diagnosing individual pupil difficulties and application of remedial measures.
4. Provide data to indicate to the school the degree to which curriculum practices meet the needs of the pupils.
5. Provide data to know individual pupils better and adapt measures of adjustment (referring to personality largely).
6. Provide data to cause effective research in school procedure.
7. Provide data for higher institutions of learning.
8. Provide data for individual pupil analysis on his own part.

### Items to Include

Suggested cumulative record items are: (1) general items of identification and progress, (2) scholarship, (3) educational and general aptitude test scores, (4) social and character ratings, (5) health, (6) home conditions and family history, (7) extra-curricular activities, (8) vocational interests and aptitude test scores, and (9) other items assisting in the school progress of the individual pupils. Some systems have found it helpful to include the curriculum election record, the transfer card, a pupil self-analysis form, record of home visits, correspondence, conference records, and a record of teacher estimates at intervals. Specific guidance and vocational records should find a place when such information is available.



This variety of items naturally suggests the importance of including data found useful in particular school situations and under given circumstances with individual pupils, in which growth and development is the dominant consideration. These can be determined after careful survey and experience. The contents of cumulative record folders, if properly kept, have a way of growing in size. It is important to point out that this growth should not be haphazard like Topsy's but rather the outcome of careful planning, selection of materials, and safeguarded procedure.

#### Records on Elementary and Secondary Levels

Specific materials in and uses of cumulative records will show increasing complexity as the pupil advances through the different divisions of the school system. Uses on the elementary level will be much simpler, except in studying specific needs, as of the gifted or the maladjusted pupils. At points of articulation, they will be invaluable. In the secondary field, data growing out of an increasing complexity of activities will be recorded, as well as redirection of educational and vocational goals and the use of leisure time. Adequate records are most essential in advising pupils as to further education on the collegiate level and in the placement problem.

#### Newer Approaches

A new emphasis on the place of the school records in the educational process has been pointed out by adherents of progressive education. The realization of the maximum development of the individual through his growth, study of environment and experiences, and evolution of those drives which are essential to that development is hardly possible without a careful record of his progress.

Moreover, the art of teaching, like the art of human relationships, depends on records for finding the patterns of human behavior and directing them wisely.

## ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF RECORDS

### Guides to the Approach

As the science of education develops, the need for factual material, accurately secured and properly recorded, is increasingly apparent. In this connection it is important to observe guides to approach. First, state laws provide for the collection of data, and usually the form to be used is supplied. In the second place, the record system will need to be fitted to the underlying philosophy and objectives of the school system. Third, whatever record forms are evolved and data collected should be developed with an eye to their usefulness, both immediate and ultimate. It is trite to remark that the record system should be kept under constant surveillance.

### Cumulative Records

The collection and recording of data pertaining to the child as he moves through the school system begin as soon as he enters school. These records follow him from grade to grade and from school to school. The nature of the information to be secured and recorded will need to be determined, concerning which suggestions have been previously indicated. Of primary importance are pupils' personal history, health record, scholastic record and activities, and psychological data. Into the cumulative record may go reports of all interviews pertaining to the pupil, notes on his home environment, special abilities, interests, and disinclinations, and personal observations.

Many writers suggest that a committee of teachers study the questions regarding what records should be kept, where they should be kept, and the manner of their preparation and use. This would seem to be in harmony with democratic procedure. Thus records may serve to unify a system and keep its personnel in harmony. Diedrich<sup>1</sup>, on the basis of wide investigation has suggested that cumulative records incorporate:

1. Personal patterns of goals. Items involving life work, school work, sports, hobbies, and recreational activities which emerge from the pupil's life compose the pattern.
2. Records of significant experiences. These experiences should be told or written by the pupil at irregular intervals, depending upon the environmental situation.
3. Reading records. A record of the pupil's free reading provides a relatively accurate index to the maturity level of the pupil. The Evaluation Staff of the Progressive Education Association developed a maturity index for a large number of authors and books by which it is possible to diagnose how well a pupil is progressing so that remediation can be prescribed. Some schools have gone so far as to keep records of attendance at motion pictures, to help the pupil evaluate the pictures, and to help them develop criteria by which good movies can be chosen.
4. Records of cultural experiences. An accurate record of attendance at plays and concerts, of time spent listening to radio programs, etc., helps to determine the pupil's cultural background of experience.
5. Records of creative expression.
6. Behavior anecdotal record, including an accurate statement of event and a separate interpretation.
7. Record of conferences.
8. Record of excuses.
9. Record of tests and examinations.
10. Personal information, including health.
11. English diagnosis. The oral portion would include pronunciation, enunciation, quality of voice, diction, usage, force, etc.

