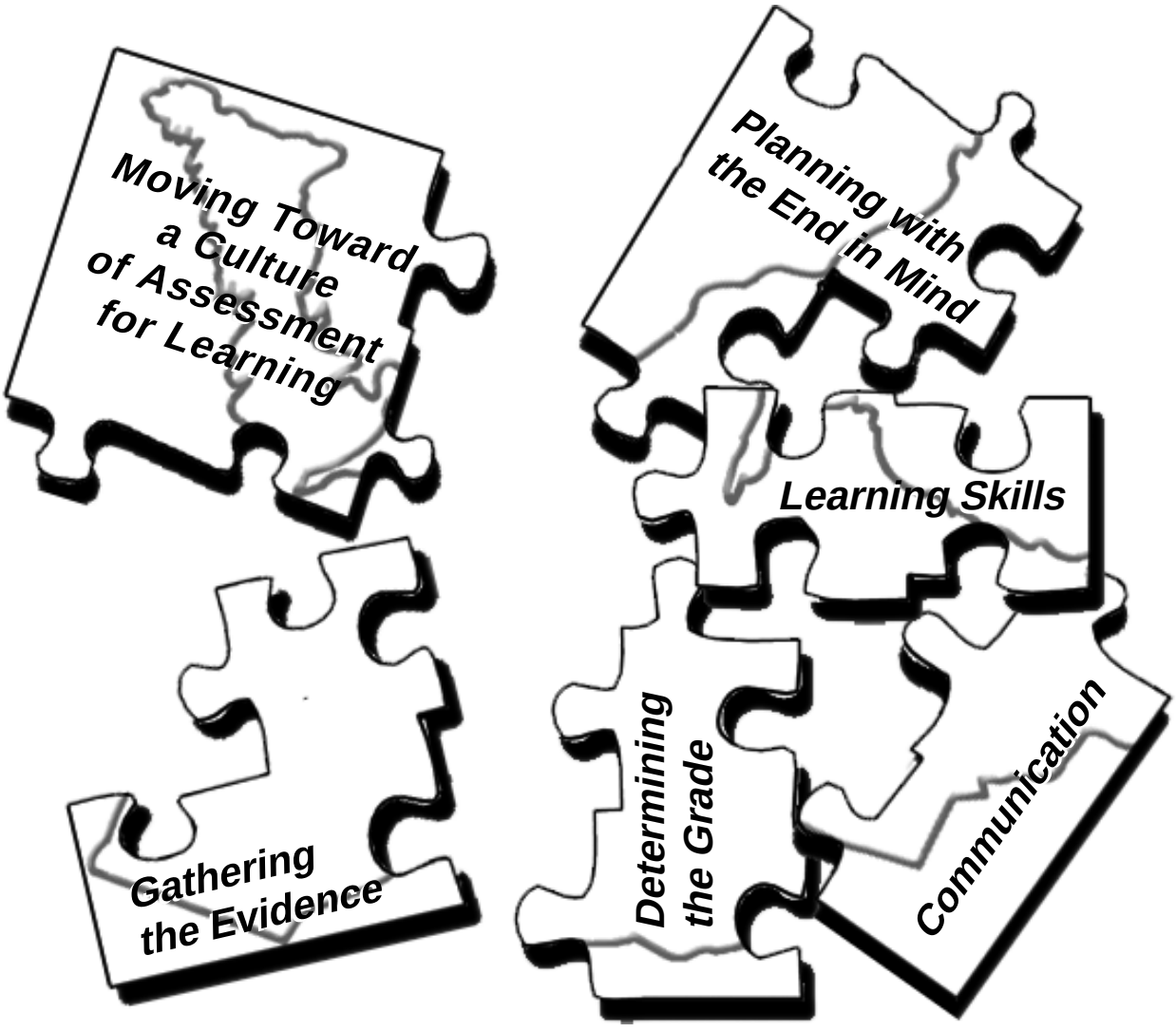
Assessment FOR Learning

Policy to Practice

Support Document for Implementing the
BWDSB Assessment and Evaluation Policy



Assessment for Learning

POLICY TO PRACTICE

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BWDSB Assessment and Evaluation Policy

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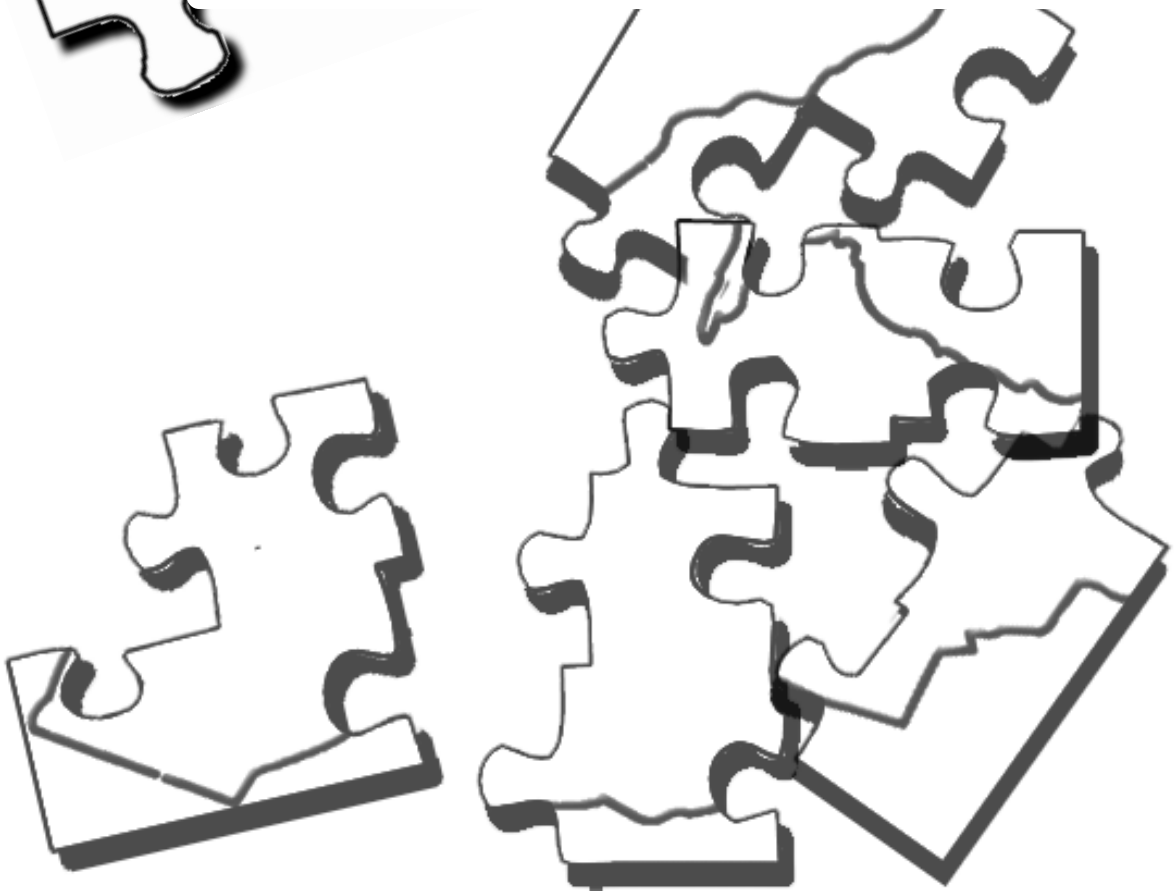
Assessment FOR Learning



Policy to Practice

Section 1:
Moving Toward a Culture of Assessment for Learning

"As educators, our job is to teach ourselves out of a job. By this I mean that we must take our students to a place where they don't need us anymore. Any students who leave school still needing to rely on their teachers to tell them that they have done well have not yet learned to hit the target, because they cannot see the quality of their own performance."

Stiggins, 2001.

Educators are encouraged to share the resources within this support document provided there is no cost to the recipient and acknowledgement is given to the source.

Bluewater District School Board, 2003.

director's comment

In the classroom, assessment refers to the collection of accurate data or information concerning students' skills, knowledge and attitudes. Evaluation refers to the application of professional judgement to that data. Together assessment and evaluation represent a critical component in the teaching and learning process.

