

Chapter 11 Communicating student achievement to others

(Report cards, Expanded format reporting, Informal communications, Student-involved conferencing)

If we are teaching differently, we must assess and communicate differently as well...and keep the focus on what has been learned and how that learning is best shared.

The varied methodologies of how to communicate student achievement are continuously debated. A recent shift in many reporting guidelines has been to deemphasize the 'reporting on achievement' and moving towards 'communicating student learning' (https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/updates/educator_update_student_progress_k-9.pdf). One of the most common interventions has been to focus on conferences with parents (either student-led or parent-teacher). Yet too often the parents that the school wants to attend the conferences either can't or won't. Parents may also say they are more comfortable receiving traditional reports that are similar to what they received when they were in school. Sending a traditional report home may feel like a convenient way of connecting student achievement with families, but it is difficult for it to communicate how learning is happening within the classroom, and there is no guarantee that it will actually be read beyond looking at the summary letter grades and percentages.

The portfolio methodology continues to be an increasingly intriguing tool to replace the report card that "has many faults" (Jum C. Nunnally. Educational Measurement and Evaluation. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972). A portfolio (electronic or hands-on) can enhance the necessary communication of how students are progressing in their learning. This allows the focus to turn to the individuals accomplishments being compared to a learning outcome/objective rather than reporting on how they did on an activity. The learner and family can also observe the learning journey in a formative, ongoing way rather than just reacting to a summation of scores.

As curriculum requirements continue to focus more on competencies such as critical and creative thinking, problem solving, communication, among others (depending on your jurisdiction) it becomes clear that it is not easy to 'report' on these competencies with a number or grade. Instead, artifacts of learning and be included in an eportfolio; as a picture, video, audio, pdf or even a note. There may be some shares of 'moments of learning', but when an authentic assessment is being done, there should be:

- a) a comment explaining what the learning objective was
- b) descriptive feedback about the students accomplishment to a set of standards
- c) a comment connecting as to whether the work of the student is within an age/grade range or not

And when thinking about frequency, that can be aligned in a variety of ways. Some school districts in British Columbia have shared their "requirements with feedback" as:

Following are the MINIMUM expectations for the number of posts provided in a portfolio over the course of the entire school year.

<h1>Portfolio Tracking Sheet</h1>	Student Name:
	Grade:
	Teacher:

Category	Post #	Details	Date completed
Language Arts Artifacts	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		
	5		
Mathematics Artifacts	1		
	2		
	3		
Physical and Health Education Artifacts	1		
	2		
Arts Artifacts	1		
	2		
Science Artifacts	1		
	2		
Social Studies Artifacts	1		
	2		
OTHER	1		
	2		
Summary of Learning	February Suggested		
	June Required		

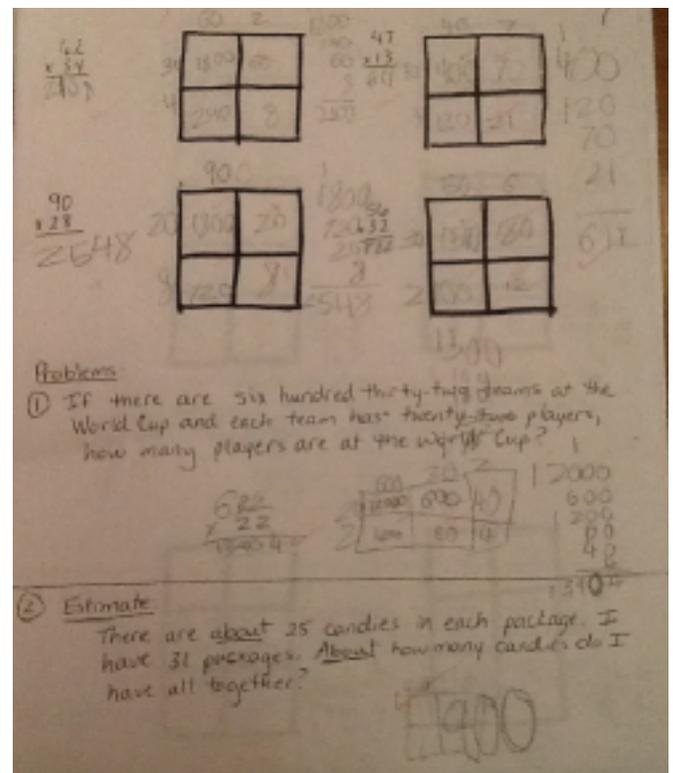
- ✓ This is a tool designed to HELP teachers keep track of the portfolio posts they do throughout the year that include descriptive feedback.
- ✓ You are free to design your own tracking mechanism.
- ✓ The posting of Competencies is embedded in the categories listed above and additional posts are not required.

