

October 7, 2005

Mariko Iwai, Jeannine Madoff, Nelyda Miguel, Elaine Zygmunt-Mink, Jane Niwa, Gene Schmidt

The International School at Dundee Assessment Policy

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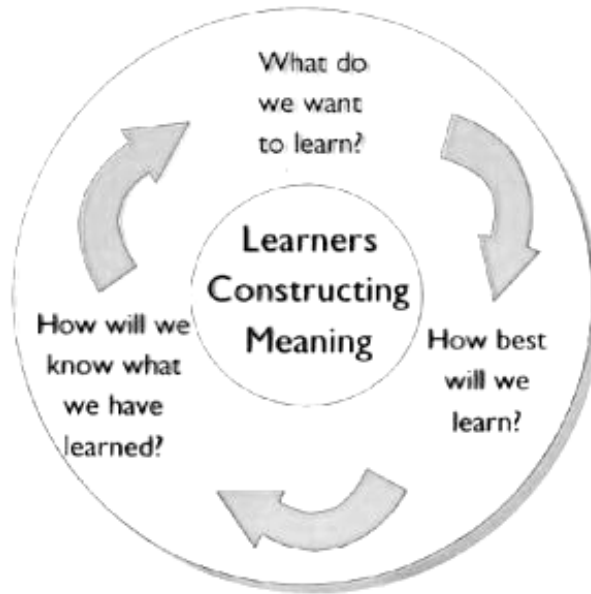
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I. Overview



Assessment is the gathering and analysis of information about student performance. It identifies what students know, understand, can do and feel at different stages in the learning process.

Assessment is integral to all teaching and learning. It is central to the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program's goal of thoughtfully and effectively guiding children through the five essential elements of learning: the understanding of concepts, the acquisition of knowledge, the mastering of skills, the development of attitudes, and the decision to take responsible action.

Everyone concerned with assessment--children, teachers, parents, administrators, and board members--must have a clear understanding of the reasons for the assessment, what is being assessed, the criteria for success, and the method by which the assessment is made.

Both children and teachers should be actively engaged in assessing student progress as part of the development of their wider critical thinking and self-evaluation skills. Teachers should also be concerned with evaluating the efficacy of the programme.

The PYP describes the taught curriculum as the written curriculum in action. Using the written curriculum, and in collaboration with colleagues and children, the teacher generates questions which guide structured inquiry and instruction. These questions address the eight key concepts which help lead to productive lines of inquiry. Assessment focuses on the quality of student learning during the process of inquiry and instruction and on the quality of the products of that learning. Assessment is, therefore, integral to the taught curriculum. It is the means by which we analyse student learning and the effectiveness of our teaching and acts as a foundation on which to base our future planning and practice. It is central to our goal of guiding the child, from novice to expert, through the learning process.

II. Why Do We Assess Students' Work?

A. Purposes of Assessment

Assessment is an essential part of the instructional cycle. It provides information about student learning and development, as well as a framework for planning, self-reflection, and collaboration.

Students' learning is promoted through:

- Assessing prior knowledge and experience
- Differentiating instruction to meet individual needs
- Engaging learners in reflection to determine strengths and weaknesses and to set goals
- Providing feedback for students
- Expanding student learning opportunities
- Building a profile of children's understanding

Information about student learning is provided through

- Examples of student work or performances
- Statistics relating to benchmarks and/or rubrics or test scores
- Test results

Program evaluation uses a variety of student assessments to:

- Assess the levels of students' current knowledge and experience before embarking on new learning
- Assess new learning
- Guide teacher planning and presentation
- Assess student performance relative to national, state, and local standards as well as PYP expectations
- Focus on closing the achievement gaps among students
- Inform all stakeholders

B. Principles of Assessment

The International School at Dundee's Essential Agreement on Assessment is a product of a collaborative effort by the staff. It recognizes that the fundamental purpose of assessment is to acknowledge student learning. It incorporates the IBPYP five Essential Elements: key concepts, knowledge, attitudes, skills, and action.

Effective assessment should:

- Provide feedback for students and teachers to revise/advance performance, learning, and teaching
- Be formative, summative and demonstrate what students know, understand, and are able to apply
- Use reflection as an essential and integral part of self, peer, teacher, and parent assessment
- Show awareness of learning style, cultural, gender, linguistic, and racial differences
- Be anchored in authentic tasks
- Provide evidence of progress along a continuum of criteria that are clearly known and understood in advance

SD Staff 2004

III. What Do We Assess?

Through the IBPYP Program of Inquiry, ISD teachers strive to provide the opportunity for learners to construct meaning primarily through structured inquiry. This is accomplished by emphasizing the connections between subject-specific knowledge and transdisciplinary skills and themes. The transdisciplinary themes--Who We Are, Where We Are in Place and Time, How We Express Ourselves, How the World Works, How We Organize Ourselves, How We Share the Planet--provide a focus for inquiry, while literacy and numeracy provide the tools. Feedback should be given on student progress and performance in each of these areas.