This, of course, is not new. Teachers have long used effective assessment and evaluation strategies in Bluewater classrooms. What is new, I believe, is the currency of educational research and degree of sophistication of assessment and evaluation techniques and their applicability in terms of student learning.

A parallel to these developments in education can be seen in the medical field. A physician today will access a wide variety of tests and assessments as he or she collects data about a particular patient. Innovative and sophisticated technologies will be used and comparisons will be made to established health standards. At the same time, observation and low-tech information will be garnered. Only after all of the possible data have been considered will an evaluation or diagnosis be rendered.

In our classrooms, teachers are like those medical professionals. We use all of the assessment tools at hand, and invent new ones where necessary, to gather all of the data necessary to a solid evaluation or diagnosis. Following that evaluation, teaching practice will be informed and specific strategies selected for the student as the teaching and learning cycle continues.

The contents of this document are extremely valuable for use in classrooms and across our Bluewater system. I commend them to your reading and use.

The creation of a valuable tool such as this Assessment and Evaluation Support Document requires a significant commitment and effort from a talented group of people. Many thanks to all of those involved.

David Armstrong
Director of Education

acknowledgements

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- A special thank you to those on the working committee.

The committee as a whole would like to extend a special thank you to Gail Pletsch, John Diefenbaker Secondary School, for her time and expertise in producing this attractive and user-friendly support document.

The Bluewater District School Board would like to acknowledge and thank all educators across the province who contributed to the creation and production of the "Policy to Practice" teacher resource document. The document was distributed to school boards by the Council of Directors of Education (CODE) last year to support the implementation of provincial assessment policy. The "Policy to Practice" provincial resource document forms the basis of the Bluewater DSB *Assessment for Learning* resource document. Bluewater would also like to thank the members of the Kempenfelt Consortium of District School Boards for sharing their valuable assessment resources and ideas which have helped to contribute to the successful implementation of the Bluewater DSB *Assessment for Learning– Policy to Practice* resource document.

foreword

Bluewater District School Board is committed to moving towards a culture of "Assessment ***for*** Learning". Assessment must be embedded within the teaching and learning process. The focus must be continuous learning and improvement of student performance. This can be achieved by continually evaluating our assessment practices.

Teachers and principals will be supported in this movement through the understanding and application of the Guiding Principles outlined in Assessment and Evaluation Policy #6951D. One such support can be found in this document, *Assessment for Learning*. It will serve to guide educators as they work towards gaining expertise in assessing student achievement in the four categories of learning:

- knowledge and understanding of assessment;
- thinking and inquiry of assessment practices;
- communication with students and parents;
- applications and making connections to teaching and assessment practices.

This support document contains resources for implementing the Bluewater District School Board Assessment and Evaluation Policy for Kindergarten to Grade 12. The loose-leaf format will allow pages to be added as *Assessment for Learning* resources are rolled out throughout 2003-2004. The document has been divided into sections to support the various components of the *Assessment for Learning: Policy to Practice* document.

SECTION 1 — Introduction: *Moving Toward a Culture of Assessment for Learning*

a) BWDSB Policy
b) Seven Guiding Principles
c) Indicators of Assessment and Evaluation Literacy
d) Moving Toward a Culture of Assessment for Learning

SECTION 2 — *Planning with the End in Mind*

a) Introduction
b) Classroom Practice: Unpacking the Curriculum (Designing Down)
c) Accommodation and Modification
d) Frequently Asked Questions

SECTION 3 — *Gathering the Evidence*

a) Introduction
b) Four Categories of Learning
c) Levels of Achievement
d) Frequently Asked Questions
e) Understanding Assessment and Evaluation
f) The Roles of the Teacher and the Student
g) Planning Your Course Assessment and Evaluation
h) Teacher as Observer: Look, Listen, Interact
i) Understanding Assessment Methods, Strategies and Tools
j) Exemplar Resources

SECTION 4 ***Determining the Grade***

a) Introduction
b) Determining the Grade
c) Frequently Asked Questions

SECTION 5 ***Learning Skills***

a) Introduction
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   i. Learning Skills in the Elementary Grades
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c) Attendance, Punctuality and Submissions of Assignments
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SECTION 6 ***Communication***

a) Introduction: Policy Components (with Strategies)
b) Framework (Chart)
c) Criteria for Provincial Report Card – Bluewater Checklist

What is the primary purpose of assessment?

Bluewater District School Board
Assessment and Evaluation Policy

Bluewater District School Board has developed a policy for Assessment and Evaluation. This policy outlines best assessment practices. This document is intended to help teachers and administrators to be literate in assessment and evaluation and to demonstrate the guiding principles in their daily practice.

a) Assessment and Evaluation Policy

It is the policy of the BWDSB to use assessment and evaluation to improve student learning by:

- Providing a common set of guidelines about assessment and evaluation which will promote high quality assessment and evaluation practices in all classrooms and programs throughout the Board;
- Supporting educators in using assessment and evaluation data effectively for decision making at the classroom, program, school and board level;
- Informing parents and guardians about the assessment and evaluation process;
- Providing professional development to enable teachers and administrators to become literate in assessment and evaluation as outlined in the Guiding Principles and Indicators of Assessment and Evaluation Literacy which follow.

b) The 7 Guiding Principles

The guiding principles set out in the Bluewater District School Board Assessment and Evaluation Policy are:

1. **The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning**.

Assessments should engage, motivate and inspire learners to aspire to academic excellence. Ongoing classroom assessment must be an integral part of day-to-day instruction and provide evidence of achievement relative to the expectations outlined in the Ontario Curriculum or the student's Individual Education Plan. To support success, teachers must monitor student progress and use assessment information to make decisions regarding how they will modify their instructional strategies and resources. As key users of assessment information, successful students should engage in self-assessment and use the information to track their achievement, identify their strengths and needs, and plan the next steps in their learning.

2. **Assessment and evaluation data is used to adapt program and teaching practice to improve student performance.**

Assessment information will guide teachers when developing lessons and designing units of study. Formative assessment will help both the teacher and student understand the strengths and weaknesses of the student across all achievement chart categories and his/her readiness for summative assessment of their overall learning.

3. **Assessment and evaluation practices are fair and equitable for all students.**

Students must know and understand the criteria and the methods that will be used to assess and evaluate their achievement. There should be no surprises for the students. Teachers must use assessment strategies designed to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate the full extent of their learning. If we do not allow students to demonstrate their learning in ways that best suit their learning styles and preferences, we may not see what the students really know and can do. When assessment practices are flexible and varied, all students (including those students with special needs) will have an opportunity to demonstrate their learning.

4. Feedback to students about assessment and evaluation is ongoing, clear and meaningful.

Timely information about the purpose, nature and use of assessment results must be communicated to students and parents. When teachers use a variety of ways to communicate this information and request feedback from parents, they increase the likelihood that the message has been understood. Individual student assessment information is truly meaningful when it results in students and parents having a clearer understanding of what the student knows and is able to do, and what he/she needs to learn to do next. By fostering student ownership for this communication process, teachers can reinforce the students' use of self-assessment, goal setting and communication skills needed for life-long learning.

5. Professional development and collaboration support assessment and evaluation.

Teachers and principals who are life-long learners and reflective practitioners, understand the critical role of assessment and engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their assessment expertise. Through activities such as discussing performance standards, leveling student work and selecting exemplars, educators develop a shared understanding of the expectations and increase consistency and accuracy in assessing and interpreting student performance.

