Supporting the Self-Assessment and Reporting of Core Competencies

Purpose of this resource

This resource is intended to provide support for teachers in meeting the requirements of the Student Progress Report Order regarding student self-assessment of the Core Competencies in the new curriculum. The three Core Competencies — Communication, Thinking, and Personal and Social — are the sets of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need to develop in order to engage in deep and lifelong learning.

In the interest of flexibility for students and their learning the ministry does not prescribe how the Core Competencies should be taught or self-assessed. Rather, embedded within this resource are suggestions for supporting student self-assessment, including possibilities for student reflection, which are aligned with reporting requirements.

While students and teachers become familiar with the self-assessment of the Core Competencies this year, it is recommended that students begin by self-assessing on at least one of the three broad Core Competencies on the final report of this school year. Thereafter, students can grow their self-assessment to include further Core Competencies with the goal of self-assessing on all three broad Core Competencies going forward.

Core Competencies and the redesigned curriculum

By design, the Core Competencies are foundational to the Big Ideas, Curricular Competencies, and Content of the renewed curriculum. This foundation ensures that students are always mindful of their growth in the Core Competencies through self-reflection, self-assessment, and providing evidence of growth. The emphasis on self-reflection promotes personalization, inclusion, diversity, and student ownership of learning as it becomes a natural part of the learning process.

Teachers can support students in self-assessment by intentionally noticing, naming, and connecting the Core Competencies to their learning. There is a relationship between the self-assessment of the Core Competencies by the student and formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by the teacher that is foundational to the curriculum model. This is integral to supporting learners in taking ownership of their personal learning as educated citizens.

Importance of self-assessment

Students come to the classroom with experiences and knowledge related to the Core Competencies. Self-assessment will allow them to develop the ability to describe themselves as unique individuals in relation to the Core Competencies. They will set goals and gain greater ownership of their learning when they have the opportunity to self-assess and describe who they are as learners, document their progress, and share their accomplishments in an ongoing and holistic manner.

Research on assessment* emphasizes the importance of students developing reflective language and metacognition (i.e., the ability to think about thinking) in order to engage in effective self-assessment. It is important that, over time, students:

- gain the ability to assess their own strengths
- create realistic and achievable goals
- construct a clear plan to reach their goals
- provide examples and evidence of their learning
- revisit previous documentations of self-assessments, where applicable, to monitor their growth

Refer to the reference section of this resource for further information on assessment research
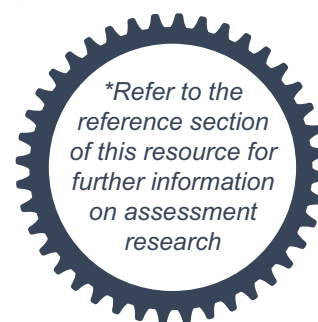
Guidelines for self-assessment of the Core Competencies

Ongoing opportunities for self-assessment and goal setting may happen at any point during the learning process that seems appropriate for teachers and students. Building relationships by simply taking opportunities to talk with students about how self-reflection can support them in achieving their learning goals can jump-start the self-assessment process.

Opportunities to demonstrate learning through an active process can be facilitated through the following guidelines:

✔ Students, through ongoing opportunities, will develop the ability to set goals and reflect on their learning, as well as gain responsibility for their learning.

✔ Teachers can explicitly develop the language of Core Competencies with their students through authentic experiences and learning opportunities.

✔ Teachers and administrators support students' personal understanding by intentionally noticing, naming, and connecting the Core Competencies to student learning.

✔ Students will have ownership of the year-end self-assessment with teacher support for the self-assessment process provided as needed throughout the school year.

Possibilities for student reflection

One of the ways that teachers can help students clarify their thinking and articulate their individual profiles is through open-ended and probing questions. Conversations with students help them make multiple connections between the Communication, Thinking, and Personal and Social Competencies. Since students will come to the reflection process with different interests, prior knowledge, skills, and experiences, a variety of strategies should be available. Sample questions may include the following:

Communication:

▶ How do you show that you were listening thoughtfully? In what ways did your listening contribute to the group's understanding?

