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REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS IN A CONTINUOUS PROGRESS SCHOOL. COMMITTEE REPORT, ANNUAL SUMMER WORKSHOP (VAIL, COLORADO, JUNE 7-11, 1964).

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THIS DOCUMENT DESCRIBES THE RATIONALE OF A CONTINUOUS PROGRESS GRADING AND REPORTING SYSTEM, AND PRESENTS EXAMPLES OF THE PROPOSED REPORTING FOR A NONGRADED SYSTEM, BOTH INDIVIDUAL REPORT FORMS AND CUMULATIVE RECORD FORMS, WITH INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO USE THEM, ARE PRESENTED. (JH)

REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS IN A CONTINUOUS PROGRESS SCHOOL

committee report
annual summer workshop
June 7-11, 1964
vail, colorado

COLORADO WESTERN STATES SMALL SCHOOLS PROJECT

Colorado State Department of Education
Byron W. Hansford, Commissioner
Denver - 1965

Introduction

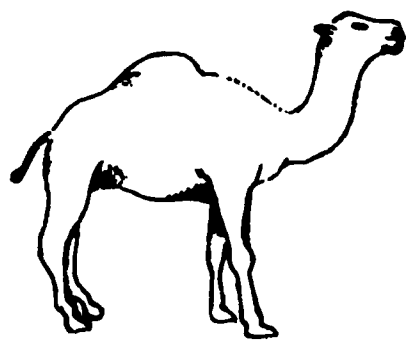
When considering individualization of instruction the nongraded school, or continuous progress, the question of grading and reporting invariably arises. The traditional grading and reporting systems are group oriented, often subjective and ambiguous, and therefore inadequate for a continuous progress program. As instructional patterns are modified, student progress must be measured and shown by other means.

A work group, composed of interested teachers and administrators along with Dr. Glen Nimnicht of Colorado State College, spent a major portion of the week at the Vail Workshop seeking a better solution to this problem.

The following committee report is the result of their efforts and appears to hold promise for reporting of individual progress as well as clarifying and explaining the philosophy of the continuous progress concept.

The Project office would like to thank the teachers, administrators, and Dr. Nimnicht for the time and effort spent in producing this significant report.

Paul Nachtigal
Project Director
February 1965



The committee at the Vail Workshop which issued the original dittoed report gave it the title "A Camel Report by the Committee to Report on Pupil Progress Reporting." For the derivation of the word camel in this usage, refer to that old adage about the fellows who put the horse together. With some editing to remove some of the humps, it has been reproduced for general distribution.

Limitations of the Present System

Assuming that school teachers and administrators are fully aware of all the limitations of our existing grade system for the traditionally organized schools, we will therefore spend only limited space reviewing the present system. When the traditional grading system is applied to a continuous progress program, it not only retains all of its previous limitations, but is actually misleading.

First, the concept of failure is built into the existing grading system, but does not exist in a continuous progress system. A child does not fail in the usual sense of the word because he is not advanced to the next level of learning until he has achieved satisfactorily on the level where he is currently working; therefore, the only way a child can fail is not to make any progress.

The concept underlying a continuous progress system is that a child will advance at his own rate along a continuum moving from the simple to complex or from the easy to the difficult without any breaks in his progress. Some children might achieve the competence (in reading, spelling or arithmetic) of an average eighth grade student after being in school only five or six years; other children might take nine or ten years to achieve the same competence. These children who learn more slowly haven't failed--they have merely moved slower along the same continuum. One child might move rapidly in arithmetic doing satisfactory work (say averaging above 80% on tests of competence); another child might move much slower but achieve a near perfect mark on the same tests. If the two children are the same age, does the first child receive an "A" because he is more advanced, or does the second child receive an "A" because he scores better on the tests? The point is that a single scale does not provide a way for evaluating a child in a continuous progress program. We must be able to say where he is on the continuum and how he is performing from that point. The parent of the child also wants to know how well the child is achieving in relationship to his ability, so we have at least three dimensions:

1. Where is the child in his progress?
2. What is the quality of his performance?
3. How does this compare to what we can reasonably expect of him?

