

## Teachers' Knowledge and Application of Anecdotal Record in Assessing Basic Schools Learners' Progress in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria

Dr. (Mrs.) Obano, Ezeimwenghian Julian  
obanoeze@gmail.com

&

Dan-Eheremwen Enowoghomwenma, Ph.D.  
Department of Educational Management  
University of Benin, Benin city  
+23480033644184 [cheremwen@yahoo.com](mailto:cheremwen@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

*For learning to be effective, there is the need for assessment. This could be during the teaching and learning process or at the end of a unit, course or programme. Assessment has various tools among which is anecdotal record that is used to record specific observations of individual pupils/students behaviour, skills, attitudes and many more. Despite the importance and use of anecdotal record, it seems that most teachers do not have the knowledge and application of it. This study therefore, investigated teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal records in assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State. The study was guided by three research questions and two hypotheses which addressed the problem of the study. The study adopted the survey research design to describe and generalize teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal records for assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State. The research population comprised all the 690 teachers in the 65 Basic Schools in Oredo LGA of Edo State in the 2020 school year. A total of 345 teachers, that is, 50 percent of the research population made up the sample size. The random sampling method was used to select the sample for the study. A questionnaire titled: "Anecdotal Record Questionnaire for Basic Schools (ARQBS)" was designed, validated and pilot-tested ( $N=20$ ; coefficient=0.82). It administered to the selected teachers for the study. The data collected were analysed using means, standard deviation and t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the level of teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal records for assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State was low. There was no significant difference in teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal record for assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State, based on teachers' gender and academic qualification. It was recommended, based on the findings of the study, among others, that the teachers in UBE Programme, particularly the primary section, should be sensitized on the importance and use of anecdotal records as an effective tool for assessing learners' progress in the schools.*

**Keywords:** Anecdotal records; Assessing learners' progress; Basic Schools; Assessment

### **Introduction**

A good assessment is like a doctor's stethoscope, it identifies specific strengths and weaknesses with the goal of making someone better. A good assessment helps learners learn better and teachers teach better. It tells us where we are on the path to mastery and what we need to do next. Assessment in the past was done entirely by the teacher. Today, in addition to teachers' assessments, learners learn to be involved in assessing their own learning and may be involved in digital learning environments that provide immediate online feedback. Assessments occur before, during and after learning, thus, an assessment is not the same as testing, although tests may be a part of assessment. Assessments in school can be carried out in different ways, and the types of tools used depend on the purpose for which the assessment is being carried out.

- Assessment for learning: Before, during and after learning, teachers and learners gather information that helps to determine the next step for skill development of learners' outcome.
- Assessment as learning: Both during and after learning, the teacher encourages learners to build knowledge of themselves as learners. The process of being aware and evaluating their own thinking processes is called meta-cognition. It is a core skill for a self-directed learner.
- Assessment of learning: Assessment of learning is the summation of all the learning evidence. It may come at the end of the learning or at regular points during learning. Teachers ensure that learners have a range of opportunities and a variety of ways to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitudes that confirm progress in the learner's outcomes. Teachers balance this evidence in their assessment

Variability of approaches and tools are used to assess pupils' learning on a daily basis in the context of the classroom experiences. Anecdotal records are one of the tools used to record specific observations of individual pupils/student behaviours, skills and attitudes as they relate to the outcomes in the programme of studies. An anecdotal record is an observational method used frequently in classroom or learning settings in which the observer summarizes a single developmental incident after the event has occurred. Written from memory, the anecdotal record documents a student's growth and trends. Such records are intended to be brief and factual accountings. Anecdotal records are written in the past tense. Observation starts when the child begins the experience and ends when the child stops participating in the experience. It is a useful method to record events or actions based on the child's strengths, interests, achievements, development and needs.

Anecdotal records can address students' participation and effort or can concentrate on the student's progress in attaining identified course objectives. To gain enough information to plan for the individual needs and interests of a child one would observe the same child over a period of time. Anecdotal records can be made systematically after each lesson, at the end of the day, or less frequently such as at the end of a unit. An anecdotal record is a detailed descriptive narrative recorded after a specific behaviour or interaction occurs. Anecdotal records inform teachers as they plan learning experiences, provide information to families, and give insights into identifying possible developmental delays. It is an observational method used

frequently in classroom or learning settings in which the observer summarizes a single developmental incident after the event has occurred. Written from memory, the anecdotal record documents a student's growth and trends. Such records are intended to be brief and factual accountings. The notes record a range of student behaviours in areas such as literacy, Mathematics, Social Studies, science, the arts, and social emotional and physical development. When recording observations, it is important to document a behaviour in terms that provide a concrete description and enough details to inform future instruction. Statements such as "The student was undertaking a task" provide no information about the task or the behaviour.