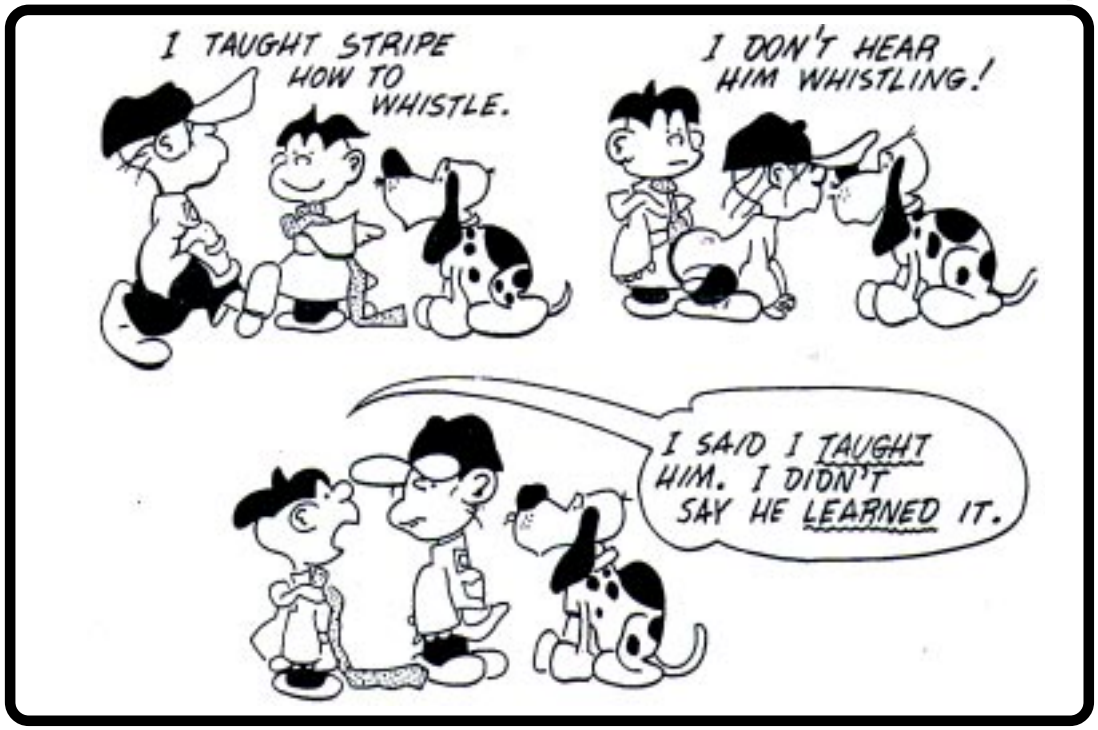
6. Partners in education are aware of and involved in the assessment and evaluation process.

Increased understanding and commitment to excellence in assessment occurs when parents and other partners are provided with opportunities to discuss assessment instruments and practices. The accuracy and impact of assessment is increased when teachers, students and colleagues develop a clear vision of what quality work looks like. When all partners work together to take steps to support all students, we increase the likelihood that all students will achieve the curriculum expectations.

7. Assessment and evaluation practices are regularly reviewed and refined.

The accuracy, efficiency and effectiveness of assessment practices should be reviewed and refined when necessary and appropriate in order to improve student achievement. Professional development related to assessment should be regularly reviewed to determine its impact on the quality of classroom assessment.

Adapted from York Region District School Board



(Source unknown.)

REFLECTION — Where am I now?

c) Indicators of Assessment and Evaluation Literacy

Indicators of assessment and evaluation supporting the guiding principles will be evident when teachers and administrators practice the following:

- Focus on a sequence of planning that begins with expectations in The Ontario Curriculum;
- Align assessment and evaluation with the grade level expectation specified in The Ontario Curriculum or the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP);
- collect sufficient, valid and reliable information to make informed decisions about program and instruction;
- Include goals related to the assessment and evaluation of students in school action plans;
- Use provincial and Bluewater District School Board assessment data to assist students in developing skills that will enable them to demonstrate their knowledge;
- Develop a formative and summative assessment and evaluation plan as part of each course outline or unit plan;
- Ensure that all evaluation is based on the Levels of Achievement as specified in the Ontario Curriculum;
- Use a wide range of assessment and evaluation methods that are appropriate to the four Categories of Learning and to the Levels of Achievement;
- Create rich performance tasks using Ministry exemplar resource documents as a model and identify local samples of exemplars;
- Minimize/control all cultural, racial, ethnic, gender and socioeconomic bias that can lead to inaccurate assessment and evaluation;
- Determine the learning needs of students through diagnostic assessment in order to plan program;
- Involve students as partners in goal-setting, assessment, self and peer assessment, record keeping and communication;
- Ensure that students are aware of expectations and criteria prior to the assessment;
- Assess learning needs within the context of the students' daily classroom investigations in order to build on (scaffold) student learning;
- Provide students with feedback and strategies to improve their performance;
- Ensure that all four Categories of Learning as specified in the Ontario Curriculum are reflected in the report card grade;
- Communicate assessment and evaluation information effectively (i.e. report cards, portfolios, conferences, other written and oral communication); and,
- Share their expertise and routinely engage in teamwork focused on improving student learning.

d) Moving Toward a Culture of Assessment for Learning

The overall goal of Elementary and Secondary Education is to have all students graduate from Secondary School with a high school diploma or certificate. The overall goal of every teacher is to foster a standard of excellence that can be attained when a love of learning is shared by educators and students. To assist in achieving this goal, teachers must learn to use assessment to improve student learning, in part by informing teacher practice.

Suggestions on how to use assessment to improve student learning:

1. Examine school results from provincial assessments and incorporate into the school plan exact methods to address weaknesses shown by the students in these assessments.

2. Examine school results from District assessments to incorporate change into class/grade level programming.

3. Use class assessments to develop anchors/exemplars of level three answers.

4. Allow students to redo, retake, retry, whenever possible.

5. Use class assessments to examine how well the material was taught.

6. Use class assessments to delineate missing skills that prevent demonstrating knowledge of the essential outcomes.

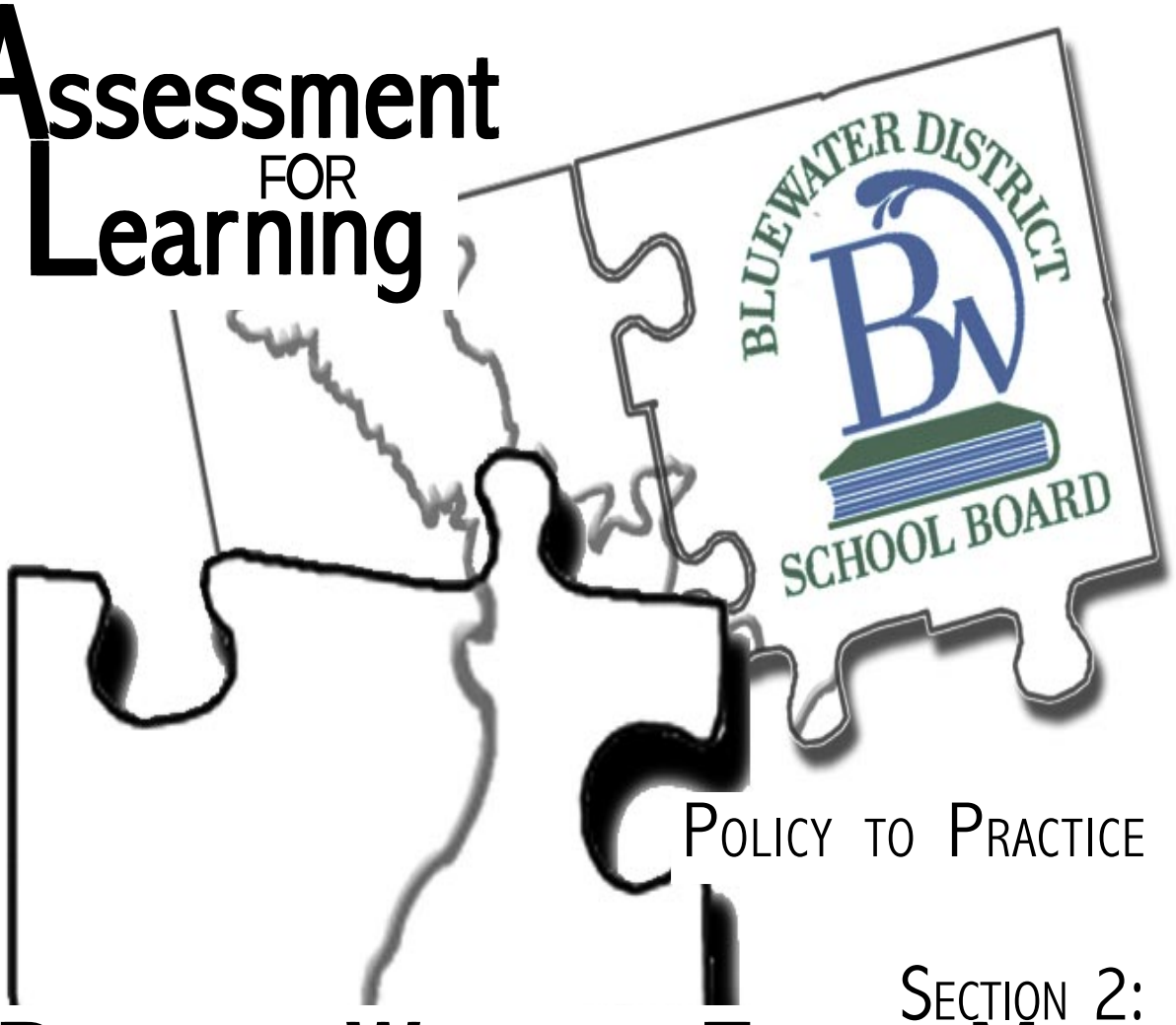
7. Use assessment to improve, not just audit, student performance.