The Proposed Reporting System

Following this line of reasoning the study committee developed the following criteria for evaluating a reporting system.

It must:

1. Be simple to communicate to parents, pupils, other schools, and colleges or universities,
2. Be easy to administer, and;
3. Provide real information on:
   a. the student's progress as related to his own ability
   b. the competence obtained compared to local and/or national norms
   c. the quality of his performance, and
   d. the teacher's judgment of effort

The following illustration of a report card shows a solution that we believe satisfies the above criteria. The system is explained on the front of the card (Page 2). A card format (Page 3) enables the teacher to report the above information.

Continuous Progress School
School Year 19__ -19__

Student_____ Teacher_____

Year in School_____ Room_____

Attendance

	(1st 6 Wk)	(2nd 6 Wk)	(3rd 6 Wk)	(4th 6 Wk)	(5th 6 Wk)	(6th 6 Wk)
Days Absent						
Times Tardy						

In our continuous progress school, instruction and organization are designed to allow the student to move steadily forward at the maximum rate for his own ability. At the same time we want you to know how your child is achieving in relation to acceptable standards of comparison. On this report of student achievement, progress is shown in various ways.

1. The quality of performance is shown by indicating achievement levels in the appropriate column for quality: Excellent, Very Good or Satisfactory. Continuous progress, however slowly achieved, does not permit failure in the ordinary sense, as a student does not progress to a higher level until he has satisfactorily completed the preceding task.

2. Student progress through the curriculum is shown by recording movement upward along the graph. This is shown in comparison with what is expected of the average child in this school (local norms) and with other standards as shown in the lower column.

3. When there has been no progress this will be indicated in the report. A complete absence of progress may be due to one of several causes and warrants a conference with the teacher.

4. Quality and quantity of progress, unless otherwise indicated, are based on teacher judgment, as is the evaluation of student effort.

Two special notes to the parents:

1. The descriptions of progress are related to our continuous progress mathematics curriculum. Concepts adopted from Middletown Non-Graded Program, Middletown, R. I.

2. Since we have a kindergarten in this district, it is counted as the child's first year in school; therefore, the average child would be doing seventh grade work in his eighth year of school.

