

Effort

He brought me his report card from the teacher and he said
He wasn't very proud of it and sadly bowed his head.
He was excellent in reading, but arithmetic, was fair,
And I noticed there were several 'unsatisfactorious' there;
But one little bit of credit which was given brought me joy—
He was 'excellent in effort,' and I fairly hugged the boy.
'Oh, it doesn't make much difference what is written on your card,'
I told that little fellow, 'if you're only trying hard.
The 'very goods' and 'excellents' are fine, I must agree,
But the effort you are making means a whole lot more to me;
And the thing that's most important when this card is put aside
Is to know, in spite of failure, that to do your best you've tried.
'Just keep excellent in effort—all the rest will come to you.
There isn't any problem but some day you'll learn to do,
And at last, when you grow older, you will come to understand
That by hard and patient toiling men have risen to command
And some day you will discover when a greater goal's at stake
That better far than brilliance is the effort you will make.'

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)