Anecdotal records are written in a journalistic form. They identify the who, what, where, when and how of a particular incident, focusing on the subject's specific conduct in the situation. In education, teachers use anecdotal records in common practice for the assessment of skill development in young children. The recorded observations are intended to identify the child's current skill level, interests and skills to develop next. Anecdotal records should always be objective recordings of the student's actions and behaviours. The records should be written in a nonjudgmental manner. With a collection of anecdotal records about a student, the child's developmental progress can be documented and teaching can be tailored to meet the student's individual needs.

Smith (2010) asserted that an anecdotal record was an observation that was written like a short story. They are descriptions of incidents or events that are important to the person observing. Anecdotal records are short, objective and as accurate possible. According to him, they are usually (but not always) written after the event in past tense by taking brief notes at the time of observation to help when writing out the full anecdotal at a later time. He reiterated that to gain enough information to plan for the individual needs and interests of a child, observing the same child over a period of time and noting any behaviour, interactions preference and skill while caring for the child may be necessary. Anecdotal records are notes written by the teacher regarding students' compunction skill, behaviour or learning. They document and describe significant daily events, and relevant aspects of pupils/students' activities and learning progress. The notes can be taken during students' activities or at the end of the day. Formats for collection should be flexible and easy to use.

The following are some basic guidelines in preparing anecdotal records:

- record the observation and the circumstance in which the learning experience occurs;
- make the task of daily notetaking manageable by focusing on clearly defined objectives or purposes, and by identifying only a few students to observe during a designated period of time;
- Record data on loose leaf sheets and keep them in a three-ring binder with a page designated for each student and organized alphabetically by students' last names or by class. This format allows the teacher to add pages as necessary.
- Write the notes on recipe cards and then file these alphabetically.
- Use adhesive note papers that can be attached to the student's pages or recipe card files.
- Design structured forms for the collection of specific data.

According to Jerry (2009), some guidance for making anecdotal records include:-

- Keeping a notebook handy to make brief notes to remind you of incidents you wish to include in the record. Also, include the name, time and setting in your notes.
- Writing the record as soon as possible after the event. The longer you delay in to writing your anecdotal record, the more subjective and vague the observation will become.
- In your anecdotal record, identify the child, time, date and setting
- Describing the actions and what was said.
- Including the response of other people if they relate to the action.
- Describing the event in the sequence that it occurred.

Teachers may choose to keep running written observations for each student or they may use a more structured approach, constructing charts that focus each observation on the collection of specific data. A combination of open-ended notes and structured forms may also be used. It is important to date all observations recorded. Anecdotes may be recorded as positive (in accordance with goal) or negative (opposed to goal). In that way, a teacher can get a picture of the growth and development of the entire class. The anecdotal record is an instrument generally considered to be ideally suited to the Basic Schools. The use of the anecdotal record serves so many important purposes which are included in but not limited to the following.

- It helps each teacher to have the benefit of the previous teachers' experiences for a better understanding of each pupil.
- It can be used to measure consistently a pupil's development over a long period of time.
- It provides a variety of descriptions of the uninhibited behaviour of pupils in diverse situations, thus contributing to an understanding of the basic personality pattern of each individual and of changes in the pattern.
- It helps each teacher to become aware of the problems of individual pupils.
- It gives specific and exact descriptions of pupils' personality instead of vague generalizations. The unique contributions of the anecdotal record to the case history of the student are that it is a dynamic description of a specific episode and the situation in which it took place.
- It provides data for guidance, especially for parent-teacher conferences and for aiding educational and health services.
- The anecdotal record helps keep in the teacher's mind a complete picture of individual growth
- It facilitates the identification or diagnosis of pupils who may need remedial work. The anecdotal record is meant to be a practical study device for improving professional assessment of such disabilities as speech handicaps, reading deficiencies, and defects in study habits and attitudes.
- It enables the school administration to have a better basis for making improvements in the curriculum. For example, evaluation of anecdotal records may indicate where there should be a general presentation of material in character development to satisfy the needs of the school community.