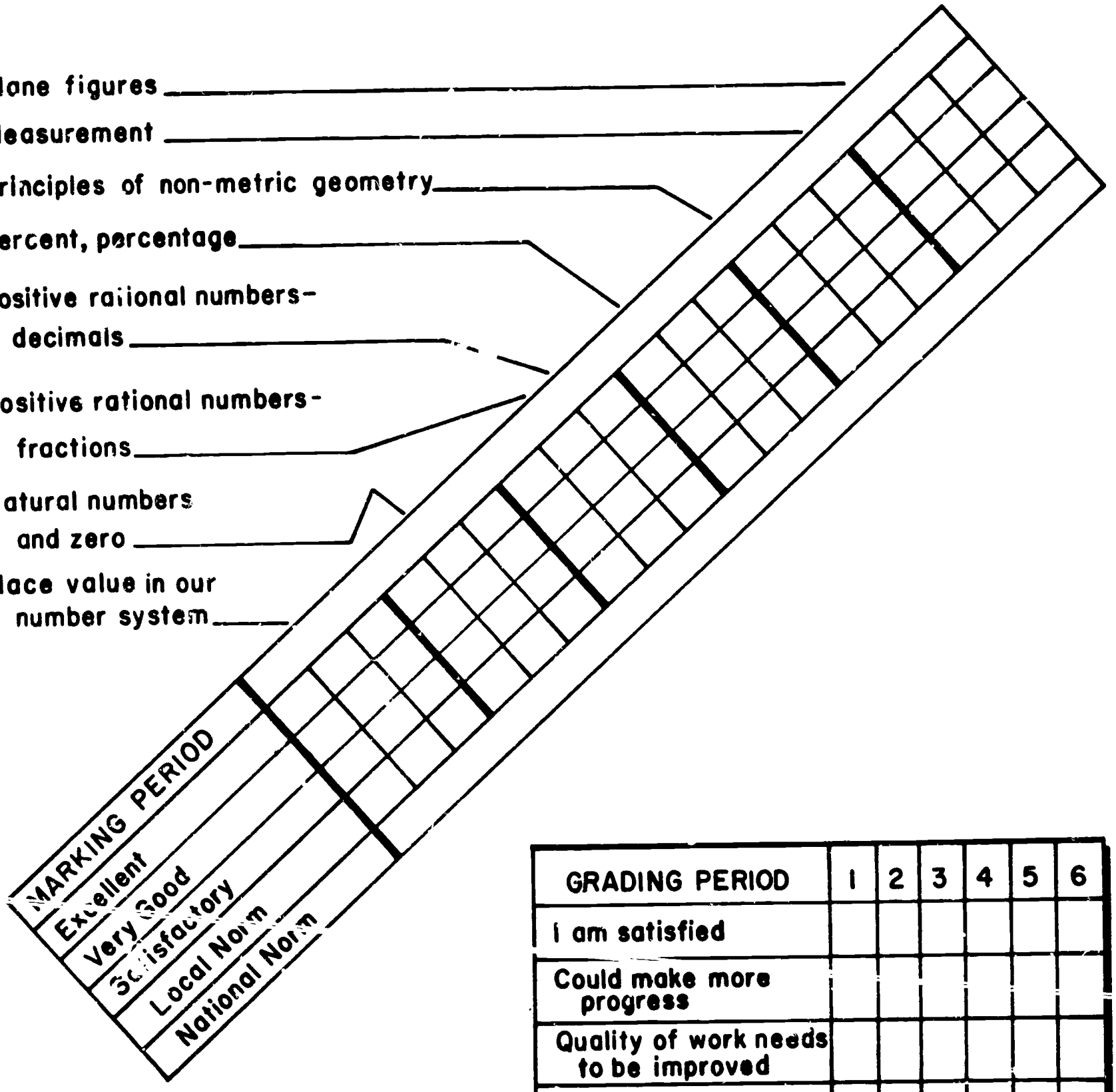
REPORT FORM

SUBJECT MATH STUDENT_____

YEAR_____

CONCEPTS, SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE.

8. Plane figures
7. Measurement
6. Principles of non-metric geometry
5. Percent, percentage
4. Positive rational numbers- decimals
3. Positive rational numbers- fractions
2. Natural numbers and zero
1. Place value in our number system



GRADING PERIOD	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am satisfied						
Could make more progress						
Quality of work needs to be improved						
We need a parent-teacher conference						

EXAMPLE I

To illustrate this reporting procedure, let's grade three students. Student A is a slow learner. From last year's report we know that he ended the year achieving just below the 6.5 level on our local norms, so we start the year in school at that point (see Example I). The first grading period he makes satisfactory progress, but, as we would anticipate, it is less than the average student would make in a grading period, so the teacher shades in the progress as satisfactory and checks "I am satisfied" under "Teacher's Judgment of Progress." The second grading period, the student makes about the same progress, but the quality of his work improves, so the teacher shows progress made as "very good" and checks "I am satisfied." The third grading period the progress is slower and the quality is only satisfactory, so the teacher shows less progress under "satisfactory" and checks "could make more progress." The fourth grading period is about the same as the first and so on through the year. At the end of the fourth year in school the teacher is satisfied with this child's progress even though he is now three-quarters of a year behind the average student.