Additionally, feedback should be provided on the attributes listed in the PYP Student Profile: Inquirer, Communicator, Thinker, Risk-Taker, Knowledgeable, Principled, Caring, Open-Minded, Well-Balanced, Reflective. This profile serves to increase the children's awareness of, and sensitivity to, the experiences of others beyond the local or national community, thus promoting an understanding that there is a commonality of human experience.

At the International School at Dundee, we assess performance and progress in each of the following subject areas: English language arts, Spanish, math, science, social studies, physical education, art, music, technology and information, social skills and work habits. We continue to incorporate student attitudes and attributes to everyday learning.

We assess Central Ideas and attempt to incorporate the GPS objectives and assessments when they are related to enduring understandings.

IV. When and How Do We Assess?

Assessment is something that occurs everyday in some fashion. A variety of assessments demonstrates our belief that children learn in different ways, at different rates, and at different times. The result of assessment is considered a critical element that influences teacher decision-making and guides student learning. (p14, STS)

A. Types of Assessments

Pre-assessment

Pre-assessment occurs before embarking on new learning to uncover prior knowledge and experiences.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is woven into the daily learning process. It provides teachers and students with information about how the learning is developing. It helps the teacher to plan the next stage of learning.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment occurs at the end of a teaching and learning cycle. Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned by applying their knowledge in new and authentic contexts.

The Exhibition as Summative Assessment

Purpose:

The Exhibition is the culminating experience for the IB Primary Years Program. It requires students to synthesize their prior knowledge and to apply it in a self-directed manner. The Exhibition provides an authentic summative assessment for the PYP years. The subject of the Exhibition is a student-selected, real-world problem which warrants an extended investigation. It is a celebration which unites students, teachers, and families in an activity which represents the essence of PYP: Transdisciplinary Skills embedded with the IB Student Profile and Attitudes.

The fifth grade Exhibition is undertaken by students in their final year of the PYP. The Exhibition represents a significant event in the life of our school, encapsulating the essence of the PYP and encouraging younger students to look forward to their final year of the program and their future participation in the community at large.

Essential Components:

- incorporates application of all key questions
- uses all transdisciplinary skills
- display of attitudes
- engaged in action plan
- application of all PYP themes

Standardized Assessment

Under the *No Child Left Behind* Act, the United States government requires that we test all children to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility and choice so that no child is left behind regardless of other factors.

Kindergarten

Local Assessments

- Health
- Science
- Social Studies
- Language Arts
- Physical Education
- World Language
- DRA*
- Task Analysis (fall and spring)

School Assessments

- IB formative and summative
- Student Profile assessment reflections
- Math

Grade 1

Local Assessments

- Health
- Science
- Social Studies
- Language Arts
- ALP Assessments
- Physical Education
- World Language
- DRA* (winter and spring)
- Task Analysis (fall)
- Sound/symbol recognition (selected students)

School Assessments

- IB formative and summative
- Student Profile assessment reflections
- Writing
- Math

Grade 2

Local Mandated Standardized Assessments

DRP* (fall and spring)

Local Assessments

Health

Science

Social Studies

Language Arts

ALP* Assessments

Physical Education

World Language

DRA* (fall and spring)

SOPA*

School Assessments

IB formative and summative

Student Profile assessment reflections

Writing

Math

Grade 3

State Mandated Standardized Assessments

CMT*

Local Mandated Standardized Assessments

SAT*

OLSAT*

DRP* (fall and spring)

Local Assessments

Health

Science

Social Studies

Language Arts

Math

ALP* Assessments

Physical Education

World Language

DRA* (fall and spring; winter for intervention students)

Spanish unit test

School Assessments

IB formative and summative

Student Profile assessment reflections

Writing

Math

Grade 4

State-Mandated Standardized Assessments

CMT*

Local-Mandated

DRP* (fall and spring)

Local Assessments

Health

Science

Social Studies

Language Arts

Math

ALP* Assessments

Physical Education

World Language

DRA* (fall and spring; winter for intervention students)

Spanish Unit test

School Assessments

IB formative and summative

Student Profile assessment reflection

Writing

Math

Grade 5

State-Mandated Standardized Assessments

CMT*

Local-Mandated Standardized Assessments

SAT*

OLSAT*

DRP* (fall and spring)