Anecdotal records should not be considered in isolation, but cumulatively. The use of anecdotal records in Basic Schools is critical. At the outset, it is essential to give all the teachers in the school an understanding of what is involved and create the willingness to cooperate in trying out the method. It is the teachers' attitude and cooperation which are most essential to the success of the plan because as constant observers of the pupils' behaviour, they are in a better position to know the children. Since teachers must be depended upon to write the majority of anecdotes, the anecdotal record plan will fail unless teachers have the knowledge of and also believe in it. When teachers see the actual and immediate need for anecdotal records in carrying out their work, it is more likely that they will be ready to accept them. A great deal is being said about encouraging able students to make the best use of their potential. This should be done in the Basic School where one can get clues to an individuals' positive or negative development. If negative development is spotted at this stage, it is easier to correct it than if it is allowed to develop over a long period of time. In the same way that early detection of a disease is desirable, early detection of negative factors is essential for the positive development of personality. Since the anecdotal record is part of the ongoing record, reliable only if recorded continuously, a wise teacher selects positive as well as negative behaviours for the record so that she can gain a complete picture. Before determining techniques of appraisal, one needs to know exactly what is being measured in terms of the learning goals set up by the school.

Bande et al (2014) did a research on teachers' knowledge and the use of anecdotal records as a tool for assessing pupils' progress in Basic Schools in Ekiti and Oyo States of Nigeria. The participants were 200 teachers selected from 100 schools in Ekiti and Oyo States. The findings revealed that most teachers lacked the knowledge and did not use anecdotal records for the assessment of the learners in the Basic Schools. There was a significant association between the knowledge and use of anecdotal records for assessment. A Significant difference existed between Lower and Upper Basic School teachers in the use of anecdotal records in favour of upper basic teachers. They recommended that teachers in Basic schools should be sensitized on the importance of anecdotal records as effective tools for assessing pupils' progress in the schools. This study therefore examined teachers' knowledge and application of anecdotal records in assessing basic school learners' progress in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In today's education climate, school success is defined as ensuring achievement for every learner. To reach this goal, teachers need tools such as anecdotal records to help them identify learners who are at risk academically and adjust instructional strategies to better meet such learners' needs. Learner progress monitoring is a practice that helps teachers use learners' performance data to continually evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and make more informed instructional decisions. Learning takes place in learners' heads where it is invisible to others. This means that learning must be assessed through performance, that is, what learners can do with their learning. Assessing learners' progression can involve formal or informal assessment which are usually carried out during activities. A good assessment is like a doctor's stethoscope, it identifies specific strengths and weaknesses with the goal of making the learner better. Good assessments help learners learn better and teachers teach better.

Despite the importance of using anecdotal records in assessing learners' progress, there seems to be issues with the use of it in schools. It seems that most Basic Schools

do not have data on the progress of learners apart from terms' report cards or results. One of the questions which seeks for answers from the foregoing discussion is "do teachers have knowledge in the use of anecdotal record in assessing learners' progress?" This allegation and the answered question are very worrisome and therefore, demand immediate investigation. Thus, this study sought to investigate teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal records in assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State.

### **Research Question**

1. What is the level of teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal records in assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State?

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal records in assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State.
2. There is no significant difference in teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal records in assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State based on academic qualification.

### **Methods**

The study adopted the survey design to describe and generalize teachers' knowledge of anecdotal records in assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, in Edo State. The research population comprised all the 690 teachers from the 65 Basic Schools in Oredo LGA of Edo State in 2020 school year. A total of 345 teachers, that is, 50 percent of the research population, made up the sample size. The random sampling method was used to select the sample for the study. A questionnaire titled: "Anecdotal Record Questionnaire for Basic Schools (ARQBS)" was designed, validated, and pilot-tested (N=20; coefficient alpha = 0.82) and administered to the selected teachers for the study. Section "A" of the questionnaire requested for the demographic information of the teachers while Section "B" contained 10-item reasons from literature on anecdotal records which the respondents were requested to fill on a modified four point Likert rating scale of: Strongly Agree 4, Agree 3, Disagree 2 and Strongly Disagree 1. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation for the research question. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used for acceptance of the items. A mean value of 2.50 and above implied an agreement while below 2.50 indicated disagreement. Also, a normative mean of 25.00 was set to ascertain the level of teachers' knowledge of the use of anecdotal records. A mean value of 25.00 and above indicated high level while below 25.00 implied low level. The hypotheses were tested using independent sample t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**Table 1: **Level of Teachers' Knowledge and use of Anecdotal Record for Assessing Learners' Progress**

