

Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

SECTION:	300 - STUDENTS	CODE:	AP 360
PROCEDURE:	STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION		

BACKGROUND

Evaluation is the collection, analysis, and judgment of the work of students that is used to determine their progress in an educational program. The fundamental goal of evaluation is to enable students to improve their learning and teachers to improve their practice. Since evaluation is such an integral component of the learning process, evaluative methods must be clearly related to the goals of the curriculum. Furthermore, evaluation must reflect the values of an interdependent Catholic learning community, based upon varied instructional approaches, guided by best practices, and ultimately structured and communicated so that students know what they have learned, and how to improve their learning. Students and parents must understand how work is assessed and evaluated.

Evaluation practices and procedures must adhere to the guidelines within this administrative procedure.

Definitions

Accountability is a process to ensure that schools meet their goals; how the assessment results are utilized to improve student performance, instruction, etc.

Achievement is a student's demonstration of knowledge, skills and attributes relative to grade level curriculum standards as outlined in the approved programs of study. Ultimately, final written reports are based upon these evaluations and are used to communicate progress to students and parents.

Action Research is classroom-based research involving the systematic collection of data in order to address certain questions and issues so as to improve classroom instruction and educational effectiveness.

Assessment means the collection of information on student achievement and performance to improve student learning and may be further defined as:

Assessment for learning is an ongoing exchange of information between students and teachers about student progress toward clearly specified learning goals for the purpose of improving learning and informing instruction (formative assessment). Assessment for learning is designed to give teachers information to modify and differentiate teaching and learning activities. It acknowledges that individual students learn in idiosyncratic ways, but it also recognizes that there are predictable patterns and pathways that many students follow. It requires careful design on the part of teachers so that they use the resulting information to determine not only what students know, but also to gain insights into how,

when, and whether students apply what they know. Teachers can also use this information to streamline and target instruction and resources, and to provide feedback to students to help them advance their learning. (Rethinking Classroom Assessment With Purpose in Mind – WNCP – 2006)

Assessment as Learning focuses on students and emphasizes assessment as a process of metacognition (knowledge of one's own thought processes) for students. Assessment as learning emerges from the idea that learning is not just a matter of transferring ideas from someone who is knowledgeable to someone who is not, but is an active process of cognitive restructuring that occurs when individuals interact with new ideas. Within this view of learning, students are the critical connectors between assessment and learning. For students to be actively engaged in creating their own understanding, they must learn to be critical assessors who make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and use it for new learning. This is the regulatory process in metacognition; that is, students become adept at personally monitoring what they are learning, and use what they discover from the monitoring to make adjustments, adaptations, and even major changes in their thinking.

Assessment of Learning refers to strategies designed to confirm what students know, demonstrate whether or not they have met curriculum outcomes or the goals of their individualized programs, or to certify proficiency and make decisions about students' future programs or placements. It is designed to provide evidence of achievement to parents, other educators, the students themselves, and sometimes to outside groups (e.g., employers, other educational institutions). Assessment of learning is the assessment that becomes public and results in statements or symbols about how well students are learning. It often contributes to pivotal decisions that will affect students' futures. It is important, then, that the underlying logic and measurement of assessment of learning be credible and defensible. (Rethinking Classroom Assessment With Purpose in Mind – WNCP – 2006) Assessment as Learning is a subset of Assessment for Learning.

Authentic Assessment – A circumstance in which the behavior that the learning is intended to produce is evaluated and discussed in order to improve learning. The concept of model, practice, and feedback in which students know what excellent performance is and are guided to practice an entire concept rather than bits and pieces in preparation for eventual understanding. A variety of techniques can be employed in authentic assessment.

Diagnostic assessment provides reliable and valid information to teachers about student learning and progress, and direction for improvement and/or adjustment to a program.

Formative assessment provides information to students and teachers about student learning and progress, and direction for improvement and/or adjustment to a program. Formative assessment includes opportunities for practice and is not part of an achievement grade (adapted from O'Connor, 2002).

Summative assessment provides information to students, parents/guardians, and teachers about student achievement at the end of a period of instruction. Summative assessment is used to determine an achievement grade.

