

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR EVALUATION



Questions and answers



*Main references in ministerial
frameworks*

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Question

1) *Should the report card show the student's progress or the level of competency development?*

Answers

- According to the Basic school regulation, the report card for elementary and secondary students must state the status of the development of all competencies that have been evaluated.
- A student's progress may be mentioned in a note, but it is not required in a report card.

2) *Are teachers required to use the competency levels?*

- In **elementary education**, the competency levels are used as a reference tool to help determine overall the level of competency development. Their use is not compulsory. The competency levels may be used during and at the end of the cycle.
- In **secondary education**, teachers are required to use the scales of competency levels only when preparing the competency report.

3) *Can the competency levels be used in communications to parents?*

- Teachers may use the competency levels when preparing communications to parents. Each level is associated with certain expected student behaviours. These levels help teachers inform parents of their child's progress with regard to development of a competency.
- The report card is an information document for parents and students. It informs them of the status of the student's competency development during the cycle or during the school year.
- The competency levels in elementary education have not been developed for use as a legend on report cards. They are not meant to be used word for word in written communications to parents.
- In secondary education, the scales of competency levels are meant to be used in the context of recognizing competencies for the competency report. The level reached for each subject-specific competency is indicated in the competency report.
- In secondary education, teachers must refer to the scales of competency levels in the legend of the competency report. However, it is not appropriate to refer to the levels in the report card.

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Question

4) What tools other than the competency levels can help teachers evaluate student learning during a cycle?

Answers

- In secondary education, during the cycle or school year, the teacher must expose students to learning and evaluation situations that allow them to gradually develop their competencies and demonstrate their competency development. The selection of learning and evaluation situations must meet the requirements of the QEP and the scales of competency levels.
- In order to assess the quality of student learning in the context of complex tasks, the teacher uses evaluation grids throughout the cycle or school year. These grids are established in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the QEP. The teacher can use them to determine how well students satisfy the requirements of complex tasks and to follow progress from one task to another. The teacher writes down these assessments as they are made.
- In order to make a judgment on student competency development during the cycle or the school year, the teacher analyzes and summarizes the different assessments carried out in the context of complex tasks. The teacher is then able to determine how well the students satisfy the requirements of the tasks assigned during a given term.
- For the competency report, teachers must make a judgment on the level reached for each subject-specific competency. In secondary education, the judgment must be based on the scales of competency levels.
- The same reasoning applies in elementary education, but teachers are not required to use the competency levels at the end of the cycle, while they may use the competency levels during the cycle.

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Main references in ministerial frameworks

Prescriptive

Education Act (hereafter, the Act)¹

- Section 19: . . . The teacher is entitled, in particular,
 - 1) to select methods of instruction corresponding to the requirements and objectives fixed for each group or for each student entrusted to his care;
 - 2) to select the means of evaluating the progress of students so as to examine and assess continually and periodically the needs and achievement of objectives of every student entrusted to his care.
- Section 96.15: The principal is responsible for approving, on the proposal of the teachers[:]
...
 - 4) the standards and procedures for the evaluation of student achievement in keeping with the prescriptions of the basic school regulation and subject to the examinations that may be imposed by the Minister or the school board.

Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education

- Section 30: The report card must contain at least the following information:
...
 - (15) the status of the development of the competencies in the preschool program of activities or the programs of studies, if the competencies have been evaluated.
- Section 30.1: The student's competency report must include:
 - (1) an indication of the level of development achieved by the student for each of the competencies in the preschool program of activities or the programs of studies. At the secondary level, the assessment of the level of development is based on the scales of competency levels established by the Minister for the programs of studies;...

Québec Education Program – Preschool Education – Elementary Education

- Evaluation is an integral part of the process of learning ... As part of the overall learning process, formative evaluation is used throughout the cycles, primarily to support students in their process of learning, and to enable teachers to adjust their pedagogical activities. Evaluation is also used for summative purposes, to determine the degree of development of the competencies and record it in a progress report (p. 5).
- In the Québec Education Program (QEP) for elementary education, the **Introduction** to each subject provides no explanation regarding evaluation. Nevertheless, indications regarding evaluation (evaluation criteria and end-of-cycle outcomes) are provided for each competency.

1. The text in italics is unabridged.

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Prescriptive

Québec Education Program – Secondary Cycle One

- ... It is important to bear in mind that evaluation should above all be seen as a tool to help students learn and to help teachers as they guide students through the learning process. Developed and used in this spirit, it provides a more solid basis for the decisions and actions that govern students' learning, on a daily basis and at more strategic moments, such as the transitions between cycles. Because it helps teachers assess students' prior learning, monitor their development and judge the effectiveness of their own pedagogical strategies, evaluation constitutes an essential resource for attaining the objective of student success (p. 10).
- In the QEP for Secondary Cycle One, guidelines are provided for competency evaluation. For example:
History and Citizenship Education: Evaluation should make it possible to assess students' progress during their learning process and should indicate the level to which they have developed the competencies at the end of the cycle. Closely associated with the learning process, the various evaluation practices are designed to provide students with feedback on their methods and approaches, their work, their strengths and weaknesses and what they have learned (p. 301).

Scales of Competency Levels – Secondary School Education – Cycle One (preliminary edition)

- Some of the scales of competency levels for Secondary Cycle One were published in February 2006. The final version will be published in the fall of 2006. The scales of competency levels for Secondary Cycle Two will be published at a later date.
- Application of the competency levels is compulsory. This tool allows teachers to evaluate student competency at the end of Secondary Cycle One or at the end of each year in Secondary Cycle Two.