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
Anecdotal record is the same as the pupil's result sheet.	2.33	0.542	Disagree
Anecdotal records are used for assessing pupils/students' progress.	2.56	0.499	Agree
Anecdotal record is a good assessment tool used by teachers.	2.49	0.519	Disagree
Anecdotal records aid in planning learning experiences of pupils.	2.46	0.520	Disagree
Anecdotal records document occurrences of certain behavior/trait/event of the learners	2.37	0.521	Disagree
Analyses of recorded behaviours or traits in the anecdotal records	2.12	0.614	Disagree
Anecdotal record is used to monitor the growth and development of the child.	2.10	0.524	Disagree
Cumulative record of a child's growth and development collected over time can be provided by anecdotal record	2.03	0.495	Disagree
The anecdotal record is a better means of pupils' data collection	2.11	0.637	Disagree
The anecdotal record enables teachers and guidance workers to study and understand the adjustment patterns of the students.	2.17	0.558	Disagree
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>22.74</b>	<b>1.91</b>	

The data in Table 1 revealed that the teachers agreed that anecdotal records were used for assessing pupils/students' progress. However, they disagreed that: anecdotal record was the same as the pupil's result sheet; anecdotal record was a good assessment tool used by teachers. anecdotal records aid in planning learning experiences of pupils; anecdotal records document occurrences of certain behavior/trait/event of the learners; analyses of recorded behaviours or traits in the anecdotal records; anecdotal record was used to monitor the growth and development of the child; cumulative record was a better means of pupils' data collection; and the anecdotal record enabled teachers and guidance workers to study and understand the adjustment patterns of the students. The grand mean of 22.74 and standard deviation of 1.91 indicated that the level of teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal records for assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State was low. The result was further illustrated in Figure 1

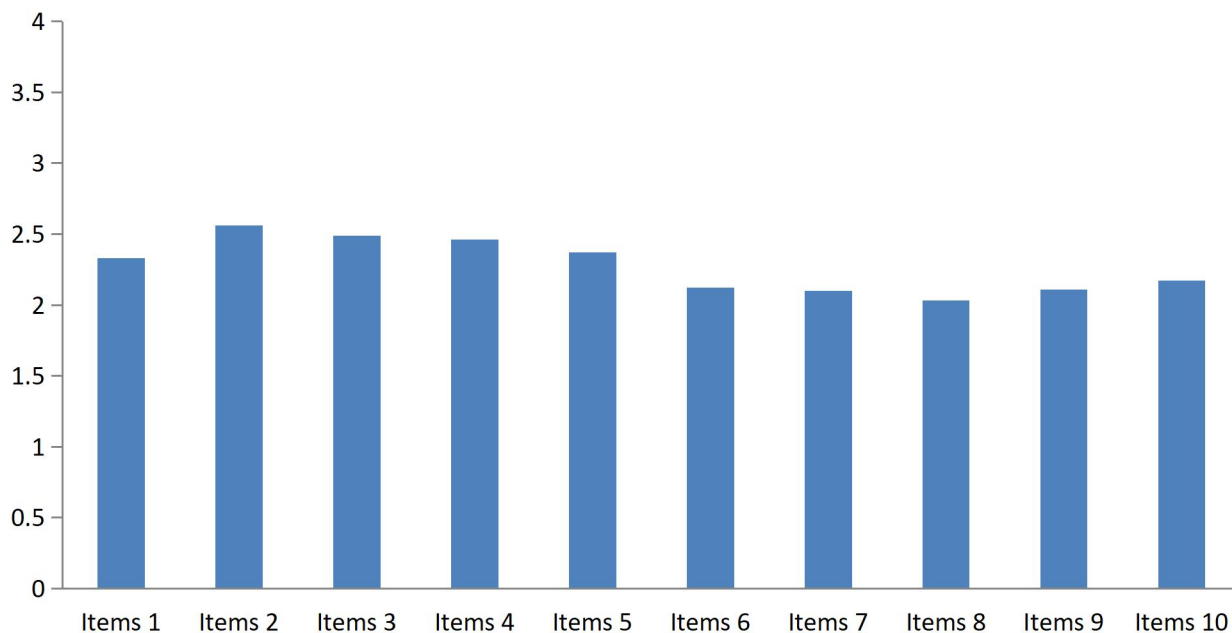


Figure 1: **Level of Teachers' Knowledge and use of Anecdotal Record for Assessing Learners' Progress**

**Table 2: Significant Difference between Male and Female Teachers' Knowledge and use of Anecdotal Records for Assessing Learners' Progress**

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Male	87	2.24	.435			
				-.736	.463	Not significant
Female	258	2.31	.467			

Table 2 revealed a t value of -0.736 and a p-value of 0.463 which was greater than the alpha value of .05. It implied that the hypothesis which stated that there was no significant difference between male and female teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal records for assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State was retained.

