

# LEARNING SKILLS

Strong learning skills are required for success in every aspect of school. They are indicators of **HOW** students learn rather than **WHAT** they learn. The achievement of learning skills should be assessed and evaluated across all subjects and in other behaviour at school. Following are the nine learning skills evaluated on the Elementary Provincial Report Card:

- Homework completion / work habits
- Independent work
- Goal setting to improve work
- Initiative
- Class participation
- Use of information
- Co-operation
- Problem solving
- Conflict resolution

Students will be more successful in developing their learning skills if they have a clear understanding of why learning skills are important, what effective learning skills look like and how learning skills can improve their ability to learn. Students need descriptors of effective learning skills appropriate to their grade or division. Therefore, teachers should address learning skills in their program planning and instruction. Learning skills must be taught, discussed, and modeled. Students need numerous and varied opportunities to learn, practice, and receive descriptive feedback related to the development of their learning skills to be successful.

The sample learning skills descriptions that follow outline some behaviours that show the development of each of the skills named in this section. These lists are not exhaustive. They are designed to assist teachers but do not limit or confine their observations.

## EVALUATION OF LEARNING SKILLS

The Provincial Report Card for Grades 1 to 8 has a separate section for reporting students' overall demonstration of learning skills. Teachers will elaborate on each student's demonstration of the skills within each subject in the space provided (learning skills box). Learning skills are evaluated using a 4-point scale: EXCELLENT, GOOD, SATISFACTORY, and NEEDS IMPROVEMENT.

Teachers must use clear tracking methods to gather the evidence that will be needed in order to assign a letter symbol and develop meaningful comments. Anecdotal reports and checklists seem to be the most effective tools. Other tools such as rubrics are also appropriate for gathering specific evidence on students' learning skills.

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To the extent possible, the evaluation of learning skills, apart from any that may be included as part of one or more curriculum expectations, should not be considered in the determination of the grade. The separate evaluation of the achievement of the curriculum and the development of learning skills provides students and parents with better information and more clearly identifies a student's strengths and weaknesses.

The homeroom teacher, in collaboration with other subject specific teachers, will comment on learning skills within the learning skills section. Subject specific teachers may wish to comment on students' learning skills within their comments on strengths, weaknesses and next steps where they have had a significant positive or negative impact on their achievement.

The following checklist taken from *Ontario Provincial Elementary Assessment and Evaluation Resource Document* will assist the teacher in determining the letter symbol for each learning skill and in developing meaningful report card comments related to learning skills.

## DETERMINING THE LETTER SYMBOL

- Learning skills have been assessed and evaluated separately from achievement of curriculum expectations.
- Appropriate demonstrations of learning skills have been identified for each grade level.
- Student achievement of learning skills has been assessed after multiple and varied opportunities to practice and demonstrate specific skills through meaningful learning experiences.
- Learning skills were observed and recorded over time.
- Achievement of learning skills has been evaluated and a letter symbol assigned for each learning skill.

## DEVELOPING COMMENTS ON ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNING SKILLS

- Comments related to learning skills have been reported separately from those related to achievement of expectations.
- Comments reflect demonstrations of learning skills appropriate for different grade levels.
- Comments are based on evidence that has been observed and recorded over time.
- Comments on learning skills that are part of expectations in specific curriculum areas are commented on in both subject and learning skills boxes.
- Comments on strengths, weaknesses and next steps in the Learning Skills box pertain to skills that the teacher / student focused on during that reporting period.
- Comments align with the letter symbols for specific learning skills.

# SAMPLE LEARNING SKILLS DESCRIPTIONS

The following nine learning skills appear on the Provincial Report Card for Grades 1 to 6 and Grades 7 and 8. Under each learning skill are listed some examples of behaviour that would constitute evidence of this skill. These lists are not exhaustive. They are designed to assist teachers but certainly not to limit or confine their observations. Teachers need not use the lists if they have other relevant observations to report.