▶ What are some ways you like to use to show your learning? What makes [a form they identified] work for you?

▶ What do you do when you disagree with someone in your group or discussion? How did you learn/develop that strategy?

Critical Thinking:

▶ How does [a topic or question] tie in with what you have learned before? How has your thinking about [the topic or question] changed? What made it change?

▶ Do you agree or disagree with this [statement, opinion, or hypothesis]? What evidence is there to support your answer?

▶ What strategies do you use to decide whether to believe something you read? How did you develop these strategies? What advice would you give a younger student about figuring out what is true?

Creative Thinking:

▶ How do you come up with ideas when you want to make something new at school or at home? Tell me about a time when you felt really good about a new idea you had.

▶ What helps you get new ideas?

▶ What makes you want to get new ideas or try something new?

Social Responsibility:

▶ How do you use words and actions to encourage other students who might be feeling a bit sad or discouraged? [Prompt: What are some words and phrases you use?]

▶ What contribution have you made to our school that you feel good about? How did you get started doing that?

Positive and Personal Cultural Identity:

▶ What are your strengths as a learner and how do you learn best?

▶ What are some aspects that you value about your culture?

▶ How do you portray aspects of your cultural contexts in your work (e.g., through words or images)?

▶ What are some things about your culture that you would like other people to know?

▶ How do you use your strengths and abilities in your family, relationships, and community?

Personal Awareness and Responsibility:

▶ Tell me about one of your learning goals. [Prompt: Something you want to get better at or learn how to do.] How did you come to choose that goal? Tell me about something you are doing to help you work on that goal.

▶ What do you do to help yourself when you are feeling a bit discouraged about your work?

▶ Think of times when you have to wait. What strategies do you use when you are feeling impatient? How did you develop that strategy? [Prompt: When did you start? How does it work?]

Documenting the year-end self-assessment

The Student Progress Report Order for students in Grade K–9 requires a student self-assessment on Core Competencies at the end of the school year.

Ways to document self-assessment include:

- ✓ Advertisement/commercial
- ✓ Body language
- ✓ Charts made from sorting
- ✓ Collages
- ✓ Collections
- ✓ Constructions
- ✓ Dramatization
- ✓ Equations
- ✓ Graphic stories
- ✓ Illustrations
- ✓ Interview (written or oral)
- ✓ Lists
- ✓ Mind map
- ✓ Other graphic organizers (e.g., Frayer model; story map)
- ✓ Photo essay
- ✓ Photographs
- ✓ Poems and acrostics
- ✓ Questions
- ✓ Reference letter or bio
- ✓ Spoken reflections
- ✓ Stories
- ✓ Symbols
- ✓ "The story behind the…"
- ✓ Videos
- ✓ Word cloud

Other considerations

Opportunities for teachers when planning learning experiences:

→ Develop understanding and ownership of the Core Competencies with students by intentionally noticing, naming, and connecting the Core Competencies to their learning.

→ Look for connections between the Core Competencies and the Curricular Competencies and share these connections with students.

→ Consider how the Core Competencies are expressed in different disciplines (e.g., Communication in Math may look different from Communication in Language Arts; Thinking in Science may look different from Thinking in Social Studies).

Ongoing assessment:

→ Throughout the year, encourage students to talk about and document their strengths and stretches in relation to the Core Competencies and in different areas of learning.

→ Ask open-ended questions to prompt student self-reflection and acquisition of the language and skills to be metacognitive.

→ Promote student ownership by providing multiple opportunities for students to document and access their reflections throughout the year.

The Ministry recognizes that there are still many questions regarding the self-assessment and reporting of the Core Competencies. Teachers and school districts throughout the province have provided samples of how the self-assessment of the Core Competencies is already taking place in schools. These examples will be added to the Ministry website this spring along with a list of frequently asked questions with answers, regarding the self-assessment and reporting of the Core Competencies.

Acknowledgements

The Ministry of Education would like to thank Lynn Archer, Pat Horstead, Sharon Jeroski, Rosalind Poon, Lisa Schwartz, Liz Taylor, the Classroom Assessment and Reporting Advisory Group and the Learning Advisory Board for their contributions to this resource.

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