**Table 3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the difference teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal record for assessing learners' progress based on academic qualification**

Group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	1.077	3	.359	1.742	<b>.163</b>	
Within Groups	22.871	342	.206			Not significant
Total	23.948	345				



Table 3 showed an F value of 1.742 with a p-value of 0.163. The p-value was greater than the alpha value of .05 thus, the hypothesis was retained. It indicate that there was no significant difference in teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal records for assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State, based on academic qualification.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The level of teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal records for assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State was low. The findings supported those of Bandele, et al (2014) which revealed that most teachers lacked the knowledge of and did not use anecdotal records for the assessment of the learners in Basic Schools. The findings also corroborated the assertion by Bandele and Omodara (2011) that the use of observations as assessment tools was not common in Nigerian schools. The study revealed that many of the teachers had limited knowledge of anecdotal records and some who used them for the assessment of the pupils/students did not do so regularly/adequately in the schools. The low level of knowledge of anecdotal records and neglecting their use could cause some areas of pupils' developments to suffer neglect. Some of the areas, according to Okpala et al (1993) include social adjustment of the child, personal and social development, identifying unintended learning outcomes, identifying difficulties with students' experience in learning projects and learning activities, identifying interest and work habits, to mention but a few. The observation of some vita behaviours may not be captured.

The study also revealed that there was no significant difference in teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal records for assessing learners' progress in Oredo LGA Basic Schools, Edo State based on gender and academic qualification of teachers. It supported the fact that once a manageable system was in place, teachers, irrespective of gender or academic qualification, had the information they needed to reflect on what the children learnt. Reflections and anecdotal notes should be inextricably linked and serve as the foundation for instructional planning thereby helping teachers think more deeply about their students' growth and learning. Furthermore, reflecting on these records allows teachers to generate questions and hypotheses that fuel additional observations and anecdotal records, making this type of formative assessment "ongoing, strategic and purposeful" (Coppie & Bredekamp, 2009:22). The results implied that most teachers, irrespective of gender or academic qualifications did not usually employ anecdotal records to assess their pupils/students despite their worth as good, potent and effective means of assessing affective and psychomotor domains of learning (Kolawole et al, 2005). The study revealed that many of the teachers who use anecdotal records for the assessment of the pupils/students did not use them regularly/adequately in the schools. Neglecting the use of anecdotal records may cause some areas of pupils'/students' development to suffer neglect.

### **Conclusion**

It was therefore, concluded in this study that teachers' knowledge and use of anecdotal record was low and, as such, the records were not commonly employed to assess the learners. There was a significant difference in the level of knowledge of anecdotal records as an assessment tool based on teachers' gender and academic qualification. The results could have accounted for the observed differences in certificates, testimonials, reports and references issued to the learners at the primary school level.

### **Recommendations**

It was recommended, based on the findings of the study, that teachers in UBE Programme, particularly the primary section, should be:

1. trained on the use and importance of anecdotal records as an effective tool for assessing learners' progress in the schools;
2. sensitized on the use and importance of anecdotal records as an effective tool for assessing learners' progress in the schools, irrespective of teachers' gender; and
3. sensitized on the use and importance of anecdotal records as an effective tool for assessing learners' progress in the schools irrespective of teachers' qualification.

### **Reference**

Bande, S, O., & Omodara, M, F. (2011). Challenges of examination as tool for quality assurance in schools. *Journal of National Association for Science, Humanity and Education Research*, 9(2), 108-112.

Bande, S.O., Omodara, M. F., & Oluwatayo, J. A. (2014). Anecdotal Records as Tools for Assessing Learners' Progress in the Universal Basic Schools in Ekiti and Oyo States, Nigeria. *Education Journal* 3 (3), 122-127.

Copple, C., & S. Bredekamp, (2009). *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8*. 3rd ed. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Jerry, T. (2009), Group Counselling. *Journal of Personal Guidance*, 45(2), 601-608

Okpala, P. N., Onocha, C.O. & Oyedeji, O.A (1993). Measurement and evaluation in education. Ibadan: Stirling – Horden publishers (Nig.) Ltd. 103-129

Kolawole, Emmanuel Babafemi (2005). Measurement and assessment in education. Lagos: Bolabay Publications. 38

Smith, E. (2010). Mental testing on children under three year. *Paediatrics*, 3 (8), 280-29