8. Use assessment to improve, not just audit, student performance on learning skills.

9. Give clear, high quality feedback.

10. Use formal and informal reading assessment.

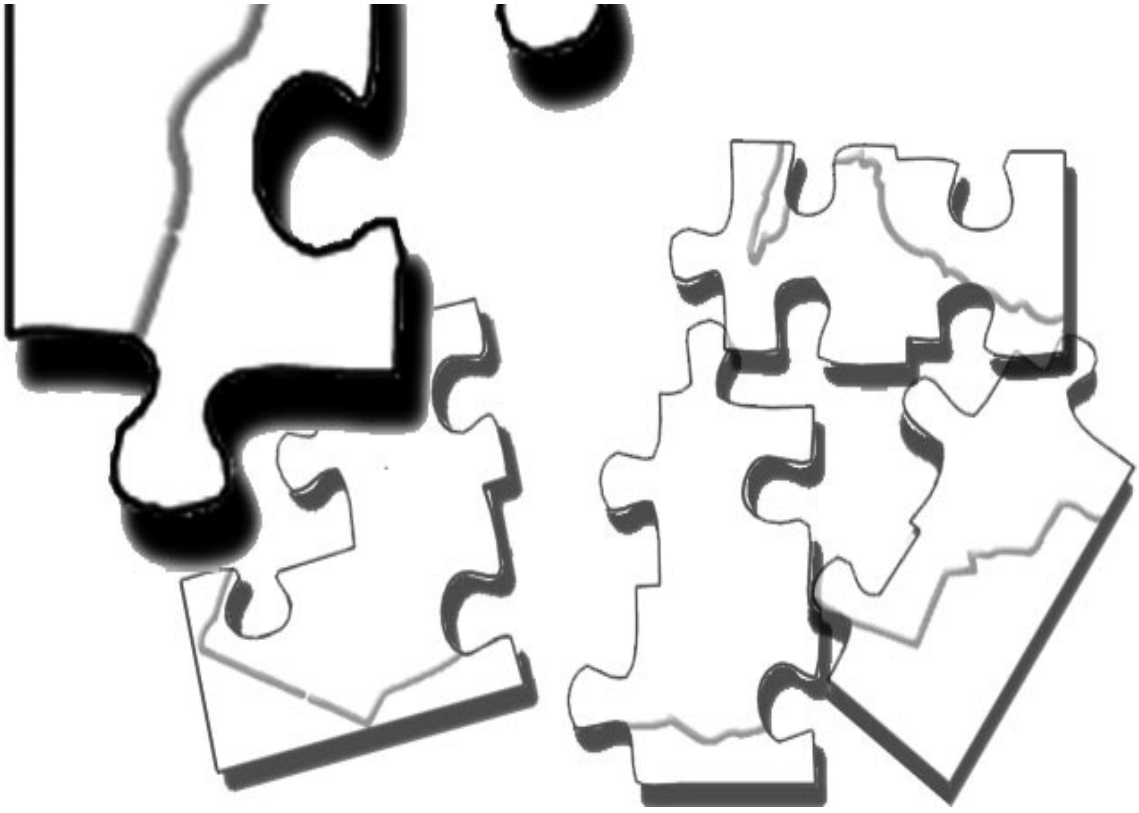
Assessment FOR Learning



Policy to Practice

Section 2:

Planning With the End in Mind



a) Introduction

The overall and specific expectations for any course or program are multiple in nature and vary in importance. Teachers must examine the overall expectations and from them determine the enduring understandings. The enduring understandings are those which students will carry with them beyond an individual grade or course of study. They need to be described in a personal and relevant context from the point of view of the student. These enduring understandings reside in the heart of the curriculum and drive the planning and assessment process.

b) Classroom Practice: Planning With the End in Mind

Information in this section of the resource document will assist teachers in planning their course assessments and evaluations. "Planning With the End in Mind" or "Designing Down" provides the teacher with a step-by-step approach using a list of questions as a guide to identify desired results, to determine acceptable evidence and to plan learning experiences.

When planning the teacher needs to ask...

- What are the enduring understandings?
- What evidence do I need to gather to show that the students have attained the enduring understandings?
- Why do I need to gather the evidence?
- How will I gather the evidence?
- How will I communicate and report on the evidence gathered?
- What do I need to think about throughout the process of gathering the evidence?

Design - (VB)
To have purposes and intentions; to plan and execute.

— OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY

Communication Strategies

Teacher
What do I need to think about through the process of gathering the evidence?

Teacher
What evidence do I need to gather?

Planning With the End in Mind

Determining the Grade

IMPROVED LEARNING

Teacher
Why do I need to gather the evidence?

Teacher
How will I communicate and report on the evidence?

Teacher
How will I gather the evidence?

Gathering the Evidence

"Understanding by Design" Checklist

Identify Desired *Results*

- ✓ Cluster expectations in the unit or strand.
- ✓ Title the clusters.
- ✓ Write a statement that articulates the Enduring Understanding in each cluster.
- ✓ Write an Essential Question that involves thinking, is provocative, has more than one right answer and can be asked over and over again throughout the unit.
- ✓ Write guiding questions that build toward being able to answer the Essential Questions.

Determine Acceptable *Evidence*

Determine the body of assessment evidence that will allow students to demonstrate the desired learnings. This evidence also needs to enable clear communication among all stakeholders and to act as a planning guide for subsequent teaching and learning.

