

Increase the power of any of the non-narrative methods by combining them with anecdotal or running records, giving the detail missing in checklists. Some teachers insert a comment section on a checklist so they can record their reflections or comments. This allows the teacher to give a bit more detail on the checklist. Here, remember that you need to use descriptive phrasing in the comments section and avoid writing subjective comments.

Rating Scales

Rating scale

Non-narrative method for observing; a listing of activities or characteristics; calls for a summary judgment

Rating scales do not tell a story; therefore, they are a non-narrative form of observation. Teachers use a **rating scale** to review observations and to make a judgment about a child's performance. This implies that the teacher has already been observing with some other method. A rating scale is a shortcut method because the teacher does not present the original data, but it does allow teachers to organize information quickly and in an easy-to-read format. A rating scale, in general, is not very helpful at all unless it is preceded by other observations. A rating scale is somewhat useful in summarizing observations.

Teachers can develop rating scales that give them information for making guidance decisions. Figure 6.4 is a rating scale on Jerry's peer relationship attributes. These attributes were also checked in the sample checklist, but they are now evaluated using a rating scale instead. Note the section for comments, which allows a teacher to add brief notes on how she arrived at the judgment shown in the rating scale. The teacher has also added a section on how she intends to use the information to guide the child. Once again, to reiterate, it is essential to use descriptive, objective phrasing and avoid subjective phrasing in the comments section.

Some of the same advantages found in checklists exist in rating scales, too. Rating scales are easy to use and do not require much training. Observers tend to like using rating scales because

FIGURE 6.4 A sample rating scale

Rating Scale: Peer Relationship Attributes

Reflect on your observations of this child, and rate his or her peer relationship characteristics. For each statement, choose the rating that best describes this child and circle the appropriate spot on the scale. Write a brief narrative in the Comments section. Use this information when you think about how to guide this child's peer relationships.

Child's Name: Jerry
Date: May 20

	Usually	Only Occasionally	Never
Accepted by other children	✓	✓	✓
Neglected or rejected by other children	✓	✓	✓
Invited by other children to join them in play, friendship, and work	✓	✓	✓
Named by other children as a friend	✓	✓	✓
Named by other children as someone they like to play and work with	✓	✓	✓

Comments: Jerry is well liked and, like all the children his age, has learned quite a lot about managing emotions and about social skills this year.

How I will use this information in guiding this child: Continue to help Jerry work on managing unpleasant emotions and continue to help him practice social skills as he works with others.

*Use rating scales after doing other forms of observation, which yield enough information on which to summarize with a rating scale.