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Completing the Report Card for the Elementary ESL/ELD Student

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1. Using the ESL/ELD check boxes on the report card

Teachers should indicate by checking the ESL/ELD boxes on the report card when program modifications have been made to the curriculum expectations for any English language learner (ELL). The ESL/ELD boxes are not checked if modifications have not been made. The boxes are not checked if accommodations only have been made.

The identification of an ESL or ELD student as being at either stage/level 1 or 2 indicates that the curriculum expectations for that student have been modified and the student’s mark or grade reflects the student’s level of achievement in the modified program. In such cases, the ESL/ELD boxes will be checked on the student’s Progress and Report Cards for the following subjects: Language (each strand for Provincial Report), Mathematics (each strand for Provincial Report), Science and Technology, and Social Studies (Geography and History for Grades 7 and 8). As well, the following statement already appears on each report (located within each progress and report card):

*Achievement is based on expectations modified from the curriculum expectations for the grade to support English language learning needs.*

The identification of an ESL/ELD student as being at either stage/level 3 or 4 indicates that the curriculum expectations for the ESL/ELD student have been accommodated only. In such cases, students will not have the ESL/ELD boxes checked in any subject.

The default rule then will check the ESL/ELD boxes for stage/level 1 & 2 ESL/ELD students but not for stage/level 3 & 4 ESL/ELD students. Teachers always have the option to add or delete the ESL/ELD check boxes manually. These boxes are available in all subject areas. Report card comments are to reflect what the student is able to demonstrate independently, and list next steps for learning.

The ESL/ELD Companion application is the source for information contained on the Report Card pertaining to ELLs. The ESL/ELD indicator box can be manually added or removed for any subject by the ESL/ELD teacher (or the Principal or a designate) who has official access to the ESL/ELD Companion. These ESL/ELD check boxes are located in the Companion under the Report Card ESL/ELD Subjects tab. Please see page 27 of the ministry guide *ESL and ELD Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, 2007* for more information.

*Note:* If any ESL/ELD student also has an Individual Education Plan, the teacher will check both the ESL/ELD boxes and the IEP boxes where appropriate. Ministry
policy for English language learners (ELLs) states that students can be eligible for both ESL/ELD and special education services.

2. Determining the Levels (or Stages) of English-Language Proficiency

Levels/Stages of Second-Language Acquisition for ESL Students:

Stage/Level 1: Use of English for survival purposes
Stage/Level 2: Use of English in supported and familiar activities and contexts
Stage/Level 3: Independent use of English in most contexts
Stage/Level 4: Facility in English approaching that of first-language speakers

Levels/Stages of Second-Language Acquisition/Literacy Development for ELD Students:

Stage/Level 1: Beginning to use Standard Canadian English appropriately
Stage/Level 2: Using Standard Canadian English in supported and familiar activities and contexts
Stage/Level 3: Using Standard Canadian English accurately and correctly in most contexts
Stage/Level 4: Using grade-level Standard Canadian English appropriately

Skills related to listening, speaking, reading, writing and orientation are described for each level or stage in Part 3 of Supporting English Language Learners: A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators, Grades 1 – 8, 2008, pages 99-120. The descriptors provided in these tables will be helpful to teachers for measuring student progress in language acquisition and, by extension, may also be useful for measuring student achievement of curriculum expectations in other subject areas.

3. Reporting on Program Modifications and Accommodations

There is no longer any need for ESL/ELD teachers to include an overriding statement regarding an ELL’s achievement for any subject being based upon modified expectations as Page 2 of the Progress Report Card and page 4 of the Provincial Report Card now includes one overriding statement for all subject area to this effect. It states that for “ESL/ELD: Achievement is based on expectations modified from the curriculum expectations for the grade to support English language learning needs.”

The revised Provincial report card also now requires that all grade 1-8 students, including English language learners, receive a grade or mark for four skill areas in Language: Reading, Writing, Oral Communication, and Media Literacy. Although the
Supporting English Language Learners, Grades 1-8 Guide does not have specific information about this strand, information can be found in the Elementary Language curriculum guide. Currently, ESL/ELD teachers can use comments taken from the ESL/ELD Comment Banker for each of the five strands listed, Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing, and Orientation to describe the student’s related skills. These comments are designed to be used for any Stage 1 or 2 ELL who receives a modified Language program. In reporting, teachers often use the Speaking and Listening skill areas in the ESL/ELD Comment Banker to describe ELL progress in the Oral Communication strand.

