

ASSESSING AND EVALUATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Background

Student achievement of learner outcomes in provincially prescribed programs, locally developed, or modified or an adapted program must be assessed and evaluated regularly and communicated periodically to the students, the students' parents/guardians and the Board (Section 18, School Act, 2015).

Alberta Education - Student Evaluation Policy requires that student learning in education programs shall be assessed to assist in: improving programs, establishing and maintaining standards, and improving student achievement.

Ideals of hope, affirmation, reconciliation, and renewal should direct and guide the processes of assessing, evaluating, communicating and celebrating student learning. The learning goals and objectives of Alberta Education and the Division provide the basis for achieving these ideals. Students and parents need to understand how student learning is assessed, evaluated, and communicated.

Definitions

Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 4 recognizes the importance of using language effectively to inform educational practice in the interest of higher levels of student achievement.

“Achievement,” refers to a student’s demonstration of knowledge, skills and attitudes relative to grade level curriculum standards.

“Assessment,” refers to the collection of information on student achievement and performance to improve student learning.

“Assessment for Learning” or **“Formative Assessment,”** is the ongoing exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress toward clearly specified learning goals.

“Assessment of Learning” or **“Summative Assessment,”** is the summarizing information collected about learning in order to share that information with those outside classrooms.

“Assessment Criteria,” refers to what students will do to show they have achieved the outcomes

“Evaluation,” is a judgment regarding the quality or worth of a response.

“Grade (mark),” is a summary statement of student achievement relative to curriculum standards.

“Learner Outcomes,” refer to what we expect students to learn; the knowledge, skills and attitudes we expect students to demonstrate as a result of schooling.

“Performance Assessment,” is a meaningful, real-life task that enables students to demonstrate what they know and can do in situations like those they will encounter outside the classroom as well as in situations that simulate how people do their work.

“Descriptive Feedback,” is part of an ongoing hopeful conversation about learning that relates directly to the expected learning outcomes.

A **“Rubric”** or **“Scoring Guide,”** is a fixed measurement scale and list of criteria that describe the quality of products or performances used to evaluate a student’s performance.

A **“Checklist,”** is a two-point evaluation tool that indicates if a student has achieved a learning goal (yes or not yet).

A **“Rating Scale,”** is an evaluation tool of three or more points that illustrates how frequently or consistently a student demonstrates a learning outcome.

“Self-reflection,” occurs when an individual considers the quality of their work by applying performance standards. The practice is employed to improve students’ understanding of course outcomes as well as improve their metacognitive skills.

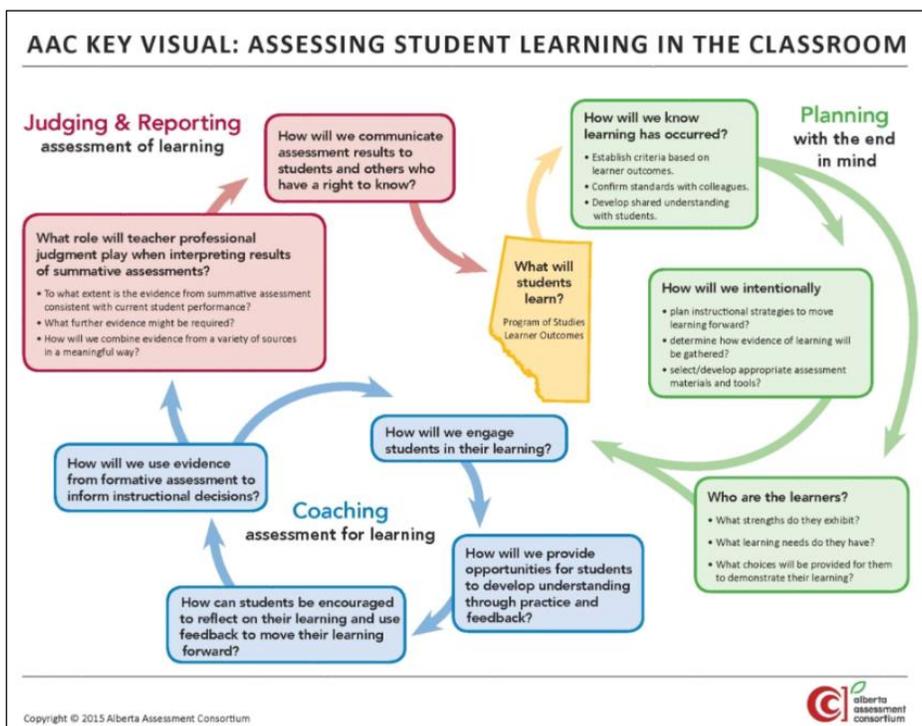
“Grade Level of Achievement,” refers to the grade level(s) the child has achieved in relation to the graded curricular outcomes of the provincial programs of study.

