

## **How to use no-marks/no-grades feedback when it comes to reporting**

When it comes to reporting, teachers need solid evidence of all of the learning outcomes or standards. There are two questions they need to address as they evaluate and report:

- What has been learned in relation to all the learning targets? (That is, what does each student know, what can she or he do and articulate as proof of learning?)
- What has been achieved? (That is, have students learned what they need to learn to an appropriate degree of quality?)

When responding to these two questions, teachers and students begin by collecting evidence of what has been learned over time. Then, teachers can compare what has been learned with expected quality levels and determine student achievement. Lastly, teachers report their professional judgment using the report card format required.

It is critical that teachers not make summative judgments based on limited evidence or data. A reliable and valid evaluation is based on proof of learning collected from multiple sources over time. This includes evidence collected throughout the term (sometimes called formative assessment data) as well as summative assessment evidence. The more complex the learning expectation, the more likely there is need for multiple forms of evidence over time to accurately evaluate that learning.

There are many ways that teachers use formative assessment data in their evaluations. The following examples focus on learning targets that are complex, and require knowledge, understanding, application and articulation.

**Example #1:**

In Ontario<sup>i</sup>, the Achievement Chart for Social Sciences and Humanities (Grades 9–12) has a category entitled, *Communication: The conveying of meaning through various forms*. Part of the required evidence includes: “Expression and organization of ideas and information (e.g., clarity of expression, logical organization) in oral, visual, and written forms (e.g., reflections, posters, role plays, presentations, reports).” Consider the formative evidence a teacher might collect over the term. It could include data from conversations, such as informal interviews, brief conferences with individual students or small groups, and self-assessments. It could also include observations made during small group or in-class work, as well as during discussions and class presentations. Typical products might be projects, assignments, presentations, and a variety of written texts such as essays, short answer, and narratives. Some of this evidence could be recorded as numerical scores; other evidence needs to be more qualitative in nature – teacher notes or recorded symbols, student work, recordings and so on. In order to evaluate, teachers need to look at the qualitative evidence as well as the numerical evidence.

**Example #2:**

Saskatchewan English Language Arts Grade 9<sup>ii</sup> learning target is expressed as follows: “Assess personal strengths and needs as a viewer, listener, reader, representer, speaker, and writer, and contributions to the community of learners, and develop goals based on assessment and work toward them.” Consider the evidence that is needed to document this complex learning over time, as well as to ensure that there is sufficient evidence to accurately evaluate the learning by the reporting date. It will require products, data from conversations (written or oral), as well as observations by teachers of students engaging in the application of this learning – assessing personal strengths and needs as a viewer, listener, reader, representer, speaker and so on.

**Example #3:**

In Hawaii, the Content and Performance Standards for Grade 9 Social Studies<sup>iii</sup> includes the following: “Political Science/Civics: GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRACY, AND INTERACTION – Understand the purpose and historical impact of political institutions, the principles and values of American constitutional democracy, and the similarities and differences in government across cultural perspectives.” The performance task involves students assessing the extent to which the American values of common good, equality of opportunity, and individual rights have been realized, by either taking a position or making a claim and then defending it with explanations, reasons, or evidence. Consider the student who submits evidence in the form of a video recording of their participation in a class debate, their preparation notes, a detailed self-assessment and two peer observations based on the criteria that the class and the teacher constructed together. To sum up, the evidence is triangulated which makes it more reliable and valid because it includes products, conversations and observations collected over time. This student-collected evidence, along with teacher observations (notes based on the observation rubric for the debate), is high quality evidence of student learning and achievement. Since students participate in more than one debate during the year, not all of it would need to be marked or graded. By the end of the year, the collection of evidence will effectively demonstrate this student’s growth and development in Social Studies.

These examples show how evidence of learning resulting from the formative assessment process is considered during summative evaluation. They also underscore the limits of singular summative assessments to fully convey learning related to complex standards/expectations. Summative tasks alone cannot provide enough data because these learning targets require diverse evidence collected over time to show learning as well as achievement.

Evidence is evidence. How it is used depends on the purpose. Initially, the purpose is to support the learning and guide ongoing teaching decisions. Ultimately, the purpose is to show growth and development over time to inform the teacher's understanding of what has been learned. Later evidence will affirm the quality reached – the achievement level. Together, all the evidence answers the two questions that need to be answered: 1) What has been learned? and 2) What has been achieved?

I want to close by quoting Murray Guest, a high school mathematics teacher who writes: "By opening the door to alternate ways of showing understanding, we as teachers can also invite our own students to devise acceptable ways of demonstrating proof of learning that we may not have thought of ourselves. By rearranging our work, we can spend more time assessing our students and responding to the understanding they show, and less time defining the form student understanding must take."

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<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/sstudies.html>

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<https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/library/curriculum/english/ela9.xml?view=431>

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[http://165.248.30.40/hcpsv3/search\\_results.jsp?contentarea=Social+Studies&grade=9%3A+Participation+in+a+Democracy&strand=&showbenchmark=benchmark&showspa=spa&showrubric=rubric&Go!=Submit](http://165.248.30.40/hcpsv3/search_results.jsp?contentarea=Social+Studies&grade=9%3A+Participation+in+a+Democracy&strand=&showbenchmark=benchmark&showspa=spa&showrubric=rubric&Go!=Submit)