When teachers read the Media Literacy strand, they will recognize that this is simply another way to look at the different ways we currently use to teach communication during an ELLs language instruction time, “including audio, visual, audio-visual, print, and electronic means” (pg 156). Many educators are most likely already teaching using a variety of media and approaches to communicating meaning to different audiences, so comments for Media Literacy may be adapted from each of the four language strands currently in the ESL/ELD descriptors.

Teachers are advised to look at what they are currently teaching when instructing in reading, writing, speaking and listening in light of the “media literacy” expectations, and then consider how best to measure student progress for reporting purposes. Comments related to Media Literacy may be found throughout the ESL/ELD descriptors, i.e., “Identifies key ideas in a variety of media works” (ESL Listening descriptor, Gr 7-8, Stage 3, pg 106), so teachers may find it beneficial to locate appropriate ESL/ELD comments to describe progress in this strand. As well, it may be beneficial to adapt some of the comments already found in the Media Literacy descriptors in the Elementary Language guidelines.

If the ELL is in Stage/Level 3 or 4, then teachers should use the regular grade Elementary Language Media Literacy descriptors. Please see the Elementary Language guidelines for more specifics on teaching and evaluating Media Literacy for each grade, as well the Glossary (pages 150-160) for appropriate descriptors of such terms as "Media”, “Media Literacy”, “Media Conventions and Techniques”, “Forms of Media Texts”, “Five Key Concepts of Media”, etc. Teachers may access descriptors in the Elementary Language Report Card Comment Banker for Media Literacy.

4. Using the provincial achievement levels to evaluate English language learners (ELLs)

The provincial achievement levels are cognitively rooted, whereas the ESL/ELD stages of language proficiency are based on the principles of second language acquisition. Generally, it is not until English language learners have reached stage/level 3 that they have the linguistic proficiency necessary to begin to demonstrate their competency in all subject areas. At stage/levels 3 and 4, teachers can begin, with some confidence, to apply the provincial achievement levels and provide a grade or percentage
based on grade level expectations. Teachers should still indicate in the comment box any accommodations that the student is receiving.

5. Evaluating the English language learner for the Provincial Report Card

English language learners should be given time to develop their skills in English before their achievement is assessed by the criteria used for other students. In some cases, it may not be possible to provide a mark in a particular subject, or even in all subjects, on the Provincial report card. For example, it may not be feasible to provide a fair evaluation of performance for students who have arrived very recently (stage/level 1) or who have missed so much schooling that few of the program expectations can be evaluated. In such cases, teachers should use the comments space on the report card to make clear that it may not be possible to provide a fair evaluation of student performance due to late arrival in the school system, or gaps in the student’s schooling.

For example:

*An evaluation mark for (strand/subject) will not be provided this term since (name) has recently arrived in Canada and is in the early stages of English language acquisition.*

Teachers should, however, be sure to write anecdotal comments about the student’s progress, emphasizing strengths observed and suggesting next steps. Every effort should be made to ensure a grade can be provided for these students by the end of the following term, albeit in a modified program.

**Note:** The decision not to assign marks/grades for these students must be made on an individual basis and only in consultation with the school administrator.

6. Assigning Progress and Grades/Marks

In evaluating ESL/ELD student progress, it is not advantageous to use “Progressing with Difficulty” as this may imply a fundamental student fault or a learning issue where in fact none may be present. In addition, it is every ESL/ELD student’s right to receive an adapted program (accommodated where possible, modified where necessary) that supports individual learning needs based on the level of English language proficiency.

Over a period of time, most ESL/ELD students can be evaluated; however, a new English language learner attending the first term at school with little or no English skills may be assigned an “I” (for insufficient data) to provide a grade/mark.

ELLs with modified expectations would very rarely receive an “R” code (for Remediation is needed).
If the student did not receive instruction in the subject/strand, the teacher may check the “NA” box (Not Applicable).

7. Learning Skills, Work Habits, Strengths, Next Steps

a. ELLs may have to learn new ways of working in the class and approaching learning tasks. For example, some students have not been required to work independently, participate in class, or demonstrate initiative. For this reason, students may need guidance to learn these skills, and teachers must base the evaluation and reporting of learning skills on the aspects of each that the student has had the opportunity to develop. In order to observe and note student growth in this area, it is essential that teachers be aware of each student’s starting point with regard to learning skills.

b. Consideration can only be given to the progress students have demonstrated in learning these skills over time. Therefore, comments should note only those skills that have been explicitly taught, that students have been given the opportunity to practise, and that are readily observable.

c. Remarks must be based on what can reasonably be expected at each student’s present stage of adjustment to the new learning environment.

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