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<sup>1</sup>Diedrich, Paul B., "Evaluation Records". Educational Method, May 1936. p. 432-440.

12. Personal ratings and descriptions.
13. Questionnaires.
14. Records of courses and school activities.

#### Availability

The location of all recorded material should be such that it is accessible to those directly concerned. Ideally, records of a particular building should be available in the principal's office in a place where teachers may enter unobtrusively. It is entirely conceivable that the school counselor may assume entire charge of records housed in his office. If the records are kept, as they sometimes are, in the central administrative office, or the office of the secretary of the board, their usefulness may be materially diminished because of inaccessibility.

The filing system should be safe, easy to operate, and capable of expansion. Although record cards can be secured from reliable publishers, these almost never quite fit the situation. It will be advantageous for committees of teachers to study and prepare the forms to be used and have them printed locally.

#### Management

The management of the recording system should be largely the responsibility of the principal. Several steps should be noted which include: (1) initiation of teacher responsibility in regard to the nature of the system to be set up; (2) provision for, as well as distinction between, temporary records and those of a more permanent character; (3) definite distribution and explanation of all forms and their administration to teachers; (4) proper housing; (5) setting up a calendar schedule for the completion of records; (6) check-up of records turned in; also follow-up service if needed; (7) provision for their free use

by teachers or others entitled to their use; (8) evaluation procedure in terms of pupil progress as a whole, or for revision of the system; (9) provision for teachers to prepare and enter data on records; (10) clerical service provided wherever necessary. In this connection it is pertinent to point out that the principal should not dissipate his time in clerical pursuits which may better be performed by clerical service provided for that purpose. Professional responsibilities should always take precedence.

These suggestions should aid in the management of a system of records. The effectiveness of such management should be studied in direct relation to the effectiveness of pupil progress as a whole. Adaptation, not imitation, should characterize the management at all times. Tests of good management might be considered in the light of: (1) determining regularity of attendance; (2) answering all questions concerning pupil progress; (3) providing information upon which to base needed adjustment, personal, social, educational; (4) applying needed information for guidance and placement; and (5) charting tendencies and predictions. In the last analysis, it is the teacher who will give intelligent direction and guidance to the educational efficiencies of the child. Adequate records will help immeasurably in this process.

#### Use of Records in Evaluation

Records are not only useful but essential in evaluating the work of the school as a whole. While they should have some uniform characteristics for comparative purposes, a school expresses its individuality in part through the form of its records. Educational objectives in general, and of the school in particular, should serve as the basis for their use in such evaluation.

## CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE USE OF RECORDS FOR GUIDANCE PURPOSES

Guidance aims to focus attention on the individual pupil. It recognizes that all problems are peculiar to the person facing them and therefore must be viewed in relation to all the many phases of the individual's life. It recognizes that the solution to any of the particular problems which may arise from a pupil's frustrating and irritating experiences in any area of the activities, in the school or out, requires an understanding of the whole picture of his activities, and the solution to any particular problem will influence the total development of the individual's personality.

The cumulative record is an effort to provide the staff with an efficiently organized body of information from which they can answer their most common questions about pupils. Teachers as well as specialists should therefore have a hand in planning the folder. With the aid of school guidance committees and the system-wide co-ordinating guidance council, a school staff can build a cumulative system based on their own needs.

Every experience a child has affects in some way his growth toward maturity. A carefully designed and well organized cumulative record should help teachers and counselors to study his development. It should help them identify the pupil's strengths and weaknesses as well as the sorts of experiences which seem either to have stimulated or thwarted the maximum development of his potentialities.

As they decide what they need to know, and evaluate the information which they have collected previously, staff members may use questions like these to guide their study:

1. How important is this information? Is it something which only one staff member needs or can it be used by others? If only one person needs the

question answered, why should he not collect the appropriate data and dispose of them when he is through with them?

2. How will this information contribute to better understanding of our pupils?
3. How should we record new information in the pupil's cumulative folder?
4. What information already incorporated in the folder may be used to supplement this new data?
5. Should we place any restrictions on the use of information? If confidential information cannot be treated with special consideration, should it be collected? When data are collected, what commitments to guard confidences should be made to pupils? How will failure to make such commitments affect pupils' answers?
6. Can we afford to spend the time required for gathering these data?
7. Are we giving the normal child sufficient consideration in selecting items which are to be included in the cumulative record? Does our record system provide us with an adequate picture of the normal child as he progresses through school?