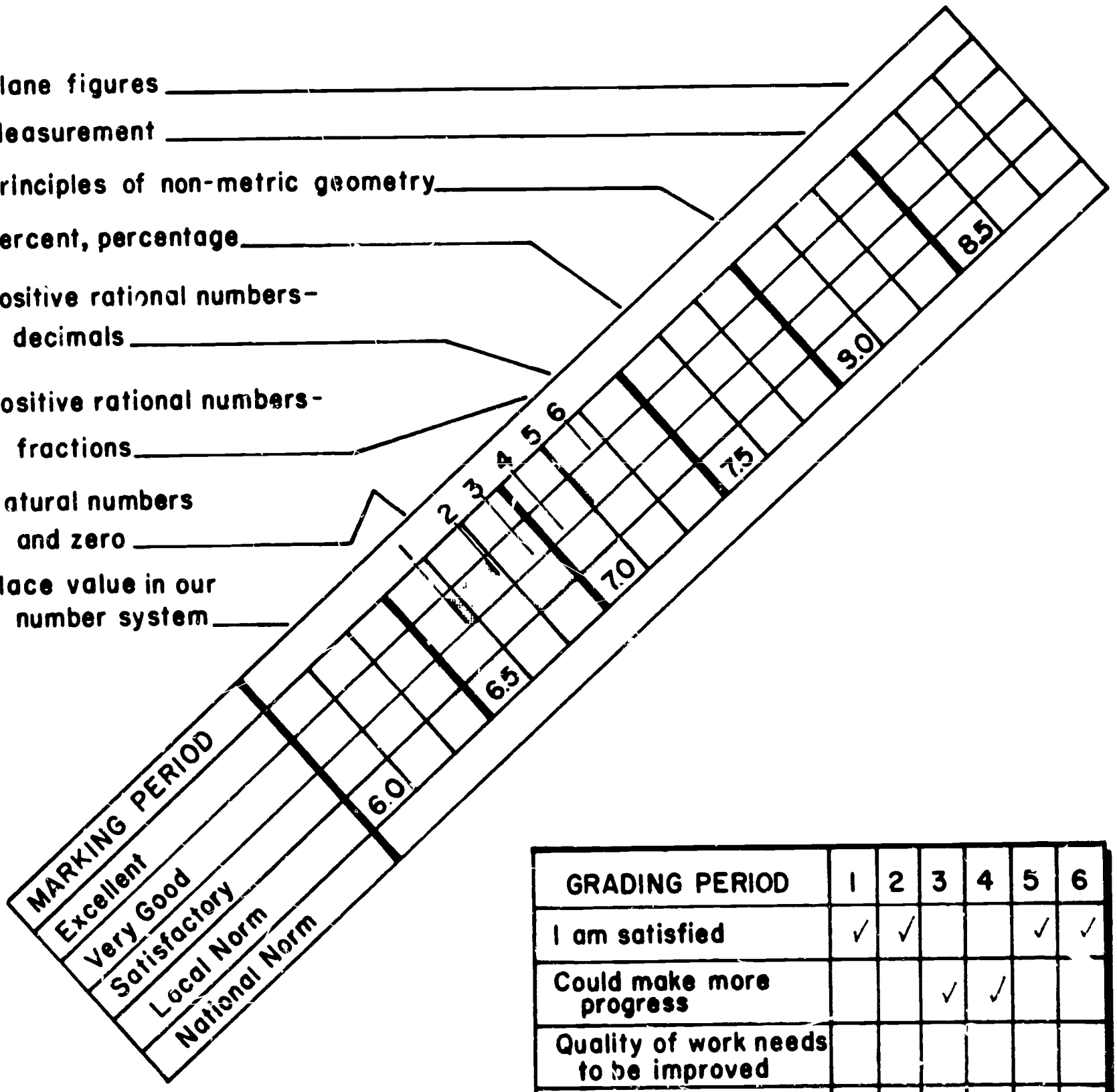
EXAMPLE I

REPORT FORM

SUBJECT MATH STUDENT A

YEAR 19–

CONCEPTS, SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE.



GRADING PERIOD	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am satisfied	✓	✓			✓	✓
Could make more progress			✓	✓		
Quality of work needs to be improved						
We need a parent–teacher conference						

EXAMPLE II

Example II is for an average Student B. He starts a little below average and finishes the first six weeks at the average set by the local norm. His quality of work drops somewhat the second grading period, but he continues to do the amount of work expected from an average student. The third grading period his progress is slower, but the quality of work has improved. His fourth grading period is a good one for him completing more work and retaining the quality of the preceding period. The fifth and sixth grading period he continues to do average work defined by the local norms and ends the year ready to start at the eighth level. In the teacher's judgment this student is making satisfactory progress as reflected in the lower right hand corner of the report.