“Portfolio” or **“Portfolio Assessment,”** is an assessment tool used to document student learning through a series of student-developed artifacts. Considered a form of authentic assessment, it offers an alternative or complement to traditional methods of communicating student achievement.

“Peer Assessment,” is a process whereby a student’s peers provide formative feedback based on the teacher’s benchmarks. The practice is employed to improve students’ understanding of course outcomes as well as improve their metacognitive skills.

“Self Assessment,” is a process whereby a student evaluates their own work based on a teacher’s benchmarks. The practice is employed to improve students’ understanding of course outcomes as well as improve their metacognitive skills.

Guidelines



1. Achievement of learner outcomes must be measured in a manner consistent with the curriculum outcomes from the Program of Studies.
2. Achievement of the learner outcomes in the Program of Studies must be the only basis for grades. The reported mark, which has been substantiated through fair assessment and evaluation practices, will indicate the grade level of achievement that the student has achieved. Factors outside of the program of studies such as effort, participation, attitude, work habits, attendance, and behaviour should not be used to determine a student's grade. These characteristics, while extremely important aspects of a student's education, should be evaluated and reported separately.
3. Fair and accurate grades for students will be determined by assessment that is ongoing, and that involves multiple strategies. Evaluation must not be viewed as a snapshot, nor a one-shot exercise. Therefore, students may need to be provided with subsequent opportunities to demonstrate learning if the evidence indicates. Arbitrary high stakes evaluation, evaluation that upholds the "element of surprise," and evaluation that is not based upon a reasonable body of evidence are not appropriate ways to achieve valid evaluation.
4. Formative evaluation provides ongoing timely diagnostic information and, as such, should not be used in the calculation of a grade. Formative assessment is purely a means to an end designed to let the teacher and student know what concepts have been learned, and which skills need to be further developed before a summative assessment is made. Formative evaluation determines appropriate next steps in instruction as well as readiness for summative evaluation.

5. Students must be informed how and why assessment information is being collected, how this information will be used in the grading process, and the criteria used in the assessment. Scoring guides, rubrics, benchmarks, exemplars, self-assessment tools, and detailed course outlines are methods of ensuring student engagement in assessment.
6. Students must be provided with an opportunity to review assessments that have been collected by the teacher in establishing a grade to enable the student's continuous improvement.
7. Feed back to students must be presented in a manner that engenders self-confidence and a belief that they are capable learners.
 - 7.1 Punitive grading does not meet the goal of evaluation. A student's failure to submit work is a critical behavioral and discipline issue as defined by the School Act (2004,12) in that "a student shall conduct himself or herself so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct: (a) be diligent in pursuing the student's studies." Punitive grading shall be considered an unacceptable and indefensible practice.
 - 7.2 The use of zeros as an evaluation strategy is an example of a punitive grading practice. It is not supported in the research, clearly does not promote success, does not represent what students have learned, and does not provide incentive to improve learning. Schools, under the leadership of the Principal, must establish intervention processes to ensure that students are committed to learning and complete work when expected to do so.
8. Students must have the right to appeal an assessment in any subject. Alberta Education - Student Evaluation Policy makes reference to appeals. When students question a grade, a teacher must constructively address the concern. A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an appeal to the teacher may appeal to the Principal. If the decision is unacceptable, the student may request a hearing from the Office of the Superintendent. The decision of the Superintendent will be considered final.
9. Students will acquire proficiency under various circumstances and at different rates; consequently, students may wish to challenge the completion of a course through a process and protocol that does not require mandatory attendance in the course to be challenged. The Principal will be responsible for establishing guidelines and procedures for course challenges. Guidelines and procedures regarding course challenges. Guidelines and procedures regarding course challenges will be addressed in compliance with the procedures outlined in Alberta Education's, *Guide to Education*.

Legal References: *The Guide to Education*
 The School Act