SOPA*

Local Assessments

Health

Science

Social Studies

Language Arts

Grade 5 Transition Math

Math

ALP* Assessments

Physical Education

Music

Art

Media Technology

World Language

DRA* (fall and spring; winter for intervention students)

Spanish Unit Test

School Assessments

IB Exhibition
IB formative and summative
Student Profile assessment reflections
Writing
Math

English as a Second Language

Local Mandated

Writing Sample

State Mandated

LAS* (English Language Learners)

*	DRA	(Developmental Reading Assessment)
	DRP	(Degrees of Reading Power)
	ALP	(Advanced Learning Program)
	CMT	(Connecticut Mastery Test)
	SAT	(Scholastic Aptitude Test)
	OLSAT	(Otis-Lennon School Ability Test)
	SOPA	(Spanish Oral Proficiency Test)
	LAS	(Language Assessment Scale)

B. Assessment Strategies

Assessment strategies form the basis of a comprehensive approach and represent ISD's answer to the question, "How will we know what we have learned?" These methods of assessment include a broad range of approaches and have been selected to provide a balanced view of the student.

- Observations: All students are observed regularly with a focus on the individual, the group, and/or the whole class.
- Performance Assessments: Students are presented with a task that represents the kind of challenges that adults face in the world beyond the classroom. It requires using a repertoire of knowledge and skills to accomplish a goal or solve an open-ended problem. In addition, it entails the thoughtful application of knowledge rather than recalling facts. It has an identified purpose or audience, involves a realistic scenario, it has an established criteria and requires developing an authentic product or performance.
- Transdisciplinary Skills Assessments (research, thinking, communication, self-management and social skills) : The focus is on the process and skill application rather than on the product. These skills are regularly observed in real contexts using checklists, narrative notes, and inventories.
- Open-Ended Assessments: Students are presented with a challenge and asked to provide an original response.
- Tests/Quizzes: These single-occasion assessments provide a snapshot of students' specific knowledge.
- Portfolios: An ongoing, purposeful collection is composed of selected student work and is designed to demonstrate growth, creativity, and reflection. Continuity Portfolios and Grade Level Portfolios are in use throughout the school.

C. Assessment Tools

The previously identified assessment strategies are put into practice at ISD by using the following assessment tools.

- Rubrics: Rubrics are established sets of criteria used for scoring or rating children's tests, portfolios, or performances. The descriptors tell the child and the assessor what characteristics or signs to look for in the work and then how to rate that work on a predetermined scale. Rubrics can be developed by children as well as by teachers.
- Benchmarks/exemplars: These are samples of children's work that serve as concrete standards against which other samples are judged. Benchmarks/exemplars can be used in conjunction with rubrics or continuums. Benchmarks should be appropriate and useable within a particular school context.
- Checklists: These are lists of information, data, attributes, or elements that should be present.
- Anecdotal records: Anecdotal records are brief, written notes based on observations of children. These records need to be systematically compiled and organized.
- Continuums: These are visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement or identify where a child is in a process.

The following chart shows assessment tools and techniques for implementing strategies. The check marks indicate the tools likely to be most relevant to each strategy.

The following chart from the Alberta Assessment consortium *Assessment Framework* (Feb 1997) offers a broader viewpoint of how tools and strategies interact to provide information for assessment.

V. How Do We Report?

Reporting is a means of giving feedback from assessment. Effective reporting should:

- involve parents, students, and teachers as partners
- reflect what the school community values
- be comprehensive, honest, fair, and credible
- be clear and understandable to all parties
- allow teachers to incorporate what they learn during the reporting process into their future teaching and assessment practice

(PYP Assessment)

A. Conferences

Parents, students, and teachers are all valued partners in the reporting process and in sharing the responsibility both for learning and for accounting student progress. Pathways for communication need to be open and reciprocal.

Greenwich Public Schools builds into the school calendar an annual parent-teacher conference. In addition, we provide many opportunities throughout the school year for conferencing. Parents, teachers, and/or students may participate, depending upon the purpose.

B. Written Reports

IB Profile Reflections are completed at every grade level and are sent home at the 2nd and 3rd marking periods.

District-mandated report cards are sent home every trimester. Transdisciplinary Skills, Student Profile, and Attitudes are reflected in the comments that teachers write on every report card. Since IB units are not reflected on our district report card, we strive to communicate, share, and reflect on student learning at the end of each unit.

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- We also gathered information from the following IBPYP school assessment policies:
- ACS Egham, England
 - Luanda International School, Luanda, Angola
 - Pregny Rigot, Geneva, Switzerland
 - St. Andrews, Bahamas
 - Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School, Calgary, Canada