EXAMPLE II

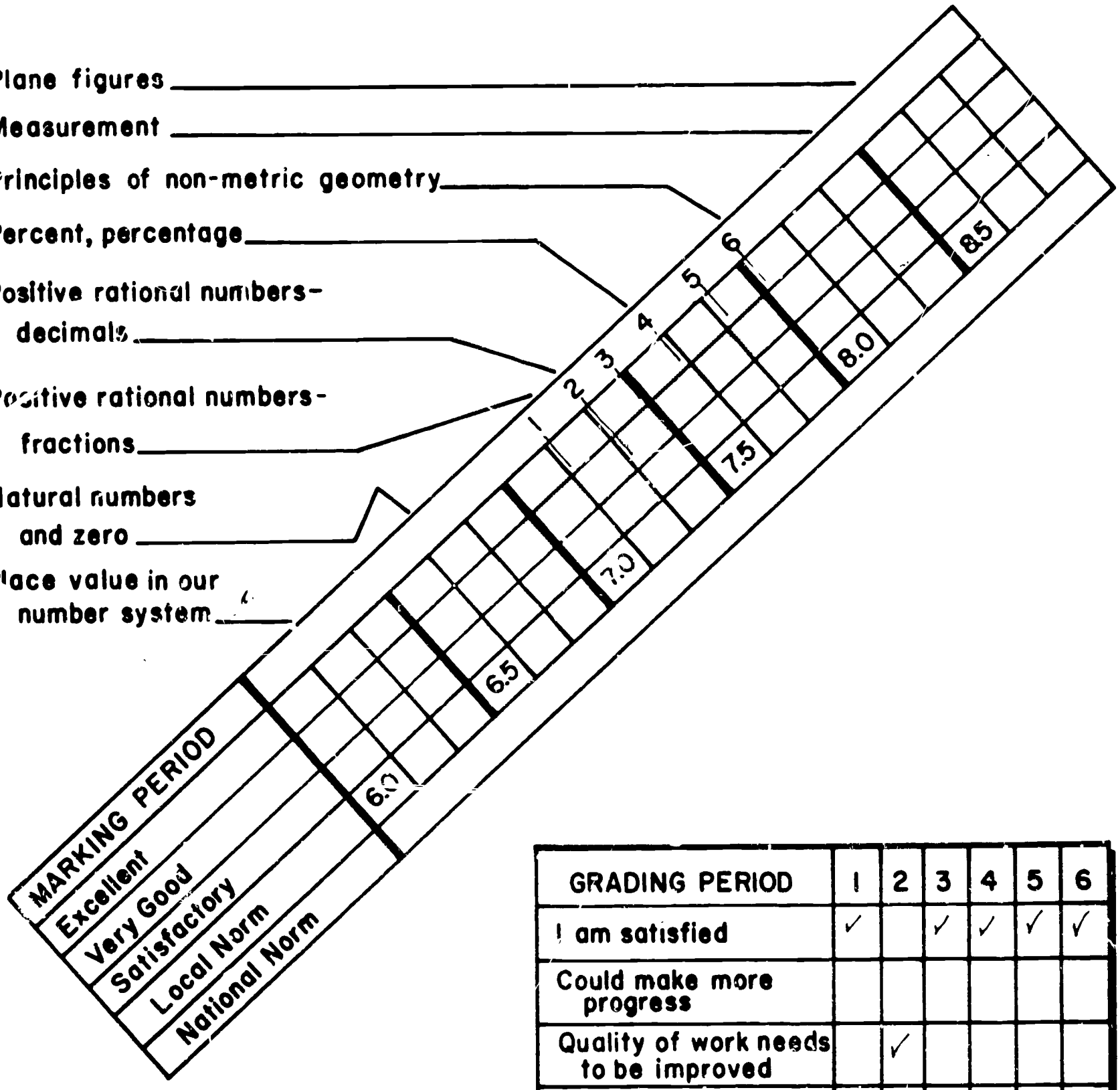
REPORT FORM

SUBJECT MATH STUDENT B

YEAR 19-

CONCEPTS, SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE.