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Main references in ministerial frameworks

Not prescriptive

Policy on the Evaluation of Learning

- Throughout a student's schooling, evaluation is used to verify learning progress with a view to providing support for learning, to make precise diagnoses, to verify the level of competency development, to certify studies and to recognize prior learning (p. 25).
- In the course of learning, evaluation serves the purpose of providing support for learning because it aims primarily at fostering students' progress. It allows for regulation of the learning and teaching processes. Thus, the teacher verifies to what extent the pedagogical intervention has produced the expected outcomes on student learning and makes adjustments if necessary. The teacher regularly informs students about their strengths and weaknesses and offers appropriate enrichment and support measures. The students use this feedback to gradually take charge of their learning (p. 26).
- Generally, the program provides information on the outcomes expected upon completion of the program as well as instructions for the evaluation of learning. This information is used to establish guidelines on the desired progression in competency development (p. 28).
- Comparing the results of a student to those of other students in his or her class does not have an important role in evaluation that aims primarily to support learning by providing information on student progress, achievements and difficulties, so that students can adjust their learning process. Emphasis should be placed on comparing an individual student's learning with what is expected (p. 29).
- During the cycle, although teachers are in the best position to make a judgment on learning progress and the development of subject-specific competencies, it is sometimes necessary for them to consult with others who work with the student (p. 35).
- During a cycle, the report card informs parents and students on learning progress (p. 40).

Evaluation of Learning at the Preschool and Elementary Levels – Framework

- A section of this document is devoted to the competency levels (pp. 33 and 34), which were drawn up in light of the end-of-cycle outcomes and the evaluation criteria for each QEP competency. The competency levels are tools for interpreting information.
- To report on students' competency development, teachers consider all the relevant information to prepare an end-of-cycle progress report. This information is interpreted in light of the end-of-cycle outcomes specified in the Québec Education Program and the competency levels (p. 10).
- Interpretation with the goal of assessing the progress achieved often takes place just before report cards are to be handed out; however, it can also be carried out at other times when teachers consider they have gathered sufficient information ... Information must be gathered frequently in order to follow a student's progress and identify strengths and weaknesses (p. 17).

Main references in ministerial frameworks

Not prescriptive

Evaluation of Learning at the Preschool and Elementary Levels – Framework

(cont.)

- *For each competency to be evaluated, the teacher analyzes the examples of the student's work available and the information recorded. The teacher compares the results obtained at different times in order to form a judgment on the progress made (p. 17).*
- *When teachers are required to pronounce on the progress made during a cycle, or on the degree to which students have developed certain competencies at the end of a cycle, they should base their judgment on tasks that have allowed the students to demonstrate their overall competencies in meaningful and complex situations that require students to use essential knowledge in a variety of contexts (p. 22).*
- *Competency levels describe the major stages in the development of competencies, thereby helping teachers to interpret information and situate the student's level of development of a competency as an integral concept, in order to orient learning or draw up a progress report. . . . Serving as guidelines to recognize certain stages in the development of competencies, the competency levels fall within the general field of interpretation by criteria and provide teachers with a common frame of reference to help them interpret their observations and form opinions about the development of competencies. . . . The sets of competency levels present an overall picture rather than a list of characteristics to be verified separately. . . . Except for the levels that represent the end-of-cycle outcomes for each cycle, the competency levels are not linked to definite points in the school calendar (p. 33).*
- *During the course of a cycle, the competency levels enable teachers to gain an overview of the students' learning in order to situate the development of their competencies. . . . When a teacher has observed and gathered a sufficient amount of relevant information to determine which level best corresponds to the development of a student's competency, the levels can be used to detect difficulties a student is having in developing competencies and to decide if the teaching approach needs to be adjusted. This use of the competency levels can also help teachers complete the report cards that are sent to parents during the cycle. For example, after determining the student's level of competency, the teacher indicates (depending on the form of report card adopted by the school) whether the student is progressing well or with difficulty (p. 33).*
- *At the end of the cycle, information collected during the course of the cycle is analyzed to situate the student's level of development for each of the competencies at the appropriate level. Therefore, the competency levels serve to help teachers recognize the competencies (p. 34).*
- *Although competency levels cannot be used directly in reports to parents, they can help when communicating information to parents during parent-teacher conferences. . . . The competency levels also serve as a communication tool for teachers within the same school or in different schools (p. 34).*

Main references in ministerial frameworks

Not prescriptive

Competency Levels by Cycle – Elementary School

- Four levels are presented for each cross-curricular competency. These levels are used in the evaluation of student competency development during and at the end of elementary school.
- For the subject-specific competencies, a scale includes two to four levels per cycle. Some levels represent the end-of-cycle outcomes.
- *They describe students' progress and so help teachers to situate the student's level of development of a competency as an integral concept, in order to orient learning or draw up a progress report. . . . They detail, for each competency, different levels of development along a continuum (p. 4).*
- *During the course of a cycle, the competency levels enable teachers to gain an overview of the students' learning in order to situate the development of their competencies. In this way, they serve as an instrument for regulating learning. Periodically, when a teacher has observed and gathered a sufficient amount of relevant information to determine which level best corresponds to the development of a student's competency, the levels can be used to detect possible delays in a student's competency development and to adjust the teaching approach (p. 6).*
- *The competency levels also provide important guidelines for planning learning situations. While the levels corresponding to the end-of-cycle outcomes describe what a student is capable of doing at the end of a cycle, the previous levels describe the intermediate levels to be attained progressively . . . (p. 6).*

Reference Framework on the Evaluation of Learning in Secondary School (forthcoming)

- This framework will present the scales of competency levels as tools to guide judgments on the levels students have reached for each competency in a given subject at the end of the cycle or school year, in Secondary Cycle Two. Information about how the scales were developed and their use is provided, as well as relevant examples.