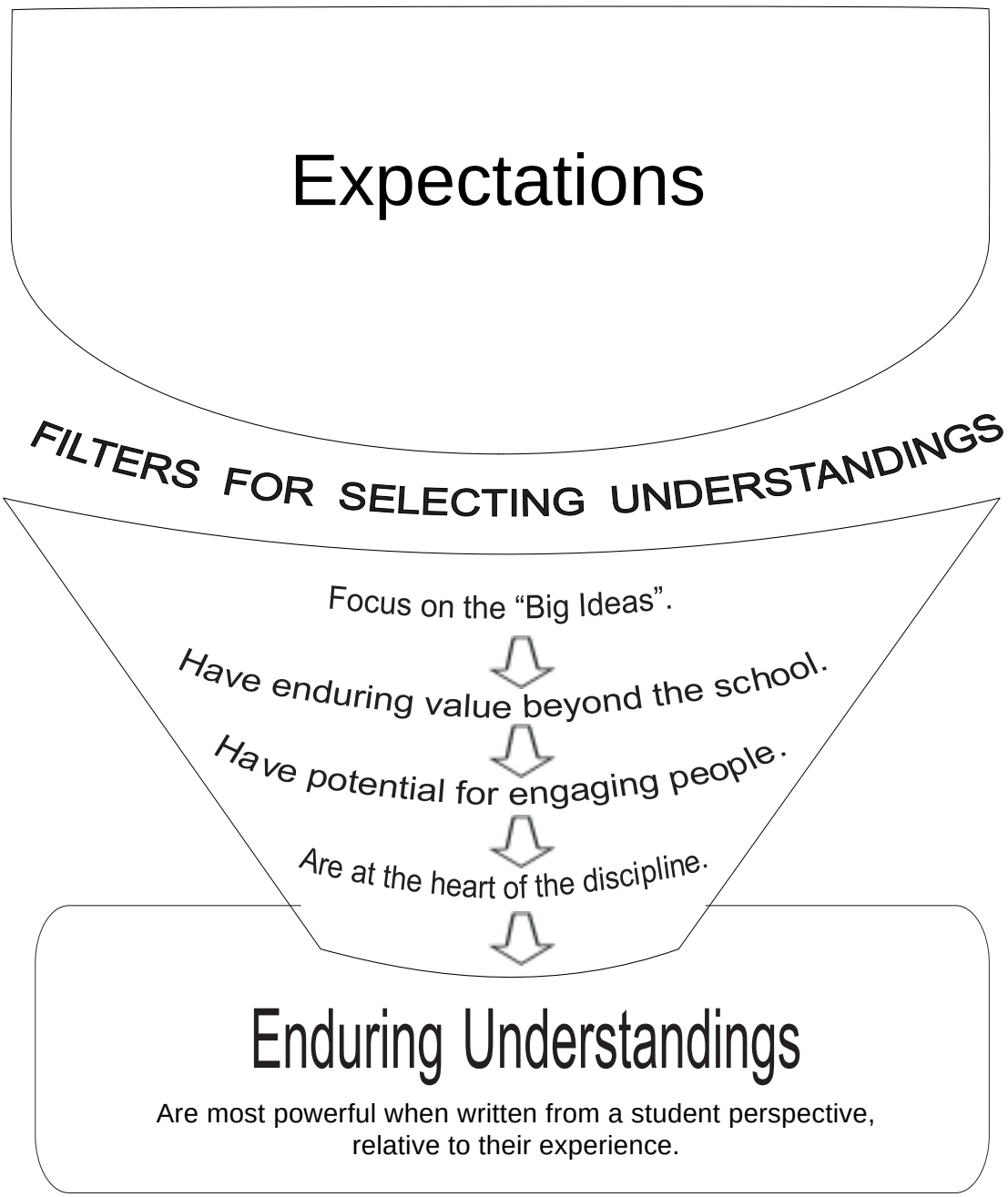
- ✓ Determine the performance task and other summative pieces of assessment.
- ✓ Determine the formative pieces of assessment.
- ✓ Determine methods to assess prior knowledge at the beginning of the unit.

Plan Learning *Experiences*

- ✓ What will need to be taught and coached, and how should it best be taught, in light of the performance goals?
- ✓ Choices about teaching methods are made after the desired results and assessments are identified.

— adapted from Wiggins and McTighe

Planning With the End in Mind



Essential Question

- ✓ Is asked continuously throughout the unit.
- ✓ Leads towards enduring understandings.

Essential Question

- ✓ Provides direction and focus for the learning experience.
- ✓ Serves as criteria for determining the level of learning.

Essential Question

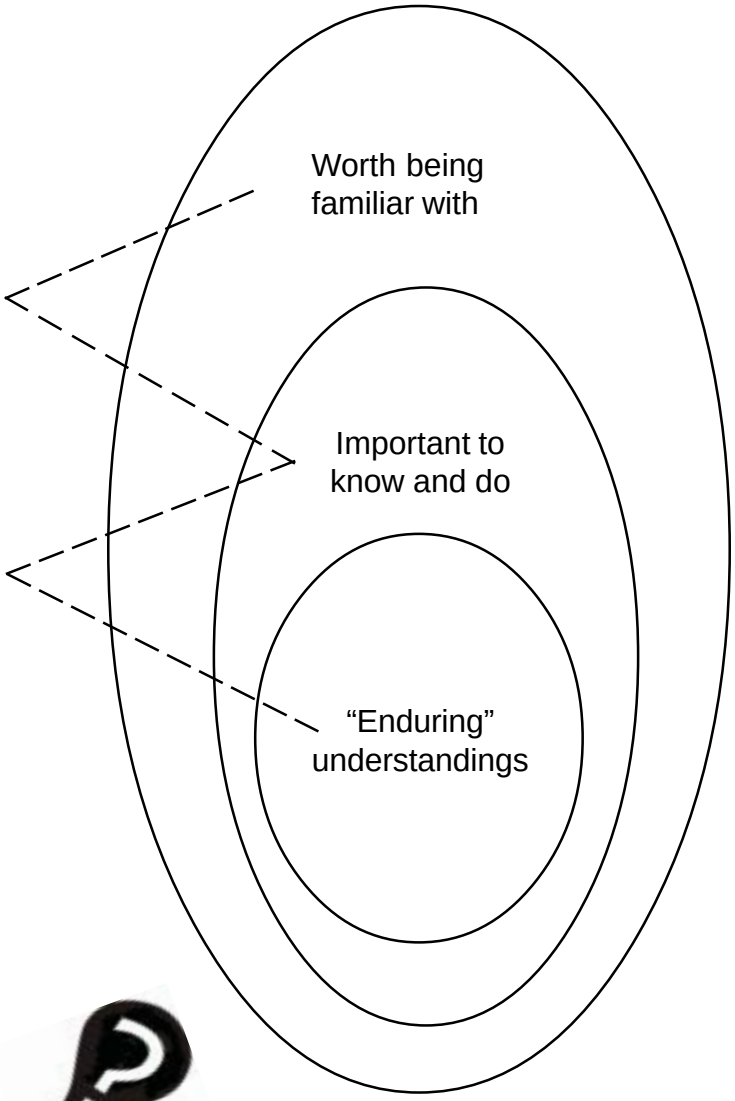
- ✓ Leads to meaningful assessment.
- ✓ Demands rich demonstration of learning.

Identifying Desired Results and Assessment Methods and Strategies

Assessment Types

Traditional quizzes and tests
- ✓ Paper / pencil
  - Selected-response
  - Constructed-response

Performance tasks and projects
- ✓ Open-ended
- ✓ Complex
- ✓ Authentic



Reflection —

With all the expectations in this course, how do I filter them to get to the heart of what is really important for my students to learn?

Planning With the End in Mind

Grade Five Social Studies

Overview

The study of heritage and citizenship in Grade 5 focuses on early civilizations. Students investigate the importance of the environment in shaping these civilizations and identify how various human needs (e.g. food, shelter) were met. They investigate and describe the influence of early civilizations on modern society (e.g. with respect to science, technology, language, art, and government).

Overall Expectations

By the end of Grade 5, students will:

- identify ways in which the natural environment shaped the culture of various early civilizations;
- identify physical and social needs of people in early civilizations and compare the ways in which these needs were met;
- describe how the knowledge developed by early civilizations has affected modern society.

FILTERS FOR SELECTING UNDERSTANDINGS

Focus on the "Big Ideas".

Have enduring value beyond the school.

Have potential for engaging people.

Are at the heart of the discipline.

Enduring Understandings

- the environment affected how and where people lived long ago
- how people lived long ago affects how I live today

Essential Question

1. How have early civilizations affected modern society?

Remember that an "essential question" needs to be significant enough to lead to meaningful learning and assessment.

Essential Question

2. How did the environment affect how and where people lived and interacted with each other?

Planning With the End in Mind

Grade Nine Geography Applied
CGC 1P
Overview of Course

Geography is an integrative subject that brings a variety of perspectives, both social and physical, to the study of people, places, and environments around the world. Knowing where physical, social, or political events or processes occur helps students gain a spatial perspective on them. Understanding the processes that shape the earth and knowing how life-forms interact with the environment allow them to view events from an ecological perspective. Historic and economic perspectives help students understand the relationship between people and their environments, as well as interactions that occur among groups of people. Studying geography, students receive practical guidance for decision making and problem solving in geographic planning, economic development, and environmental and resource management. As the world's economics become increasingly interdependent, as pressures on the world's resources mount, and as concerns about issues such as global warming, urbanization, and population growth escalate, people need to become geographically literate and able to make informed judgements about environmental and social issues. The Grade 9 Geography of Canada course provides students with a foundation in this essential area of learning.

Global Connections
Overall Expectations

By the end of the course, students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of the connections between different parts of Canada, and between Canada and other countries (e.g. migration, cultural activities, foreign ownership, trade, aid programs);
- explain how Canada's diverse geography affects its economic, cultural, and environmental links to other countries;
- produce research reports on global concerns that affect Canadians (e.g., wilderness protection, economic impact of globalization).