8. Plane figures
7. Measurement
6. Principles of non-metric geometry
5. Percent, percentage
4. Positive rational numbers-
   decimals
3. Positive rational numbers-
   fractions
2. Natural numbers
   and zero
1. Place value in our
   number system



GRADING PERIOD	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am satisfied	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Could make more progress						
Quality of work needs to be improved		✓				
We need a parent-teacher conference						

EXAMPLE III

Example III is for the gifted Student C. He starts the year well advanced, and although the progress in the first grading period is good by ordinary standards, it is poor for this student. The teacher reflects this in filling out the report. The second grading period the progress is better, but the quality of the work is still not as good as it should be. The third grading period the quality of work goes up and the rate of progress is consistent with the teacher's estimate of the student's ability. This level of achievement is continued through the remainder of the year at which time he has progressed a full school year beyond the average student in this school district.

EXAMPLE III

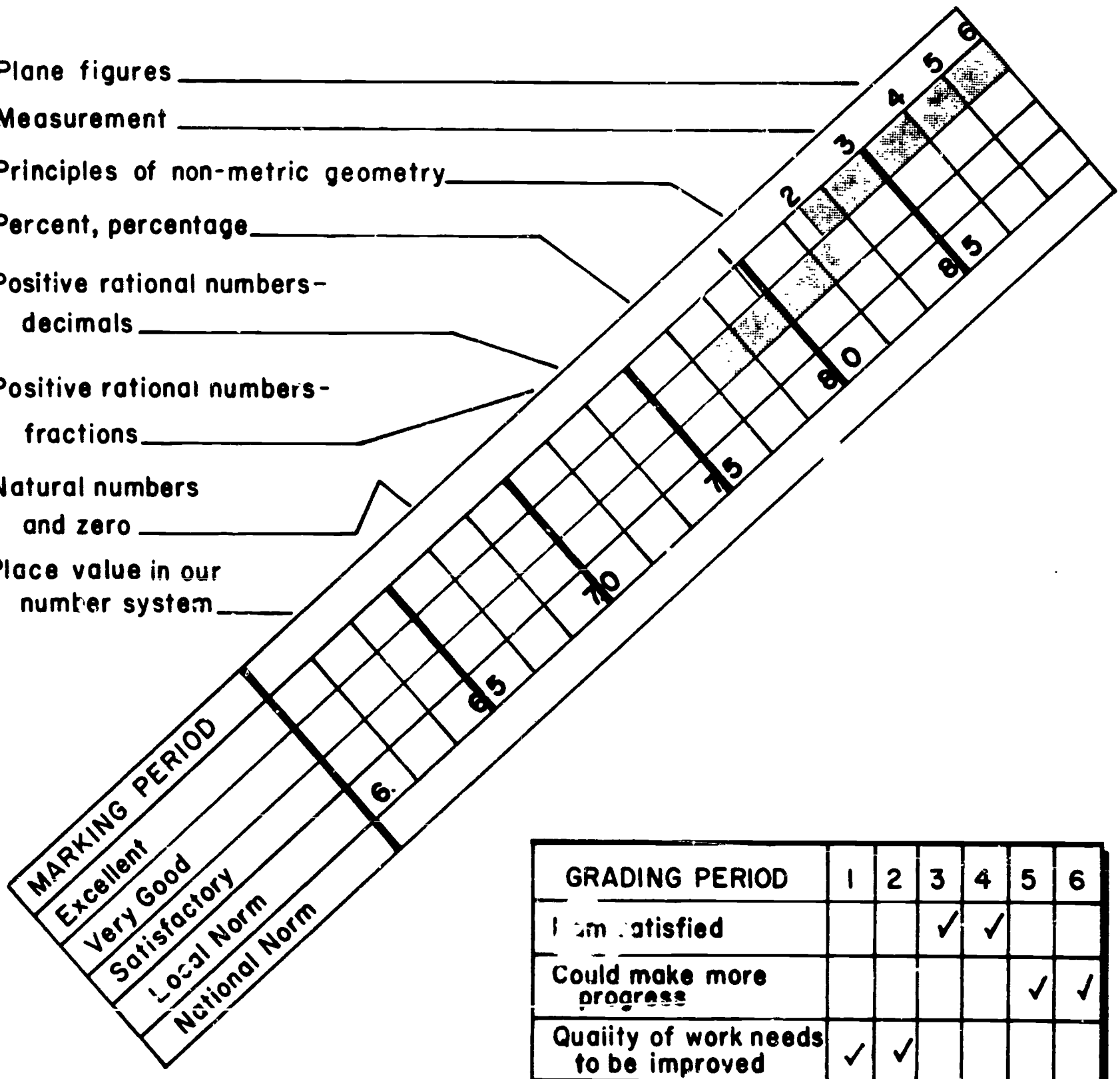
REPORT FORM

SUBJECT MATH STUDENT C

YEAR 19–

CONCEPTS, SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE.

8. Plane figures _____
7. Measurement _____
6. Principles of non-metric geometry _____
5. Percent, percentage _____
4. Positive rational numbers–
   decimals _____
3. Positive rational numbers–
   fractions _____
2. Natural numbers
   and zero _____
1. Place value in our
   number system _____



GRADING PERIOD	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am satisfied			✓	✓		
Could make more progress					✓	✓
Quality of work needs to be improved	✓	✓				
We need a parent–teacher conference						

Cumulative Record

Example IV on page 11 is an illustration of a cumulative record. If we plot the students' progress over a number of years on this cumulative record, we have a graphic presentation of a continuous progress program. The cumulative record becomes a bar graph showing progress along the continuum. Notice on the cumulative record example for Student A (Example V) that the teacher in the last three grading periods of the second grade was not satisfied with the quality of the student's work, but based on this experience, the teacher in the third year is satisfied with the same quality of work. Example VI illustrates that even with an outstanding student there will be periods of rapid progress and periods when progress and quality of work decline.

