

# Tutor Orientation, Part II

# Writing a Session Report - Best Practices

#

Effective communication between tutor and student is the key to a successful tutoring relationship. But, the importance of effective communication extends beyond the instructor and the student. There are other stakeholders who must be kept in the loop about the student’s progress.

The School is Easy Opus ***Session Report*** is a key part of the “all-through” service that we provide to our clients. Alongside our consultations, learning plans, OPUS, and ongoing customer care from the School is Easy team, session reports are one of our USPs (unique selling proposition/point), helping add value to our service and setting us apart from other providers. On an operational level, session reports make it easy for us to keep everyone (parents, student, SIE office) up-to-date and informed about the progress of the student.

School is Easy tutors provide session reports after every tutoring session they complete. By giving parents this consistent, in-depth visibility of their child’s progress, we alleviate some of their anxiety, (which after all, is one of the goals we are trying to achieve!) Session reports are also useful from a practical standpoint, as a point of reference once tutoring has ended. They can be used to analyse a student’s performance over a course of tuition and to help students improve as they move forward into the next stage of their education.

Here’s how to write a meaningful Session Report –

1. **Session ratings**

Here, you will rate the student across 3 dimensions: *Engagement*, *Preparation*, and *Progress*.

* 1. **Engagement**: Can be rated “*High*”, “*Medium*”, or “*Low*”.
	Was the student active during the session? Did the student ask questions and offer explanations? Was the student interested and involved in the exploration process?
		+ “High” means the student was fully engaged in the session. The student put a lot of effort into the session, and showed motivation and energy.
		+ “Medium” means the student had some problems with engagement, but that you don’t believe it was a serious problem that warrants intervention from parents/the Director. An example might be a student who is tired because he was up late writing a paper or who seems distracted.
		+ “Low” means the student had problems with engagement, and you do believe it is serious enough to warrant intervention from parents/the center director. An example might be a student giving one-word answers, seeming distracted, or making it clear they do not want to be there.
	2. **Preparation**: Can be rated “*Prepared*” or “*Unprepared*”
	Was the student prepared for the session? Lack of preparation might include:
		+ Not bringing in needed materials (books, binders, study guides, etc.)
		+ Not knowing what the class is covering or what the homework is.
		+ Not having done homework as prescribed by the tutor during the previous session(s).

**\*Please note that if the homework was done, but NOT in the way prescribed by the tutor, this should be logged as “Unprepared”.**

* 1. **Progress**: Can be rated “*On Track*” or “*Needs Improvement*”
	How certain is it that the student will achieve the goals outlined in the Learning Plan based on the progress achieved in the session today?
	This one requires that you understand clearly what the goal for the work for the student is, and that you consciously ask yourself, “Is he going to achieve this goal based on what I saw today?”

**\*Only in exceptional circumstances should students who consistently receive an “On Track” rating, not reach their goals.**

1. **Session Reports**
* Your Session Report should be written in the “***Client Note***” field. The majority of your session reports will only be written in the Client Note field, (unless you have arranged with the parents/student/SIE office, to include the student). This means only the parents and administrators will see your session report and you will be able to include comments on progress, that you/the parents may not wish the student to see. If all parties agree the student should be included in the session report, you can write it in the “***Student Note***” field instead. Again, if you choose the Student Note field, all 3 parties (the student, parents and administrators) will see your session report.
* It is good practice to also write separate notes to the student in the Student Note field. You can include helpful information such as recapping what you covered in the session, recording any goals you may have set, or giving the student instructions for what they need to do before the next session.
* Use the “***Admin Note***” field, when you need to communicate something to administrators (School is Easy local office).

**NOTE: It is good practice to write all of your session reports/notes in a way that you would feel comfortable with *everyone* seeing, regardless of the selected recipients. Parents may choose to show students your session reports at a later date.**

Session Report Guidance Notes -

**Include information about what specifically was worked on. Keep it short and to the point.**

Example:

*“In today’s session, Mary and I worked on linear equations. Specifically, the relationship between two variables and how changing the coefficient and adding a constant, effects this relationship.”*

**Communicate whether or not the student is on track to hit their goals as stated in the tutoring recommendation and/or the student’s learning plan.**

1. If the student is on track, then be specific about what behaviors you want to continue to see from them. (Research shows that praise is effective if it is specific).

\*This type of goal-related information is a good example of information that could be shared both with the parents (in your session report) and the student (as a note in the Student Note box), if you feel it adds value to both parties. Typically, you would share the same information, but in slightly different ways.

Example: student note

* *“Mary, you are doing a great job of keeping your work neat and organised. This is paying off!”*

Example: session report

* *“Mary has done a great job of keeping her work neat and organised recently. This is paying off as I am seeing a marked improvement in her work during the session and her understanding of the subject matter!”*
1. If the student is *not* on track, then be specific about what needs to change. Your job is to work with your student, set goals, and discuss what is getting in the way of reaching those goals.

Example:

*“We spoke about Mary’s missing homework assignments. She reconfirmed that her goal is to raise her grade to a B or better by the end of this term. We also spoke about what is getting in the way of her achieving her goal. She admitted that she often spends too much time playing XBox and then runs out of time to complete her homework before bed. We therefore agreed that Mary will try setting a 30-minute slot for playing XBox after school, and then start her homework. We also agreed she would only play XBox again, if she completes her homework. Please report back to me on how this goes during the week before my next session with Mary.”*

**Be specific if the parent needs to take action to support the student.**

For example, if the student has had trouble remembering to revise before exams and you think it would be helpful for the parent to remind the student, then clearly ask them to do so.

Example:

*“Mary said she forgot to revise the chapter on linear equations before her last test. We put a reminder in her phone’s calendar for the day before her next test and agreed that it might help if her parents knew about her test schedule, to help remind her to do at least an hour of revision the night before. Mary’s next test is this Friday 25th Oct. Please could you remind Mary to study for at least 1 hour on Thursday night before the test.”*

**Be specific if you need help from an administrator.**

Use the “Needs Attention” check box if you want to bring special attention to a tutoring session. Do this when you are unsure about how to proceed with a student or if he/she seems stuck on the same issue. Also, make parents aware (via your session report) if you feel the student really needs additional sessions in order to meet his or her stated goals.

Note: This should never be viewed as a failure, just good monitoring of your student’s progress. If you are uncertain about communicating this directly to a parent, always speak with your School is Easy Director.

Session reports can be a great tool in support of your students, but they can also provide important documentation of progress if questions come up later regarding the course of tutoring.

The student’s success is ultimately up to them (see parable about bringing a horse to water!) It is imperative that parents and administrators know if the student is not progressing well, so that all stakeholders can come together in support of the student. Be positive, but be honest!

Some of our best students are ones that struggled initially. However, with structured and consistent support, they were able to turn things around. Tutoring can be a wonderful gift for them. Often times, your regular communication will be the first time parents have been kept in the loop about their child’s education, (consider most schools only have one parent-teacher meeting per term!) As a result of the extra level of service we provide, our parents often turn into our “Cheerleaders” becoming strong referral sources for you as a tutor *and* School is Easy.

**Summary**

**1) Be concise about what you worked on.**

**2) Report if the student is on or off track towards their goals. If off track, report how you are addressing this with the student, and be specific about the solution you and your student have decided upon.**

**3) Be specific about any action parents may need to take, to support their child.**

**4) Make sure to ask for help from your School is Easy Director whenever you need it.**

**5) Remember, session reports are directly connected to your session payments in OPUS – meaning you can’t be paid for a tutoring session before you submit the relevant session report.**