

Comment Framework

Progress Reports and Report Cards

Big Ideas for Building Comments

Teachers should write comments that:

- focus on what students have learned
- describe significant strengths
- identify next steps for improvement

Comments should:

- describe in overall terms what students know and can do
- avoid language that simply repeats the wordings of the curriculum expectations or the achievement chart
- use language that parents/guardians will understand
- provide parents/guardians with personalized, clear, precise, and meaningful feedback
- help parents/guardians understand how they can support their children at home



Growing Success (2010), p. 64

The Purpose of the Comment Framework

The comment framework has been developed to provide teachers and principals with a common process for creating comments that reflect the intent of *Growing Success*. The purpose of report card comments is to communicate individual student learning to both students and parents.

The Progress Report and Provincial Report Cards provide opportunities to communicate descriptive feedback. Descriptive feedback helps students learn by providing them with precise information about what they are doing well, what needs improvement, and what specific steps they can take to improve. According to Davies (2007, p. 2), descriptive feedback “enables the learner to adjust what he or she is doing in order to improve.” Ongoing descriptive feedback linked specifically to the learning goals and success criteria is a powerful tool for improving student learning and is fundamental to building a culture of learning within the classroom (Growing Success, 2010, p. 34).

It is important that teachers have the opportunity to compose and use personalized comments on report cards (Growing Success, 2010). Personalized comments include more than specific names and pronouns. Personalized comments communicate student progress, indicate specific individual evidence, and vary from student to student.

Comment Framework for Progress Reports and Report Cards

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Comment Framework

1

Write key learning with qualifiers and descriptors.

- The teacher identifies big ideas related to a learning goal developed from clusters of expectations or learning skills and work habits.
- The qualifiers on the progress report should reflect the student's progress toward curriculum expectations or development of Learning Skills and Work Habits. (See Appendix 1.)
- The qualifiers on the report card should reflect the student's level of achievement of curriculum expectations or attainment of Learning Skills and Work Habits. (See Appendix 1.)
- The descriptors take the tasks and learning goals into account to clarify and more specifically define effectiveness. (See Appendix 2.)
- Growing Success says, "focus on what students have learned."**

2

Share specific examples that demonstrate the learning.

- The teacher uses information gathered from observations, conversations, and student products to share specific examples of what the student has done to demonstrate his/her strengths.
- This information should be personalized and connected to the success criteria for the learning goal(s).
- Growing Success says, "describe significant strengths."**

3

Communicate next steps to students and parents.

- The teacher should communicate success criteria the student still needs to accomplish or extend their learning.
- These next steps should be connected to the learning goal and be meaningful, clear, and attainable.
- Growing Success says, "identify next steps for improvement."**

The Comment Framework Promotes:

Moving Away From...

Commented on a large number of expectations.

Comments unrelated to Learning Skills and Work Habits or Curriculum Expectations.

Comments generated from impersonal comment banks.

Comments used educational jargon.

Comments were created with strengths, areas of concern and next steps.



Moving Towards...

Commenting on one cluster of expectations.

Comments directly relate to Learning Skills and Work Habits or Curriculum Expectations.

Comments reflect personalized, clear, precise, and meaningful feedback.

Comments use parent and student friendly language providing specific classroom examples.

Comments are created with strengths, specific examples, and next steps personalized to the student.

Sample Progress Report Learning Skills and Work Habits Comments (Appendix 3)

Sample Progress Report Subjects and Strands Comments (Appendix 4)

Students with Special Education Needs

When writing comments for students requiring an Individual Education Plan, the following considerations must be taken:

Students with Accommodations Only

If the student's IEP requires only accommodations to support learning in a subject and/or strand, teachers will **not** check the "IEP" box. The letter grade or percentage mark and comment are based on the regular grade expectations.

Students with Modifications

If the expectations in the IEP are based on expectations outlined for a grade in a particular subject and/or strand in an Ontario curriculum document, but vary from the expectations of the regular program for the grade, teachers must check the "IEP" box for that subject/strand on the Elementary Progress Report Card and the Provincial Report Card.

On the Provincial Report Card, teachers must also include the following statement in the section "Strengths/Next Steps for Improvement":

Elementary:

"This (letter grade/percentage mark) is based on achievement of expectations in the IEP that vary from the Grade X expectations (and/or) are an (increase/decrease) in the (number and/or complexity) of curriculum expectations."

Secondary:

"This percentage mark is based on achievement of the learning expectations specified in the IEP, which differ significantly from the curriculum expectations for the course."

Students with Alternative Learning Expectations

On the provincial report card, teachers must include the following statement in the section "Strengths/Next Steps for Improvement":

Elementary:

"This (letter grade/percentage mark) is based on achievement of alternative learning expectations in the IEP, which are not based on the Ontario curriculum."