Summary

This reporting system should work for a continuous progress system. Since most of these programs are in reading, spelling, language arts and arithmetic, it is assumed that it will be tried in those areas first. It has been suggested that with modifications this system would be an improvement in reporting in a traditional school. This may be so, but the immediate concern was to design a grading and reporting system that was consistent with the concept of continuous progress.

EXAMPLE IV

Cumulative Record

Name _____

Subject _____

YEAR IN SCHOOL					
Grading Period					
STUDENT PROGRESS					
EXCELLENT					
VERY GOOD					
SATISFACTORY					
LOCAL NORMS					
NATIONAL NORMS					
TEACHER'S JUDGMENT OF PROGRESS					
I am satisfied					
Could make more progress.					
Quality of work needs to be improved					
Conference requested					

EXAMPLE V

Cumulative Record

Name student "A"

Subject Math

YEAR IN SCHOOL	First year						2nd year						3rd year						4th year					
Grading Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
STUDENT PROGRESS																								
EXCELLENT																								
VERY GOOD																								
SATISFACTORY																								
LOCAL NORMS	X						1						2						3					4
NATIONAL NORMS																								
TEACHER'S JUDGMENT OF PROGRESS																								
I am satisfied	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Could make more progr ss														✓			✓					✓	✓	
Quality of work needs to be improved										✓	✓	✓												
Conference requested																								

EXAMPLE VI

Cumulative Record

Name *student "C"*

Subject *Math*

YEAR IN SCHOOL	*First year*						*2nd year*						*3rd year*						*4th year*					
Grading Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
STUDENT PROGRESS																								
EXCELLENT																								
VERY GOOD																								
SATISFACTORY																								
LOCAL NORMS	K						1					2				3					4			
NATIONAL NORMS																								
TEACHER'S JUDGMENT OF PROGRESS																								
I am satisfied	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Could make more progress							✓																	
Quality of work needs to be improved							✓	✓	✓										✓	✓				✓
Conference requested									✓															