The emotional climate a teacher provides will be determined to a considerable extent by what the teacher knows about each child in the group. In increasing numbers, schools are concerned about providing cumulative guidance records on which pertinent data are kept throughout the pupil's school experience. Reference to such material helps the teacher to get a clear picture of the child; his physical equipment and condition; his nature as well as his native endowment; his school attendance, experiences, and achievement, his family background; problems he has encountered in achieving his developmental tasks; his attitudes and emotional adjustment.

In addition, teachers who are guidance conscious endeavor to study the behavior of children in the group and to make factual, objective, anecdotal records in order to deepen their insight into the causes of behavior. The teacher knows that unacceptable behavior can be permanently changed only by discovering and eliminating the cause, not by punitive forays directed at symptoms in the form of overt behavior.

As each teacher adds to his growing understanding of children by observation, conferences with parents, visits to homes, and conversations with individual children, needs are sometimes revealed of conditions beyond the knowledge or power of the teacher to improve or correct. At this point, the services of specialized guidance personnel should be available to the teacher.

The services should be largely of a consultative nature, although in the case of exceptional children it may sometimes involve placement in a special class for full time or part time instruction; it may mean intensive case study; it may mean consultation of guidance personnel, the teacher and the school administrator with parents to work out plans for individual treatment.

A good system of cumulative records should be developed on the principle that a good elementary-school program is based on the interests, needs, and abilities of the children it serves. The record system can help translate this principle into action by building a better understanding and appreciation of each child. It enables the teacher to get a long-range view of the individual's growth. Teachers and parents are so familiar with growth that they often lose sight of its full meaning. They tend to see only the present status and fail to view the growth of the child from the beginning to the present.



## Content of Records in the Elementary School

A cumulative record system that promotes guidance may include the following items:

1. Photographs of the child cemented to the inside of the file folder.  
These pictures are taken at the beginning of each year and are helpful in acquainting new teachers with their classes.
2. Anecdotal record sheets on which teachers may jot down many types of information.
3. A health record sheet kept up to date by the nurse.
4. The physical examination records filled out by the examining physician every fourth year or at more frequent intervals.
5. An autobiographical form, designed to secure information about these items:
  - a. Activities of the child in the home.
  - b. General home atmosphere.
  - c. Leisure-time activities.
  - d. Play interests.
  - e. Friendship.
  - f. Reading interests.
  - g. Travel experiences.
  - h. Attitudes toward school.
  - i. Fears, worries, and ambitions.
6. Pupil case study forms which serve as a summary of the other information.  
The case study also includes a description of the child's behavior in terms secured from a behavior rating scale.

7. A permanent record card that contains the usual types of information which to remain in the files after the child is out of school.
8. Many other types of materials which might help at some time in counseling the child, such as:
  - a. Profile sheets from standardized tests.
  - b. Significant notes or letters from home.
  - c. Report cards or records from other schools.
  - d. Copies of letters sent to the home.

Any school can set up a similar system with a minimum expenditure of time and money. Each school can design forms pertinent to its own needs. By following this procedure teachers will have a greater interest in using the forms.

#### Content of Records in the Secondary School

A good cumulative record provides evidence concerning the social, civic, and economic responsibility of individuals. These include supervisors' and employers' anecdotal reports and questionnaires filled out by the students.

The record should show whether students' interests are becoming broader, narrower, or more intense. Are his attitudes and beliefs becoming more rigid, more flexible, more consistent, or more confused? Social competence and emotional adjustment are reflected in measures of personality traits, personality inventories, rating scales, sociometric tests, and in the results of projective techniques. Brief notes from faculty conferences, from counselor and teacher interviews, and from anecdotal records will describe behavior, purposes of life, and levels of aspiration. Somewhere the guidance worker should find accounts of the student's struggle for popularity; his attempts to rise above the socioeconomic status of his parents; his success or failure to

achieve high moral standards, economic independence and recreational outlets. Ideally the record should contain evidence of successful employment and further education after leaving school.

#### ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN THE GUIDANCE PROGRAM

The teacher's part in guidance has been discussed at great length in the literature. Opinions on the subject vary within wide range from those who feel that guidance activities demand a definite division of responsibility between specialists and teachers to others who contend that the classroom teacher is the hub of the guidance program.