FILTERS FOR SELECTING UNDERSTANDINGS

Focus on the "Big Ideas".

Have enduring value beyond the school.

Have potential for engaging people.

Are at the heart of the discipline.

Remember that an "essential question" needs to be significant enough to lead to meaningful learning and assessment.

Enduring Understandings

- ✓ The geography of where I live impacts on my life (e.g. transportations, communication, economy, clothing, culture, recreation).

Essential Question	Essential Question	Essential Question
1. How does Canada's diverse geography affect its internal relationships?	2. How do global concerns affect Canada's growth and development?	3. How does Canada's diverse geography affect its relationships within the global community?

Now that I have identified the enduring understandings...

What evidence do I need to gather?

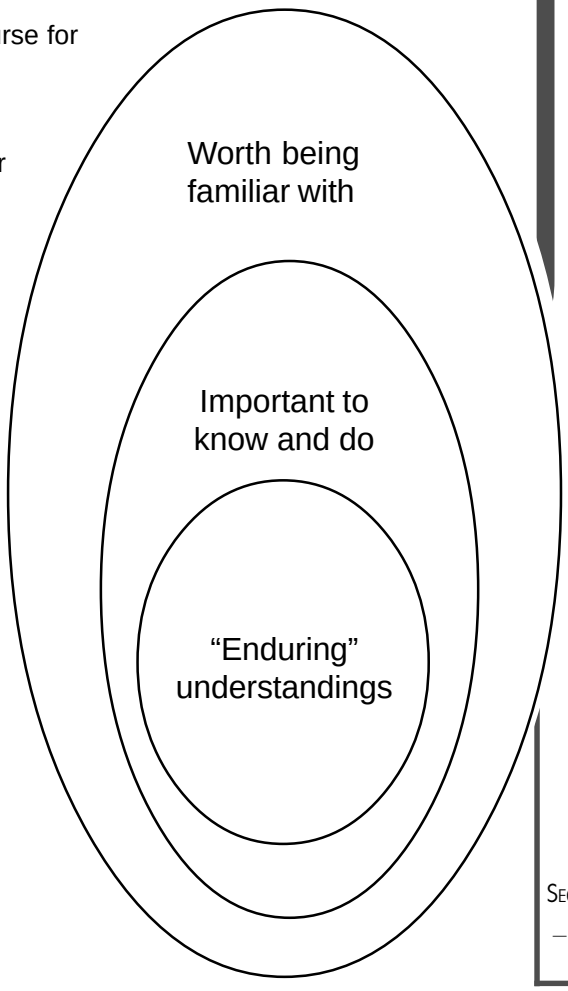
Consider the following.

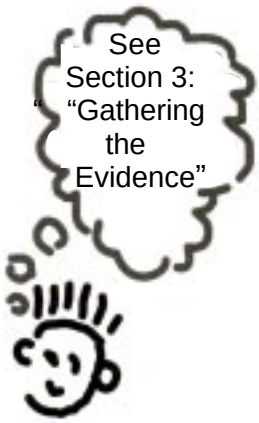
- What do students need to know and be able to do at the end of the lesson, unit, term and/or course (based on the provincial curriculum document)?
- What cluster of curriculum expectations are being addressed?
- How do the cluster of curriculum expectations relate to:
  - what resides at the heart of the subject/discipline and the underlying focus, goal, or purpose of the curriculum for the course?
  - the overall expectations or key learnings?
  - the achievement chart categories?
- What will the learning look like? What will the students write, say, or do to provide evidence that they know and can do what is expected?

Why do I need to gather the evidence?

Consider the following.

- What is the purpose of gathering the evidence?
  - to determine students' achievement of the curriculum expectations or their learning skills development.
  - to assess or evaluate students' achievement.
  - to provide for diagnostic, formative or summative evidence.
- When will I gather the evidence?
  - at the beginning of the unit/course for diagnostic purposes.
  - throughout the unit/course for formative purposes.
  - at the end of the unit/course for summative purposes.
- Are there sufficient and varied opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning?





See Sections...
2c: “Accommodations and Modifications”
3: “Gathering the Evidence”
5: “Learning Skills

“It’s not teaching that causes learning. Attempts by the learner to perform cause learning, dependent on the quality of feedback and the opportunities to use it.”

(Grant Wiggins)

How will I gather the evidence?

Consider the following.

- What type of evidence needs to be gathered? (i.e., written evidence, performance evidence and/or oral evidence)
- What assessment method will gather evidence that is valid and reliable? (i.e., paper pencil tasks, performance tasks, and/or personal communication tasks)
- What type of assessment task will provide students with the best opportunity to practice and demonstrate their learning?
- What type of assessment tool is appropriate to the evidence (related to the curriculum expectations and the achievement chart) that is being gathered?
- What is sufficient and revealing evidence of learning?
- What resources are necessary?
- Who will gather the evidence? (i.e., self / peer / external /teacher)
- What modifications and/or accommodations need to be considered for exceptional students?
- How will student achievement and/or learning skills be tracked over time?
- Does the plan for gathering evidence link to the learning experiences and instructional strategies?

How will I communicate and report on the evidence gathered?

Consider the following.

- With whom do I need to communicate the results of the evidence gathered?
  - students
  - parents/guardians
  - other teachers

Before gathering the evidence:

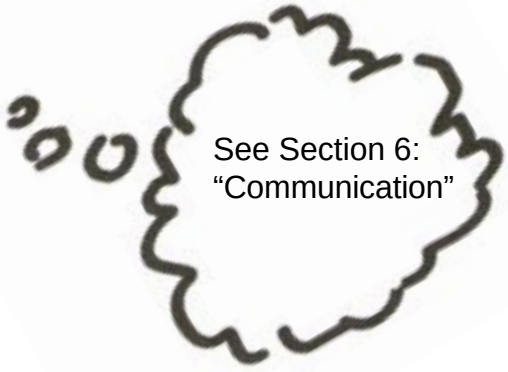
- Ensure that students understand what they need to know and be able to do.
- Set clear targets by providing students with:
  - detailed course outlines;
  - clearly explained assessment tasks; and
  - examples of student work that represent various levels of achievement.
- Involve students in the development of assessment tasks and tools.

During the process of gathering the evidence, ask yourself:

- Am I telling students what they are doing well and what they must do to improve?
- Are parents consulted on an on-going basis?

After the evidence has been gathered, ask yourself:

- What should I communicate to students and parents?
- Have I used a suitable method to arrive at a final grade?
- Have I commented appropriately on each student's performance?



> "As life provides second (and more) chances, so should school."
>
> (O'Connor, 1999)

> "Successful learning depends on adjustments in response to feedback; no task worth mastering can be done right in the first try."
>
> (Grant Wiggins)

Stage 1 – Identify Desired Results

Enduring Understandings:

What are the enduring understandings the students will carry with them beyond this unit? These enduring understandings reside in the heart of the curriculum and drive the planning and assessment process. They need to be described in a personal and relevant context from the point of view of the student.

Essential Question(s):

- What are the "big ideas" ?
- What questions will foster understanding and allow students to apply their learning?
- What misunderstandings are predictable?

Students will know… *Students will be able to…*

- What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?
- What should they eventually be able to do as a result of such knowledge and skill?

Stage 2 – Determine Acceptable Evidence

Performance Task(s):

- Through what authentic performance task will a student demonstrate the desired understandings?
- By what criteria will "performances of understanding" be judged"?

Other Evidence:

- Through what other evidence (e.g. quizzes, test, academic prompts, observations, journals, etc.) will students demonstrate achievement of the desired results?
- How will students reflect upon and self-assess their learning?

Stage 3 – Plan Learning Activities

Learning Activities:

- What learning experiences and instruction will enable students to achieve the desired results? How will the design –
    - help the students know where the unit is going and what is expected.
    - hook all students and hold their interest.
    - equip students, help them experience the key ideas, and explore the issues.
    - provide opportunities to rethink and revise their understandings and work.
    - allow students to evaluate their work and its implications.
    - be tailored (personalized) to the different needs, interests, abilities of learners.
    - be organized to maximize initial and sustained engagement as well as effective learning.

Adapted from ASCD, Wiggins and McTighe, 2002.