(Original Design from School District 71 Comox Valley)

A focus on formative assessment through the eportfolio necessitates the use of ongoing descriptive feedback loops; not a collection of numbers and percentages, but meaningful feedback based on what the learner has accomplished at the time of assessment. This feedback can be done by writing or having a conversation with the leader about what they have done and what they should be focusing on next. It works best when the feedback includes an area of strength along with a focused area for further work. A score /30 does not communicate that a student is missing a key step in division but comparing work to a set of standards can indicate where general and specific areas for growth exist.

Quick Scale: Grade 5 Numeracy
 The Quick Scale is a summary of the criteria described in detail in the Rating Scale that follows. These criteria may apply to any line of the scale depending on when, how, and on what you are assessing.

Agent	Not Yet Meeting Expectations	Meeting Expectations (Minimum level)	Fully Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
EFFORT How the student uses the available time to complete the work without regarding time as a barrier to completing the work independently.	The work is incomplete. The student may need assistance to complete the work without regarding time as a barrier to completing the work independently.	The work is complete and the student may need assistance to complete the work without regarding time as a barrier to completing the work independently.	The work is complete and the student is able to produce a complete solution of the work without regarding time as a barrier to completing the work independently.	The work is complete, accurate, thoughtful, and efficient. The student may independently produce an alternative or alternative way of showing an answer or further application.
CONCEPTS AND APPLICATIONS - recognizing mathematical concepts, strategies, skills, patterns, relationships	unable to identify concepts or procedures needed to solve problems in a particular task recently introduced in class	identifies most concepts and procedures needed to solve problems in a particular task recently introduced in class	identifies all concepts and procedures needed to solve problems in a particular task recently introduced in class	identifies concepts and procedures needed to solve problems in a particular task recently introduced in class and applies them to new situations
PROBLEM SOLVING AND APPLICATIONS - apply problem-solving strategies, mental math, calculations, drawing graphics	unable to solve problems to develop a plan	analyzes problems to develop a plan if problems require three recently introduced concepts	analyzes problems to develop a plan if problems require three recently introduced concepts	analyzes problems to develop an efficient plan (thoughtful)
ACCURACY - reading, calculation, graphic display	reading is frequently inaccurate	reading includes some errors	reading may include some errors	reading is accurate and complete
REPRESENTATION AND COMMUNICATION - presenting work, communicating, drawing, explaining results	work is often confusing or incomplete	work is complete and includes required results and graphics when appropriate	work is generally clear and includes required results and graphics when appropriate	work is clear, detailed, and includes required results and graphics when appropriate



At various times it may be required (or requested) to provide a summation of learning. This can be provided by reviewing the portfolio and creating a written comment about their achievement at that point in time. There should be consistency in the language used (ie grade level or age

level) to communicate how the student is generally doing in the subject area. If it is possible common language (or numbers) between the performance standards and the subject summaries would be ideal!

Subject	Achievement	Date: June 2017
Language Arts	Exceeding Expectations	
Math	Meeting Expectations	
Science	Meeting Expectations	
Social Studies	Meeting Expectations	
Physical Education	Meeting Expectations	
Fine Arts	Meeting Expectations	
Health and Career Education	Meeting Expectations	
Work Habits, Attitude and Effort	Meeting Expectations	
<p>General Comments</p> <p>STUDENT has had a great year. She has developed many great friendships in class and at the school. She struggles to stay focused and on task because of her social nature. I think she is capable of creative thinking than she puts in.</p> <p>STUDENT has made significant improvements with spelling, reading, and writing this year. She is above grade level in reading accuracy and comprehension. She should focus on developing reading fluency over the summer by choose some 'good fit' books to try to build stamina with reading for extended periods of time. She can also keep a journal and write about what she has done daily by focusing on making simple and complex sentences that are grammatically correct.</p> <p>STUDENT has had a good year in math. She always does well on all of her assessments and projects which indicate her strong number sense and her ability to apply math concepts to problem solving. She can continue to build fluency in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division by practicing with drills and playing card games and dice games.</p> <p>I wish STUDENT much success in grade 5 next year. Keep staying on task. Have a great summer!</p>		

Another option can be to have students provide their own self-assessment with the teachers observations and comments connected to it. This can be a powerful part of the descriptive-feedback-loop where teachers and students can confirm that they have the same view of what they have achieved and where their next focus should be. The focus is on the quality of student work over the quantity that has been accomplished. The accountability is that there are no surprises for anyone connected to the descriptive feedback because the portfolio has samples of the student work over time.