Strang<sup>1</sup>, who noted the difference in guidance theory, listed as one of the modern trends in personnel work, "the trend toward increasing responsibility for guidance on the part of teachers." In a similar vein Erickson stated:

It is becoming evident that an effective guidance program must be linked with the activities of the classroom teacher. The teacher and the use she makes of her tools are vital factors in a pupil's success or failure.<sup>2</sup>

The unique position of the teacher was recognized by Umstattd who wrote: "the pupil can be adequately guided only by those who are in contact with him daily in the various fields of study...his classroom teacher."<sup>3</sup>

Hamrin strongly pointed out the responsibility of the teacher in preparing for the guidance role:

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<sup>1</sup>Strang, Ruth M. *Role of the Teacher in Personnel Work*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1953, p 32

<sup>2</sup>Erickson, Clifford E. *Guidance Practices at Work*. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1946, p 88.

<sup>3</sup>Umstattd, op. cit., p 54.

It is not enough for every teacher to understand what guidance is and to have worked out a philosophy of his own. He must understand the factors which have contributed to the increased need for guidance, he must see the movements which have influenced guidance and particularly he must know what to do in terms of his obligations to his pupils.<sup>1</sup>

Even though cumulative record systems vary among the school systems, there is general agreement regarding purposes and use. In describing the cumulative record, Allen pointed out its use as a guidance tool:

To be cumulative the basic permanent records of pupils' progress and adjustment in schools should be a unified, usable outline presenting a well rounded picture of experience and development, concerned with skills, personality, and interest. A cumulative record should not only be a means of studying the pupil but a result of such a program or study. Essentially, the cumulative record should be, and should function primarily as, a guidance tool rather than merely an instrument for official record. An adequate cumulative record provides the data essential to study of a student's present situation in the light of his development.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most significant shortcomings of record systems in many schools is the lack of use by teachers. Too often they become merely "an instrument for official record" and lose identity as an important aid in guidance work. Strang suggested some reasons why teachers don't use cumulative records. These reasons might serve as a check list for evaluating record systems:

1. Teachers have not shared in the planning of the records.
2. Interpretation and use of the cumulative record require considerable time and skill.
3. Records are not conveniently located for the teachers' use.

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<sup>1</sup>Hamrin, Shirley A. *Guidance Talks to Teachers*. Bloomington, Ill.: McKnight and McKnight. 1947. p. 23-24.

<sup>2</sup>Allen, Wendell C. *Cumulative Pupil Records*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University. 1943, p. 1

4. Clerical work required of teachers gives rise to dissatisfaction with records.
5. Teachers do not know how to interpret the records available.
6. Records do not include enough significant information about the causes of behavior.
7. Few teachers have had help in using records in parent conferences.<sup>1</sup>

Many writers have suggested types of information the teacher could use to better understand his pupils. A typical list is that of Dunsmoor:

1. Intelligent quotient.
2. Achievement scores.
3. Scholastic record.
4. Student's subject strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes.
5. Interests, participation, leadership.
6. Vocational and educational goals.
7. Physical handicaps.
8. Home environment.<sup>2</sup>

Hamrin listed ten ways in which the cumulative record can be used for guidance purposes:

1. To help pupils select their educational programs.
2. To identify pupils with special abilities and aptitudes.
3. To determine the need for different instructional materials and methods.
4. To locate causes of failure.
5. To discover causes for behavior difficulties.

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<sup>1</sup>Strang, op. cit., pp 418-19.

<sup>2</sup>Dunsmoor, Clarence C. and Leonard M. Miller, Guidance Methods for Teachers in Homeroom, Classroom, Core Program. Scranton, Pa.: International Textbook Company, 1942. pp. 30-31.

6. To help pupils discover and choose extra curricular interests.
7. To help students towards better time budgeting.
8. To help pupils appreciate the interest the school has in them.
9. To help pupils in their vocational placement and follow-up adjustment.
10. To encourage pupils and teachers to analyze their problems, needs, abilities and opportunities.<sup>1</sup>

The cumulative record has an advantage over specific records as it provides a developmental picture of the pupil's progress. This is particularly valuable in determining the causes of the pupil's present behavior and predicting future progress.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study of the use of cumulative records for guidance purposes was based upon information obtained through interviews with teachers and administrators of the Public School District of Kansas City, Missouri, and by surveying literature of this subject area from the library of Kansas State College, and the Public Library of Kansas City, Missouri.

The survey revealed that, although the cumulative record has a unique role in the permanent educational history of the individual pupil from his entry into a school system until he leaves, some teachers lack certain knowledge and skills needed for appraising students scientifically; and some teachers have habits that prevent their understanding students. Such habits as making snap judgments or immediate interpretations on the basis of inadequate evidence, reacting to student behavior according to its significance for the teacher rather than its significance for the student, and appraising

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<sup>1</sup>Hamrin, op. cit., pp 193-94.

a student's actions in terms of the teacher's cultural values rather than in terms of the norms of the social class of the student and his family.