A period of instruction is defined as the number of classes during which a student has been involved in activities leading to understanding a particular concept central to the acquisition of the objectives of a unit of study. A period of instruction will vary depending upon the purpose of the assessment (i.e. at the end of a unit or part of a unit of instruction to determine student mastery). For example, in Mathematics a teacher may break down a unit into several periods of instruction. The teacher may include several summative assessments throughout the unit to determine the level of student mastery of specific unit objectives and then conduct a summative assessment at the end of the unit to assess student learning for all objectives taught.

Assessment Literacy is the possession of knowledge about the basic principles of sound assessment practice, including terminology, the development and use of assessment methodologies and techniques, familiarity with standards of quality in assessment. increasingly, familiarity with alternatives to traditional measurements of learning.

Benchmarks are student performance standards (the level(s) of student competence in a content area).

Cohort is a group whose progress is followed by means of measurements at different points in time.

Content Standards: detailed descriptions about the quality of the academic knowledge students are to attain relative to the curriculum; curriculum standards, or standards.

Course Mapping is a matrix showing the coverage of each program learning outcome in each course. It may also indicate the level of emphasis of each outcome in each course.

Criterion-referenced or Standards-based Tests measure the content that students actually learned in relation to the curriculum and curriculum standards, not how well they did in relation to other students.

Curriculum Map is a matrix showing where each goal and/or learning outcome are covered in each program course.

Evaluation means making informed professional judgments about the quality of student achievement over a period of time, primarily for the purpose of communicating student achievement (adapted from O'Connor, 2002).

Grade means a summary statement of student achievement relative to the curriculum standards and may be reported as a level of achievement or a percentage.

High-Stakes Test: one test used as the only determinant to measure success.

Learning Outcomes are operational statements describing specific student behaviors that evidence the acquisition of desired goals in knowledge, skills, abilities, capacities, attitudes or dispositions. Learning outcomes can be usefully thought of as behavioral criteria for determining whether students are achieving the educational goals of a program, and, ultimately, whether overall program goals are being successfully met. Outcomes are sometimes treated as synonymous with objectives, though objectives are usually more general statements of what students are expected to achieve in an academic program.

Mark means the score (number, letter, or descriptive category) given on any single test or performance. (O'Connor, 2002)

Metacognition is the knowledge of one's own thinking processes and strategies, and the ability to consciously reflect and act on the knowledge of cognition to modify those processes and strategies.

Norm is a distribution of scores obtained from a norm group. The norm is the midpoint (or median) of scores or performance of the students in that group. Fifty percent will score above and fifty percent below the norm.

Norm-referenced Tests: measure students against a provincial or national median or norm and ranks students against each other along a bell curve with the norm in the middle.

Opportunity to Learn: extent to which students receive the type of instruction needed to respond correctly to assessment questions and statements.

Performance-Based Assessment – Direct, systematic observation and rating of student performance of an educational objective, often an ongoing observation over a period of time, and typically involving the creation of products. The assessment may be a continuing interaction between teacher and student and is ideally to be part of the learning process. The assessment is to be a real-world performance with relevance to the student and learning community. Assessment of the performance is done using a rubric, or analytic scoring guide to aid in objectivity. Performance-based assessment is a test of the ability to apply knowledge in a real life setting or performance of exemplary tasks in the demonstration of intellectual ability.

Performance standards: descriptions of what students are to be able to do to demonstrate mastery of academic content.

Portfolio is a systematic and organized collection of a student's work that exhibits to others the direct evidence of a student's efforts, achievements, and progress over a period of time. The collection is to involve the student in selection of its contents, and is to include information about the performance criteria, the rubric or criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection or evaluation.

Portfolio Assessment may occur in a variety of ways. Each piece may be individually scored, or the portfolio might be assessed merely for the presence of required pieces, or a holistic scoring process might be used and an evaluation made on the basis of an overall impression of the student's collected work. It is common that assessors work together to establish consensus of standards or to ensure greater reliability in evaluation of student work. Established criteria are often used by reviewers and students involved in the process of evaluating progress and achievement of objectives.

Punitive Grading is a mark deduction mechanism that significantly minimizes evidence of student achievement due to behaviours extrinsic to the “body of evidence” collected by a teacher.

Reasonable Body of Evidence is a set of summative assessments based upon the scope and sequence of the Program of Studies and is weighted according to the expectations in it.

Reliability is an assessment tool’s consistency of results over time and with different samples of students.

Reporting refers to the act of providing information at term-end or year-end through a report card and/or an Individual Program Plan about students’ achievement, progress, and growth.