Template: "Planning With the End in Mind" Guiding Questions

Stage 1 – Identify Desired Results

Enduring Understandings:

Essential Question(s):

-

Students will know…

-

Students will be able to…

Stage 2 – Determine Acceptable Evidence

Performance Task(s):

-

Other Evidence:

-

Stage 3 – Plan Learning Activities

Learning Activities:

-

Adapted from ASCD, Wiggins and McTighe, 2002.

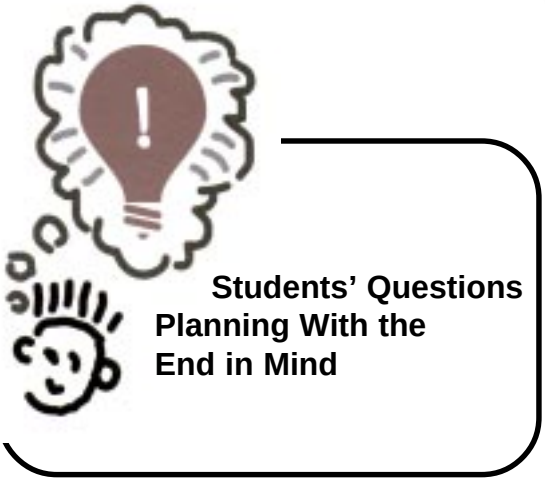
Assessment Plan

Grade 2 Structures and Mechanisms

Structures have a specific form and function that relates directly to the forces they are designed to withstand. Mechanisms use, create or transfer motion to perform a specific function.

Enduring Understanding	Summative		Formative				Diagnostic
The various ways objects move can be grouped and classified.	Making a toy.		Journal	BLM 2.2.1			BLM 2.1.1
Mechanisms (e.g. wheel and axle, lever, hinges) create and transfer.	Making a toy.		BLM 2.4.1	BLM 2.6.1	Pulleys	BLM 2.11.1	BLM 2.1.1
Forces (e.g. gravity, friction) can start, stop or alter the movement of mechanisms.	Making a toy.		Journal	Move a load	Machines	BLM 2.7.1	BLM 2.1.1
The inquiry process begins by identifying a need and developing testable questions.	Making a toy.		BLM 2.10.1	BLM 2.12.2			
The design process uses pre-planning based on scientific concepts to build something useful.	Making a toy.		BLM 2.6.1	Pulley		BLM 2.11.1	
Answers are based on observations and communicated in an appropriate way.	Making a toy.		Journal	Journal	Pulley		

Reporting	Learning



What do I need to know and be able to do?

Why do I need to know and be able to do this?

When do I need to show what I've learned?

How will I demonstrate what I know and can do?

How will I know how well I've done?

What do I need to to do next?

c) Accommodations and Modifications

If the purpose of assessment is to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and thereby improve their learning, then it is incumbent upon teachers to allow students the best possible means of demonstrating their learning. We need a clarification of terms to speak a common language.

Very rarely do the curriculum expectations deal with learning within a specified amount of time or with memorization of things such as mathematical or scientific formulae. Thus, providing students with additional time or a printed list of formulae or a calculator does not affect the student's achievement of the curriculum expectations.

Accommodations refer to the teaching strategies, supports and/or services that are required in order for the student to access the curriculum and demonstrate learning. Accommodations do not alter the provincial learning expectations for the grade level (i.e. accommodations do not affect the integrity of the course).

Key Features of Accommodations

- Accommodation to process could include such things as recorded books, a reading buddy, or a mathematics grid.
- Accommodation to product could include such things as an oral report, group presentation or illustrated project.
- Accommodation to evaluation could include such things as providing additional time, oral testing or open-book testing.
- Accommodation to environment could include such things as providing preferred seating or study carrel.
- Accommodations may include assistive technology such as text reader, voice recognition software or text scanner.

Consider the metaphor of a house: redecorating, rearranging furniture, installing ramps or handholds, no-slip mats, safety system; that is, enhancing or improving without structural changes.

Modifications refer to the changes made to the grade-level expectations from the Ontario Curriculum for a subject or course in order to meet the needs of the student. Modifications are necessary when the regular curriculum is inappropriate to the level of the student's abilities. Modified expectations may be drawn from a grade below the current placement, and/or may include significant changes to the number and/or complexity of the grade-level expectations. They will be outlined in the IEP and will include the knowledge and skills in a particular subject or course at a specific grade level.

"A representative sample of the student's learning expectations in each subject, course or skill area must be recorded in the IEP. Learning expectations need not be recorded in the IEP if the student is working on provincial curriculum expectations at the regular grade level."

(*Individual Education Plans*, Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 10)

Key Features of Modifications

- Modification to expectations – significantly below grade level.
- Modification to focus of instruction – functional academics or essential skills.
- Degree of modification – consider duration, intensity and frequency. (Ask yourself, "What's the DIFFERENCE?" – how does this child's program differ in intensity over time?)

Consider the metaphor of a house: restructuring, moving walls, adding a room; that is, changing the look or function of some or all of the structure.

(From ETFO, *Special Education in the Regular Classroom*, Winter, 2003)

Transfer of Information: Recommended Best Practices — Information Sharing?

When students require accommodations and/or modifications to improve and demonstrate their learning, it is imperative that a description of the accommodations and/or modifications travel with the student to the next grade or school. For students who are formally identified, or who have an IEP (Individual Education Plan), the information about accommodations and modifications is included in the IEP, which is reviewed at least annually. For students who require only accommodations or who don't have an IEP, a Bluewater District School Board Program Plan (see Section 2 Appendix) should be used to record the accommodations required for success. Both the IEP and the Program Plan need to be discussed, developed and shared with parents. IEPs and Program Plans are also stored in the OSR (Ontario Student Record). Each of the student's teachers must have a copy of the IEP or Program Plan.

How will I know when accommodations are required?

Each student should receive accommodations, whenever necessary, to allow him/her to demonstrate his/her achievement of the expectations, if they improve the student's learning.

Accommodations are listed in an IEP or Program Plan, but for the student without an IEP or a Program Plan the following should be considered.

Are my methods accurately assessing what I see in class?
When teachers reflect on their assessment practices, they realize there are some students who perform better on informal classroom assessments than more formal summative assessments. Sometimes student achievement is limited by the time available, for example, on a paper and pencil assessment. Accommodations may be required to accurately assess student achievement of the expectations by providing additional time.

If continuous learning and improvement of student performance doesn't occur, teachers need to reflect on their instructional and assessment practices, and determine if the student requires accommodations to demonstrate his/her achievement. If a teacher observes that there is a significant discrepancy between what the student knows based on class discussion, informal conferences, etc. and his/her achievement on formal assessments, then accommodations should be considered.

Effective teachers consistently provide accommodations in the classroom to meet the needs of every student. Teachers need to use professional judgement in determining the extent of the accommodations necessary for every student to be successful. When *extensive* accommodations are necessary a Program Plan should be developed in consultation with the school resource team, student and parents.

Grading:

Providing accommodations does not affect the determination of the student's grade.

Accommodations may be provided in any of the following three areas:

- Environment (e.g. quiet workspace, minimize distractions)
- Instruction (e.g. use of computer, modeling, graphic organizers, pre-teaching vocabulary
- Assessment and Evaluation (e.g. scribing, quiet workspace, paraphrasing directions, prompting, cueing)

Assessment Accommodations:

Setting

- Individual or small group setting in a separate location or familiar space
- Individual study carrels
- Preferential seating within the regular classroom
- Special lighting
- Assistive devices or adaptive equipment (keyboarding, computer)

Timing

- Additional time
- Periodic supervised breaks
- Prompts to draw the student's attention back to the assessment

Presentation and Test Format

- Repetition of instruction
- Paraphrase instructions or questions
- Cueing
- Oral reading of questions
- Text to voice software (e.g. Kurzweil)
- Audio version
- Altering the types of question format used (e.g. comparison essay vs. comparison chart)

For a more extensive list of accommodations or to test your knowledge of accommodations and modifications, refer to the Section 2 appendix.