The data collected from different sources are usually organized and summarized in a case study or cumulative personnel record. The case study is the form used frequently by psychologists and guidance specialists but is comparatively little used by teachers and teacher-counselors. Because of the time required for making a good case study, few teachers can make them for many students. But many do find that making a case study of at least one student each semester or year helps them to become increasingly sensitive and alert to student needs, to understand better the influences behind student behavior, and to become more skilled in using analytical and diagnostic procedures and in interpreting the material collected.

For summarizing the information collected on students, most schools must rely upon cumulative personnel records. A good cumulative record is in one sense an abbreviated case study and has certain important advantages: It helps to strengthen guidance and instruction by providing a sound basis for understanding the individual, by showing his significant experience, by indicating his readiness for new experiences, and by pointing out the routes to new goals. It aids teachers in the study of the individual by making it possible for them to understand his present through an analysis of his past, by furnishing clues regarding the causes of his behavior difficulties and failures, and by disclosing his strengths and weaknesses.

A good cumulative record aids counseling in particular by permitting the worker to use the interview time for counseling rather than for collecting information. It aids curriculum revision and improvement of teaching by revealing the needs of students and their progress towards specific goals. And it aids articulation by contributing to continuity and by providing a

helpful basis for educational and vocational placement.

To provide these advantages, the record must offer all the information needed by the various workers; and it must show the students' development over a period of time, not merely his status with respect to a given item at a given time. Accordingly, there must be a continuous, systematic recording of data. A four year record of social timidity, for example, has much greater significance than a single recorded observation of this fact. Yet the collecting and recording of data must not overshadow use of the data or become an obstacle to use. Hence, the items collected and recorded should be the ones that the workers recognize as important and usable. Overelaborate and too intricate records should be avoided, for they may prevent use of valuable items by some workers.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

After a careful perusal of the information obtained through interviews and a study of available material on cumulative records the following recommendations were made:

Teachers should be prepared to understand how records can be effectively used in the classroom. A teacher education program might well include a form of in-service training or further academic preparation in the area of using cumulative records as a guidance tool.

More teachers need to develop or be motivated to develop a greater interest and enthusiasm for guidance in the classroom.

The responsibility for guidance on the part of the teacher should be increased. It is becoming evident that an effective guidance program must be linked with the activities of the classroom teacher.



Teachers should share in the planning of the records, and the records should be conveniently located for the teachers' use.

Additional study should be made into the training of teachers in the field of guidance by school administrators, and adequate programs should be set up for this purpose.

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THE USE OF CUMULATIVE RECORDS  
FOR GUIDANCE PURPOSES

by

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B. S., Kansas State College of Agriculture  
and Applied Science, 1952

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Education

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE  
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1957

This study was made for the purpose of developing criteria for teachers in the effective use of cumulative records for guidance purposes in the classroom. As well, a particular concern of this study was to try to encourage an in-service teacher preparation program in the use of records and to understand the significance of the guidance aspect.

The first step in this study was the securing of information from interviewing teachers and administrators in the Public School District of Kansas City, Missouri. The writer felt a need to know what was being done in that locale.

The next step was to review the available written material on this subject. The Kansas State College Library contained some of this material. The Public Library of Kansas City, Missouri contained some periodical material and some very recent books on the subject. After all of the material were studied and evaluated, then the latest and more essential data were selected and compiled into this report.

The results of this survey showed that the cumulative record serves a variety of administrative, supervisory, and instructional uses. It may be used as a technique of appraisal or guidance in counseling with the pupil, conferring with his parents and transmitting reports to other schools or prospective employers.

The unique role of the cumulative record in evaluation is that the predictive value of data is increased when such data have been recorded periodically. The ability to use cumulative records efficiently requires a high degree of insight into human behavior. Untrained teachers for example, can scarcely see comprehensive test and anecdotal data in their patterns of interrelationship. Training for interpreting test scores generally exceeds that given to the average teacher; thus it is necessary to include record

interpretation in the program of inservice training.

Few teachers realize, for instance, that data recorded as raw scores are relatively useless unless one knows the nature of the population, the central tendency, and the variability of scores for the group from which the data were gathered. It is important to know, too, whether the results are recorded as percentile or standard scores, and whether the norms represent local, state, or national populations.

When the entire school staff participates in constructing a cumulative record system and determines the data it should contain, each guidance worker, including the teacher, will know whether the school has adopted some standard for distribution of marks, whether the mark represents achievement of a student in relation to others, to ability, or to achievement per se.

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