Rubric is a set of criteria specifying the characteristics of a learning outcome and the levels of achievement in each characteristic.

Triangulation is the collection of data via multiple methods in order to determine if the results show a consistent outcome.

Validity: the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure.

Value added assessments: measures gains in student learning over time rather than absolute levels of achievement; value may be calculated solely upon test scores and/or factor in socioeconomic characteristics.

PROCEDURES

1. The main purpose of evaluation is to improve students’ learning.
2. The teacher, under the supervision of the Principal, is responsible for assessing, evaluating and reporting student achievement.
3. Achievement of curricular objectives must be measured in a manner consistent with the outcomes listed in Saskatchewan Learning Curricula. For those students with a modified or an adapted program, some grades may be based upon material that has been modified to meet the needs of an individual student.

Notwithstanding, guideline 3, community service, relevant to learning outcomes in a course may become part of a rubric or checklist assessment or may be imbedded within such diagnostic tools. This strategy is a valid goal for our Catholic schools since the productivity of work in a Catholic community is dedicated to the progress of the entire human community and not just for a student’s personal gain. Scoring that reflects the student’s contribution to

the progress of his or her learning community must be readily substantiated to students and parents.

4. Fair and accurate grades for students will be determined by assessment that is ongoing, and that involves multiple reporting strategies. Assessment is not to be based upon one testing mechanism, but rather upon a variety of methods including tests, learning logs, criterion based observations, performance tasks, projects, written, visual or oral reports, and rubric assessments. 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.
5. Formative evaluation (assessment for learning) provides minute-by-minute diagnostic information and as such, is not to be used in the calculation of a report card grade. Formative assessments are 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 readiness for summative evaluation.
6. During the first week of classes, teachers shall provide students and parents with a written syllabus of learning expectations and grading criteria in clear, easily understandable language, indicating how summative assessment throughout the grading period will be calculated into course grades. Teachers will discuss classroom assessment practices with students, in an age appropriate manner, at the beginning of instruction.
7. Students who know the purpose of an assessment are in a better position to respond in a successful manner. Students must be told why and how assessment information is being collected, how this information will be used in the grading process, and what criteria will be measured. Scoring guides, rubrics, benchmarks, exemplars, and detailed course outlines are essential.
8. Students must be provided with an opportunity to review performance assessments that have been collected by the teacher in establishing a grade to enable the student’s continuous improvement. Feedback to students must be presented in a manner that engenders self-confidence and a belief that they are capable learners.

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 evidences are demonstrating that individual students and/or groups of students are not meeting the learning expectations. As a general rule, if fifteen percent (15%) or more of a class have not met the learning requirements, this could trigger a need for re-teaching those students who have not met the acceptable standards.

9. Achievement of the curriculum outcomes in the Program of Studies must be the only basis for grades. The report card mark, which has been objectively substantiated, will indicate the success that the student has achieved in meeting the prescribed outcomes. Formal evaluation for reporting is used to judge how well the student has learned the prescribed knowledge, skills, and values. Extraneous and arbitrary factors such as effort, participation, attitude, work habits, attendance, and behavior are not to be used to determine a student’s grade. These characteristics, while being extremely important aspects of a student’s education, are to be evaluated and reported in a separate category on the report card.

10. If participation has been deemed to be a learning outcome in a program of studies, substantiation of participation must be clearly apparent to the student and weighting must be appropriate to curriculum expectations. Criteria which define participation at various performance levels must be provided to students.
11. Grading and reporting must always be done in reference to specified achievement targets, comparing students' performance against a standard rather than against other students in the class (on a curve).
12. Teachers must not assign zeros as a first recourse in evaluating students' work. Zeros clearly do not promote success, do not represent what students have learned, and do 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. A student's failure to submit work is a critical behavioral and discipline issue.
13. Teachers must establish fair and just appraisals of the accomplishments of students. Punitive grading does not meet the goal of evaluation and shall be considered an unacceptable and indefensible practice.
14. Students must have the right to appeal an assessment in any subject. 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 this appeal process fails, the student may request a hearing from the Office of the Director. The decision of the Director will be considered final. Teachers are required to respect the confidentiality of student evaluation records and must release information in accordance with FOIP regulations.

Reference: Sections 85, 87, 108, 109, 175, 231 Education Act
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Date Issued: November 21, 2007