## INDEPENDENT WORK

- attends regularly and is punctual
- works well without supervision
- completes tasks and assignments on time and with care
- accepts responsibility for own behaviour
- follows routines and instructions without supervision
- identifies and pursues learning goals and tasks independently
- responds and participates in a variety of learning activities
- selects learning materials, resources, and activities independently
- persists with tasks
- follows schedules and uses planners to organize time effectively
- adheres to established time lines
- explores, selects, and uses a variety of learning strategies

## INITIATIVE

- welcomes new tasks and seeks new opportunities for learning
- responds to challenges
- seeks challenges and takes risks
- is interested in and curious about objects and events
- observes, questions, and explores
- seeks additional and new information from library books, CD-ROMs, and other resources
- identifies problems to solve and conducts experiments
- approaches new learning situations with confidence
- demonstrates a positive attitude towards learning
- generates questions for further inquiry
- investigates and obtains information independently
- develops original ideas and innovative procedures
- attempts a variety of learning activities
- seeks assistance when necessary
- participates in co-curricular activities

## HOMEWORK COMPLETION (WORK HABITS)

- follows directions and completes homework on time and with care
- puts forth a consistent effort
- shows attention to detail
- demonstrates interest in and enthusiasm for homework assignments
- organizes materials and equipment for effective use
- begins work promptly
- follows directions and completes tasks
- chooses and uses materials and equipment correctly, safely, and creatively
- uses time efficiently
- perseveres with complex projects that require sustained effort
- attends to the task at hand
- demonstrates flexibility and adaptability

## USE OF INFORMATION

- effectively interprets and synthesizes information
- integrates learning from various subjects / areas of learning
- gathers information effectively, using a variety of techniques and sources
- shows regard for accuracy in analysing and evaluating information
- recognizes when assignments and projects would benefit from additional information and identifies the type of information needed
- identifies and uses a variety of facilities, equipment supplies, evidence, research, expert opinions, and discussion to gather information and solve problems
- considers all information and alternatives before reaching a conclusion
- demonstrates creativity in assessing information and ideas and draws relevant conclusions
- organizes information logically and creatively and manages it effectively
- selects appropriate research procedures and uses them effectively
- asks questions to clarify meaning and ensure understanding
- uses information-retrieval technology effectively

## COOPERATION WITH OTHERS

- takes turns
- listens to, acknowledges, and considers differing opinions
- willingly works with others
- follows classroom and school procedures
- assumes responsibilities in groups, the classroom, and the school
- helps others
- volunteers
- considers both the immediate and long-term effects of his or her actions on others
- respects the rights, property, and opinions of others
- shares resources, materials, and equipment with others
- shares in cleaning duties after an activity
- works and plays cooperatively with others
- establishes positive relationships with peers and adults
- responds and is sensitive to the needs and welfare of others

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- resolves conflicts when they occur
- resolves conflicts independently
- resolves conflicts in socially acceptable ways
- negotiates to solve problems and resolve conflicts
- mediates differences of opinion
- listens to and understands conflict before acting or offering a resolution
- assists others to resolve conflicts appropriately
- seeks positive solutions to conflicts
- uses a variety of strategies to resolve conflicts appropriately
- helps the group to identify and use strategies for conflict resolution

## CLASS PARTICIPATION

- participates in class and group activities
- willingly works with new groups
- accepts various roles within the class and group, including leadership roles
- accepts a share of the work to be done
- contributes to cooperative problem solving
- helps to complete class and group activities or projects
- works towards the goals of the class and group
- helps to motivate others and encourages others to participate
- communicates well with class and group members
- helps the class and group to work together
- contributes information and ideas to the class and group
- questions the ideas of the group to seek clarification or agreement
- shows respect for the ideas of others in the class and group
- supports ideas and observations of the group with facts and details
- listens to others without interrupting
- paraphrases points of view to help understanding
- recognizes contributions of group members through encouragement, support, or praise
- seeks consensus before making decisions
- shares responsibility for carrying out decisions
- shares responsibility for difficulties encountered during an activity

## PROBLEM SOLVING

- solves problems independently
- uses analysis to clarify problems
- devises a plan to solve the problem
- carries out the plan
- records the process and the results
- checks the solutions / results
- evaluates the plan, solution, or result
- devises alternative solutions or ways of solving a problem
- makes connections between different problems and solutions
- applies successful strategies to new problems
- chooses appropriate materials and equipment to solve problems
- develops original ideas and creative approaches to solve problems
- applies logic in solving problems

## GOAL SETTING TO IMPROVE WORK (WITH ASSISTANCE, WITH PEERS, INDEPENDENTLY)

- identifies appropriate criteria for assessing work
- uses identified criteria to assess work
- assesses own work
- identifies goals
- identifies specific steps or actions needed to reach goals or to improve
- evaluates own success in reaching goals
- identifies strengths and areas for improvement in own work
- perseveres to achieve goals
- revises goals or steps and strategies when necessary
- identifies and pursues goals independently
- accepts comments on performance from others
- uses others' comments to improve work and monitor learning