

2.4.6 Anecdotal Record

An anecdotal record contains short descriptive accounts about some events regarding a student. Every account is a report of a significant episode in the life of a student. It is a simple statement of an incident deemed by the observer to be significant with respect to a given student. When such reports describing, on the spot, some incidents are recorded so that they may be of some significance, they are collectively known as an anecdotal record.

An anecdote may be compared to a snapshot of an isolated incident of the behaviour of the student, which suggests some special significance. Just as a camera catches the pose of an individual at a given time, similarly the anecdote should report exactly the behaviour observed. If we accept the uniqueness of the individual as a basic principle of guidance, this word snapshot is of immense significance to us for guidance purposes. An individual's behaviour is always in response to some felt need. For example, desire for affection or threat to his/her security may cause him/her to show certain strange behaviour. A teacher should note it down at once, i.e. he/she should have a word snapshot. Such word snapshots written by as many teachers as they meet individual students, in as many situations as possible, give a true picture of the students' behaviour pattern or his/her personality.

Maintaining anecdotal records: An anecdotal record is the result of observation by a teacher about the specific behaviour of the student in a situation. It is written down to get a better understanding of the student because the teacher may forget the incident if it is not written down. The teacher writes down what s/he observes and does not give any remarks. S/he may describe the behaviour and say something by way of comment or s/he may describe the behaviour and suggest possible remedial measures.

What to observe: A proforma is supplied to each teacher to note down his/her observation. It contains date, place, incident and remarks on the proforma supplied. Directions to the teachers are given indicating that they must record the child's behaviour, by making their statements descriptive and specific to avoid vague/general remarks. Their descriptions should be statements of what happened, for example, came late by half an hour without an excuse for previous day's absence, did not obey instructions and showed defiance.

Areas to be noted down: Haphazardly noting down bits of information serves no purpose. Hence, in the proforma supplied, areas are clearly marked, on which observations are to be made. An anecdotal record is a record with a purpose. For

example, a boy's interest in industrial work may be exhibited by his article on the visit to a local factory. A girl's interest in a literary magazine may be indicative of her literary taste. A teacher can find many such occurrences in the life of his/her students, of which he/she has to make a note. For example, a boy's comment on a radio newscast is a good item for an anecdotal record if he is interested in studying the text for current history. A girl's comment on some recent scientific invention may show her interest in science. An anecdotal record is of special interest in understanding social and emotional behaviours. If a boy is found sitting alone when all are rejoicing and making merry in a holiday excursion, shows that he has some emotional problems.

Longitudinal Approach: Only those anecdotal records are of any help to the guidance worker, in which behaviours of an individual are described over a long period of time. Longitudinal anecdotal records maintained from the nursery school to the high school are very useful. The anecdotal record file should not contain irrelevant material. The file should be scrutinized from time-to-time and irrelevant material may be removed. Anecdotal records pertaining to all aspects of life should be maintained.

Every teacher in the school should be provided with forms to write down the incidents about students as and when they occur. A few basic considerations to be kept in mind are given below:

- 1) The form should be short and informal.
- 2) Reports should be of some significant episodes. The episode described should show a marked tendency from the norm of the individual or the group.
- 3) The anecdotes should be written about all students and not just about the high achiever or the problematic ones i.e., stereotypes.
- 4) The anecdotes should be the reports of the actual observations and written just after the events.
- 5) A single incident is of no value.
- 6) Both positive and negative incidents of behaviour should be noted down.
- 7) We should know what to look for, where to look for and how to record.