Secondary:

"This percentage mark is based on achievement of alternative learning expectations specified in the IEP, which are not based on the Ontario curriculum."

When using an alternative format, teachers should indicate the student's progress/achievement relative to the expectations identified in the IEP, and should comment on the student's strengths and next steps for improvement.

Growing Success (2010), p. 61-63

Comment for Students with ESL/ELD

Elementary:

For Grades 1 to 8, when a student's achievement is based on expectations modified from the grade level curriculum expectations to support English language learning needs, teachers will indicate this by checking the "ESL/ELD" boxes on the progress report cards and the provincial report cards for the appropriate subject(s)/strand(s).

Secondary:

For Grades 9 to 12, when a student's achievement is based on expectations modified from the course curriculum expectations to support English language learning needs, teachers will indicate this by checking the "ESL/ELD" box on the provincial report card for the appropriate course. Where a modification is made to course curriculum expectations, the principal will work collaboratively with the classroom teacher to determine the integrity of the credit.

If only the ESL / ELD box is checked:

Elementary and Secondary

The ESL/ELD box is checked to indicate that modifications have been made to curriculum expectations to address the language learning needs of English Language Learners. No specific statement is used in the comments section when the ESL/ELD box is checked. This is a change in policy from the past and has been made because modifications for students with language learning needs are usually made on a more temporary basis.

If the ESL / ELD box and the IEP box is checked:

Elementary and Secondary

For an English Language Learner, when modifications to curriculum expectations have been made to address both language learning needs and special education needs, the teacher will check both the "ESL/ELD" box and the "IEP" box. Ministry policy for English language learners states that students can be eligible for both ESL/ELD and special education services. In this case, the statement would be included in the comments related to the modifications made for the IEP.

Appendix 1: Qualifiers

Qualifiers for Learning Skills and Work Habits

Excellent	adaptable, astutely, autonomous, can model, caring, clearly, committed, completely, consistently, discerning, distinguished, divergent, easily, effectively, extensively, exemplary, flawless, flexible, giving, impressive, innovative, insightful, inspirational, kindly, masterfully, meticulously, positively, precisely, proficiently, reflective, reverent, secure, seeks challenges, self-assured, servant leadership, synthesizes, thoroughly, uniquely, virtuous
Good	accomplished, comfortably, competent, confidently, constructively, credible, developed, frequently, generally, influences, knowledgeable, manages, more, most, often, regularly, skilled, successfully, usually
Satisfactory	acceptable, adequate, approaching, at times, developing, fair, inconsistently, learning to, limited, occasionally, sometimes, passable, periodically, some, suitable
Needs Improvement	avoids, clarification needed, disengaged, few, hardly, indifferent, infrequently, illogical, literal, little, minimal, minor, naïve, numerous attempts, only, poor, rarely, reflection needed, reluctantly, review needed, seldom, simplistic, when required, with difficulty, unclear, unsure

Planting Seeds for Success, EOCCC (2010), p. 28

Qualifiers for Subjects and Strands: Elementary Progress Report

- Very Well
- Well
- With Difficulty

*Note: The qualifiers on the progress report should reflect the student's progress **toward** curriculum expectations

Qualifiers for Subjects and Strands: Provincial Report Card

High Degree	accurately, consistently, almost always, clearly, precisely, confidently, proficiently, very successfully, all or almost all concepts, complex, logical, sophisticated, thorough understanding, wide range of context, consistently accurate, with no minor errors or omissions, high level of proficiency, extends, expands, self corrects
Considerable	usually, often, routinely, regularly, frequently, most concepts, fair range of context, very good, good, firm understanding, strives, grasps, applies
Some	sometimes, adequately, some concepts, some specific purpose, simple purposes, some appropriate strategies, some understanding, appropriate but incomplete, attempts familiar, require review / practice, beginning to demonstrate, developing, several minor omissions / sometimes major errors
Limited	rarely, seldom, with monitoring, few purposes, few contexts, incomplete unclear, imprecise, basic, limited understanding, limited range, inconsistently, with difficulty, few conventions, major errors, simple ideas

This list of qualifiers is not exhaustive or exclusive. The list is meant to provide initial direction for the creation of comments.

Appendix 2: Descriptors

The following tables have been provided to clarify and more specifically define effectiveness when writing a comment.