Term 2 Report Card

Please answer the questions below by circling 1-5 (1 is don't get it yet, 5 is fantastic). Then you MUST justify that mark by writing WHY in the lines below.

Math (Algebra, Ratios and Rates):

1 2 3 4 5

I selected 5 because I had in all of my work after a time or before it's due, I excel at all of the mathematical subjects and can do problems with ease, I almost always finish first or close to. This is true I have you can't rush to be first. It's much more valuable to do work understood than to be first.

English Language Arts (Spelling, Magazine):

1 2 3 4 5

I picked 5 because I know that spelling comes easy. Being at the top of the levels isn't always easy but most of the time it is. In the magazine I always get my work in on time, even when I had less than a week to do so.

SOLES (Solutions, Mixtures, Mars Transposition):

1 2 3 4 5

I chose 4 because I feel that this subject is not my best. With solutions and mixtures I had a little trouble but not much. The Mars Project however I felt better about. I think it and my group did very well. OK so maybe some creativity. A new team you can be challenged. Don't forget challenge is something to you, it's not that easy from.

PE (Basketball, Dance):

1 2 3 4 5

I circled 4 because although PE is fun I have never been the most athletic. I do well because I am light on my feet and good sport and I always at least try to participate. You do not have to take a challenge in the house. It's not a challenge. Make sports/activities in order when it's a challenge?

Art (Spider web illusions, Block printing, Sketching):

1 2 3 4 5

I chose 5 because art is my strong suit. I absolutely love creating spider illusions and new styles. Abstract art is sketching. My other hobby is art is my absolute favourite hobby. I can't do more in an entire amount of learning that can happen with sketching.

I am good at creative thinking (coming up with new ideas, imaginary places and things etc.):

1 2 3 4 5

I selected 5 because as a writer I must come up with antagonists and protagonists plots scenes etc. I have to come up with hooks and all that sort of stuff. I have a reader. I have always been good at creativity. I once even made up my own stories from a random system.

I am good at critical thinking (solving problems, asking 'good' questions, weighing pros and cons):

1 2 3 4 5

I picked 4 because I can't always get my point across at solving problems. OK it's weighing pros and cons and pretty good at asking 'good' questions.

I am good at communicating (presenting information, explaining how I feel, get my point across):

1 2 3 4 5

I circled 4 because even though I am pretty good at presenting information I can't always get my point across as well. More sense in my head but not out loud to others. I am OK at explaining how I feel most of the time. I know you feel like that part of the time. It's a good problem - A sign of a well loved brain.

I am socially responsible (I can interact with others without fighting, I can make peace, I help others):

1 2 3 4 5

I chose 5 because I can break up fights before they get ugly. I rarely ever fight and if I do it's for a good reason and I often help others through. That's all that.

Some things I'd like Mr. Olson to change are:

The lack of fun and interesting long-term projects. The ones we have here have to be fun, such as the magazine. You're right. Teachers have to be challenged. Don't forget about the student project thing!

The most difficult assignment/project this term was (and explain why):

The Mars project because my team wasn't the best at cooperation. Although in the end we ended with a play, it was so hard to find information about what we were trying to do.

The best assignment/project this term was (and explain why):

Block printing because it was insanely fun and really smart. I was making things to make shapes, like letters and shapes all tidy and very original. It's amazing what you can do with rubber, special tools and an imagination.

Remember the idea that will continue to do you is finding challenge in yourself. I think you will find fulfillment in doing a challenge goal - such as a fitness/body awareness, or other subject. But don't come only to you. Take all your learning and good questions about it out.

It can not be said that portfolios are less work than report cards, but it is spread out throughout the term (throughout each week/day) instead of artificially created "due dates for learning". It is not about 'bonus marks' or 'doing more work for extra credit'; it is about the learning that has been done. It also enables better school-home communication: as one parent said after seeing her son play guitar, 'he plays so much better at home' and the challenge was issued: record him at home and we will add that to the archive to show what he is able to do, because portfolios help support that learning happens at all hours and in multiple environments.