DESCRIPTORS of Effectiveness¹

Descriptor	Definition	Clarifying Words or Terms	Questions to Consider
* Effectiveness	Having a definite or desired effect; having the intended outcome	useful explicit relevance pertinent	Have you produced the desired or intended result?
¹ The descriptors below more specifically define effectiveness. Teachers are encouraged to use the more specific clarifying words in task-specific rubrics			
Descriptor	Definition	Clarifying Words or Terms	Questions to Consider
Accuracy	Conforming exactly with the truth or with a given standard; lacking errors	accurate verify correct	How could we check that? How could we find out if that is true? How could we verify or test that?
Appropriateness	That which is suitable to the outcome; is to the point.	relevance applicable	Have you produced a result that is applicable to the situation? Is there a result that could be more suitable?
Breadth	Freedom from limitations (opinion, interests); extent, range.	insight perspectives comprehensive liberality of view elaborate (ideas, perspectives)	Do we need to consider another point of view? Do we need to look at this from another perspective? Is there another way to look at this question? What would this look like from the point of view of...?
Clarity	That which is without ambiguity (unambiguous).	clear elaborate detail illustrate	Could you elaborate further? Could you express that in another way? Could you illustrate what you mean? Could you give me an example?
Depth	That which explores the very foundations of a thing or idea; that which goes beyond appearances.	complexity sophisticated layers comprehensive levels (of understanding)	What factors make this a difficult problem? What are some of the complexities of this question? What are some of the difficulties we need to deal with? Is that dealing with the most significant factors?

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Descriptor	Definition	Clarifying Words or Terms	Questions to Consider
Flexibility	Change direction of thought; vary ideas.	adaptable not rigid	Do other factors need to be considered?
Fluency	Generate a quantity of ideas; offer many alternatives.	ease of use effortless unconstrained ease of generating ready...ease...grace	Have many ideas been considered? Are there other alternatives?
Logic	Describes events or data that are heavily inter-dependent; conclusion depends on the premises.	make sense reasonable mutually supporting organization internal consistency tied together order...sequence...flow	Does all this really make sense together? Does that follow from what you said? How does that follow? But before you implied this and now you are saying that; how can both be true?
Precision	That which leaves no room for indecision. That which is clearly defined and corresponds to an identifiable notion. That which is performed or which operates in the safest possible manner, with the minimum likelihood of error.	detail degree explicit	Could you be more specific? Could you give more details? Could you be more exact?
Relevance	Fits a purpose, conforms to reason and common sense, having a bearing on the matter in hand.	pertinent relatedness connected	How does this relate to the problem? How is that connected to the question? How does that bear on the issue?
Significance	Of great importance or consequence.	so what? implications importance consequences of	Is this the most important problem to consider? Is this the central idea to focus on? Which of these facts are most important?

Part Four: Effective Classroom Practices (B) The Planning Cycle - (ii) Gathering the Evidence

CODE: Effective Elementary Assessment and Evaluation Classroom Practices

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Appendix 3:

Sample Progress Report Learning Skills and Work Habits Comments

Responsibility – ‘Good’
<p style="text-align: center;">1 Write key learning with qualifiers and descriptors.</p> <p>John usually demonstrates responsibility by fulfilling commitments within the classroom. He comes to class prepared and ready for learning by bringing his agenda and learning materials. John needs to volunteer for more classroom responsibilities.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 Share specific examples that demonstrate the learning</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3 Communicate next steps to students and parents.</p>

Initiative – ‘Needs Improvement’
<p style="text-align: center;">1 Write key learning with qualifiers and descriptors.</p> <p>John avoids taking initiative during opportunities for learning. When tasks become routine (e.g., Independent Reading), he participates. He needs to extend his participation to new experiences such as engaging in reading buddy activities.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 Share specific examples that demonstrate the learning</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3 Communicate next steps to students and parents.</p>

Collaboration – ‘Satisfactory’

1

Write key learning with qualifiers and descriptors.

John sometimes models collaboration skills by working with others to build consensus. He participates willingly and listens to others in group conversations. John needs to work through conflict with his peers.

2

Share specific examples that demonstrate the learning

3

Communicate next steps to students and parents.

How the sample comments look on the Progress Report:

Learning Skills and Work Habits		E – Excellent G – Good S – Satisfactory N – Needs Improvement
Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fulfills responsibilities and commitments within the learning environment. ■ Completes and submits class work, homework, and assignments according to agreed-upon timelines. ■ Takes responsibility for and manages own behaviour. 	G	<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths/Next Steps for Improvement</p> <p>John usually demonstrates responsibility by fulfilling commitments within the classroom. He comes to class prepared and ready for learning by bringing his agenda and learning materials. John needs to volunteer for more classroom responsibilities.</p> <p>John avoids taking initiative during opportunities for learning. When tasks become routine (eg. Independent Reading), he participates. He needs to extend his participation to new experiences such as engaging in reading buddy activities.</p> <p>John sometimes models collaboration skills by working with others to build consensus. He participates willingly and listens to others in group conversations. John needs to work through conflict with his peers.</p>
Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Devises and follows a plan and process for completing work and tasks. ■ Establishes priorities and manages time to complete tasks and achieve goals. ■ Identifies, gathers, evaluates, and uses information, technology, and resources to complete tasks. 	G	
Independent Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Independently monitors, assesses, and revises plans to complete tasks and meet goals. ■ Uses class time appropriately to complete tasks. ■ Follows instructions with minimal supervision. 	E	
Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Accepts various roles and an equitable share of work in a group. ■ Responds positively to the ideas, opinions, values, and traditions of others. ■ Builds healthy peer-to-peer relationships in person and through personal and media-assisted interactions. ■ Works with others to resolve conflicts and build consensus to achieve group goals. ■ Shares information, resources, and expertise, and promotes critical thinking to solve problems and make decisions. 	S	
Initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Looks for and acts on new ideas and opportunities for learning. ■ Demonstrates the capacity for innovation and a willingness to take risks. ■ Demonstrates curiosity and interest in learning. ■ Approaches new tasks with a positive attitude. ■ Recognizes and advocates appropriately for the rights of self and others. 	N	
Self-Regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sets own individual goals and monitors progress towards achieving them. ■ Seeks clarification or assistance when needed. ■ Assesses and reflects critically on own strengths, needs, and interests. ■ Identifies learning opportunities, choices, and strategies to meet personal needs and achieve goals. ■ Perseveres and makes an effort when responding to challenges. 	G	

Appendix 4:

Sample Progress Report Subjects and Strands Comments

Language (Reading) – ‘Progressing Well’

1

Write key learning with qualifiers and descriptors.

John understands important ideas when reading new texts and cites supporting evidence well in his reading responses. During partner discussions, he summarizes the main ideas in “Fly Away Home”, “Owl Moon”, and science-related newspaper articles. John needs to record the ideas from oral discussions in his written reading response through the use of graphic organizers.

2

Share specific examples that demonstrate the learning

3

Communicate next steps to students and parents.

Language (Writing) – ‘Progressing Well’

1

Write key learning with qualifiers and descriptors.

John generates ideas and classifies them well into his recount writing. His “Our Field Trip” recount organized ideas on a timeline. John needs to refer to the Recount Anchor Chart in order to include an important summary of the main events.

2

Share specific examples that demonstrate the learning

3

Communicate next steps to students and parents.

Mathematics (Number Sense & Numeration) – ‘Progressing With Difficulty’

1

Write key learning with qualifiers and descriptors.

In Number Sense and Numeration, John has difficulty applying the correct operation (e.g. addition or subtraction) when solving problems. He is able to add and subtract 2-digit numbers, using manipulatives and on his white board. However, when solving tasks in his math journal, John needs to re-examine the problem highlighting key words to help him choose the correct operation.

2

Share specific examples that demonstrate the learning

3

Communicate next steps to students and parents.

How the sample comments look on the Progress Report:

ESL/ELD – Achievement is based on expectations modified from the curriculum expectations for the grade to support English language learning needs.		IEP – Individual Education Plan NA – No instruction for subject/strand			
Subjects	Progressing With Difficulty	Progressing Well	Progressing Very Well		Strengths/Next Steps for Improvement
Language Reading, Writing, Oral Communication, Media Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/ELD <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> NA		√			John understands important ideas when reading new texts and sites supporting evidence well in his reading responses. During partner discussions, he summarizes the main ideas in “Fly Away Home”; “Owl Moon” and science-related newspaper articles. John needs to record the ideas from oral discussions in his written reading response through the use of graphic organizers. John generates ideas and classifies them well into his recount writing. His “Our Field Trip” recount organized ideas on a timeline. John needs to refer to the Recount Anchor Chart in order to include an important summary of the main events. In Number Sense and Numeration, John has difficulty applying the correct operation (e.g. addition or subtraction) when solving problems. He is able to add and subtract 2-digit numbers, using manipulatives and on his white board. However, when solving tasks in his math journal, John needs to re-examine the problem highlighting key words to help him choose the correct operation.
French <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/ELD <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> NA <input type="checkbox"/> Core <input type="checkbox"/> Immersion <input type="checkbox"/> Extended		√			
Native Language <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/ELD <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA					
Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/ELD <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> French	√				
Science and Technology <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/ELD <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> French		√			
Social Studies <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/ELD <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> French		√			
Health and Physical Education Health Education <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/ELD <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> French Physical Education <input type="checkbox"/> ESL/ELD <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> French		√			

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Credits

Comment Framework for Progress Reports and Report Cards, 2010



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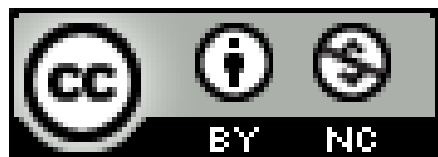
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