- Reducing the choices in a paper and pencil multiple choice test
- Providing additional choice (e.g. write one of three essays)
- Increasing emphasis on performance tasks options

Response Format

- Extra space for written responses
- Text to voice software (e.g. “Dragon Naturally Speaking”)
- Scribing
- Oral response

Modifications:

If a student is not consistently demonstrating limited (Level One) achievement of the grade level learning expectations, even with accommodations as outlined in the Program Plan, modifications may be required. The student must be referred to the school resource team for determining the best course of action to help the student learn.
Next steps may include:

- Revisions to the Program Plan
- Collecting and collating additional data (e.g. OSR review, results of CTCS (Canadian Test of Cognitive Skills), CAT (Canadian Achievement Test) scores, report card data)
- Consultation with and/or referral to Student Services support staff, (e.g. speech and language assessment)
- Development of an IEP

Grading and Reporting:

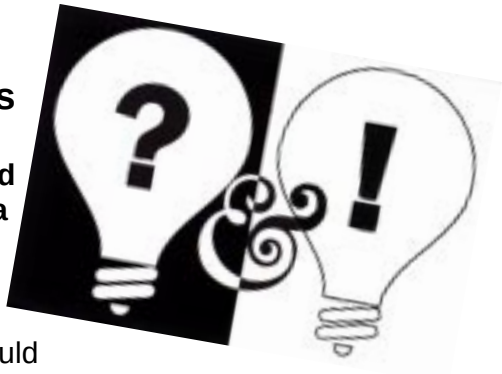
If the student has only a Program Plan, the IEP box on the provincial report card is not checked. **IF THE STUDENT HAS AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN THAT PERTAINS TO A PARTICULAR SUBJECT OR COURSE, THEN THE IEP BOX MUST BE CHECKED FOR THAT PARTICULAR SUBJECT OR COURSE REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT THE IEP CONTAINS ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS.**

Guide to the Provincial Report Card Grades 1-8

If the student has an IEP that applies to a particular strand/subject, check the IEP box for that subject. If the expectations in the IEP are based on *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8* **BUT VARY FROM THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE REGULAR PROGRAM FOR THE GRADE, THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT MUST APPEAR** in the Strengths/Weaknesses/Next Steps section: “The (grade/mark) for (strand/subject) is based on achievement of the expectations in the IEP, which vary from the Grade ___ expectations.”
In instances where expectations are not drawn from *The Ontario Curriculum ,* a student’s progress may be reported on the report card or in a different format (e.g., IEP, anecdotal). In very few instances, where none of the expectations in *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8* form the basis of the student’s program, an alternative format may be used to record achievement (i.e. the DL (Developmental Learning) report card). Indicate the student’s achievement relative to the expectations identified in the IEP, and comment on strengths, weaknesses and next steps. The use of the Provincial Report Card response form (i.e. page 3) is recommended for student/parent use wherever possible.

If some of the student's learning expectations for a course are modified from the curriculum expectations, but the student is working towards a credit for the course, it is sufficient simply to check the IEP box. If, however, the student's learning expectations are modified to such an extent that the principal deems that a credit will not be granted for the course (see section 7.12 of *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12*: *Program and Diploma Requirements,1999*) or if the expectations are alternatives to the curriculum expectations, the following statement must be included in the "Comments" section (along with comments about the student's achievement): "This percentage grade is based on achievement of the expectations specified in the IEP, which differ significantly from the curriculum expectations for the course."

If the student is not working towards a credit in the course, enter a zero (0) in the "Credit Earned" column.



Accommodations and Modifications FAQs

1. **Is an IPRC (Identification, Placement and Review Committee) process required for a student to receive accommodations?**
   No. Any student to whom any accommodation would allow him/her to better demonstrate his/her knowledge of the curriculum expectations should be given the accommodation. We want the student to demonstrate his/her learning to the best of his/her ability.

2. **Is an IPRC (Identification, Placement and Review Committee) process required for a student to receive modifications?**
   No – but a student must have an IEP (Individual Education Plan) that describes the modifications and the IEP box must be checked on the report card at grading and reporting time.

3. **If a student has an IEP and is in a regular class (e.g. Grade 9 art), but working on fewer than required expectations for each unit or the depth of each expectation is less (and therefore modified), how is a classroom teacher supposed to assess and evaluate the student?**
   The student is evaluated relative to the curriculum expectations. In the example given, the overall expectations that are being modified need to be delineated in the IEP and the assessment and evaluation are based on these modified expectations. This can mean that a student gets a higher level, based on his/her performance on a reduced set of expectations, but the IEP box must be checked on the report card.

4. **Please explain how students on an IEP are evaluated.**
   The evaluation process for students with modified curriculum expectations is the same as for every student. There is no other set of rules. If a teacher understands clearly the four categories of learning and four levels of achievement and provides opportunities for ALL students to demonstrate work at the four levels, then the problem disappears. This is differentiated instruction.
   At the secondary level, if a student is unable to work successfully at a level one (limited), even with modified curriculum expectations within that grade level of the curriculum, then he/she is not to receive a credit. The mark is the mark is the mark. Teachers report what the student demonstrates – including if some modifications have been made.

5. **Do we still use the levels 1 to 4 and Categories of Knowledge and Skills?**
Yes – The Achievement Chart related to each curriculum policy document is the standards-based criterion we have in Ontario and is to be used for all assessment and evaluation, grading and reporting.

6. **If a student is receiving modifications, how should this be reflected on his/her IEP?**
The IEP is the legal requirement that delineates the modifications. In the case of a specific subject/course, the IEP needs to identify the overall expectations from the curriculum document that the teacher plans to teach, and to assess and evaluate the student. The ministry sees the IEP as the "translation document" for the report card. In the case of modified expectations, the mark is based on the student's demonstration level of the expectations relative to the four categories of learning (i.e., Knowledge, Thinking and Inquiry, Communication and Application). It's the same process as for every other student, just a different set of expectations/criteria.

7. **In secondary school courses, at what point are the modifications to the course expectations (listed in the IEP) so significant that the student is no longer working for credit. Is this a quantitative measurement? (e.g. when 40% of the expectations are modified?)**
There is no hard and fast rule for determining if modifications to the course expectations are so significant that granting a credit for the course is questionable. There is no definitive percentage of expectations modified that justifies whether the credit is grantable or not. However, we do need to maintain some integrity in the process. The course must be a true representation of the material that is mandated. Thinking about the student relative to the 30% final evaluation, (e.g. final performance, paper and pencil etc...) is a good barometer. The final assessment tasks do not cover every specific expectation for the course. Rather, they are to be a rich assessment task that gives a clear picture of the student's ability to demonstrate to some level the enduring expectations for the course. If the student who receives modifications could not pass the final evaluation, even with all appropriate accommodations, then it would be doubtful that the student had even a limited mastery of enough of the enduring course expectations to earn the credit. Ultimately, the decision falls upon the principal, with input from the classroom teacher, as to whether an IEP outlining modifications to the expectations for a particular course in which a student is enrolled will be offered for credit or not.

8. **If a secondary student is taking a Grade 9 locally developed compulsory course (eg. Essential English) and demonstrates performance at level 4 in all four categories, would he/she get a (e.g.) 85-89 on the report card OR does he/she earn a level 1 because this course is based on the elementary grade 6 to 8 language expectations?**
A locally developed compulsory course is a legitimate course approved for individual Boards by the Ministry. The locally developed compulsory courses, sometimes referred to as "Essential" are designed to help secondary students upgrade their knowledge and skills by re-visiting expectations from earlier grades, usually expectations from grade 6-8. A student enrolled in a locally developed course is to be graded using the Locally Developed Achievement Chart assessment and evaluation rubric, which is included with each locally developed course document.

d) Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Where do curriculum expectations fit into the planning process?*

The curriculum expectations represent:
- what the student will be expected to know and be able to do by the end of the course; and
- what the teacher will be looking for during the student demonstration of learning.

The curriculum expectations are the foundation for planning and should be considered **first** when planning a course, unit, or lesson. When teachers have a good understanding of the expected learning, they are better prepared to make good decisions regarding:
- how much evidence they will need to assess and evaluate students; and
- the best assessment methods (e.g., paper/pencil, performance task, personal communication, etc.) to provide students with opportunities to learn and practice before being expected to demonstrate the learning;
- the best assessment tools (e.g., rubric, checklist, marking scheme, rating scale, anecdotal comments, etc.) to collect the appropriate evidence of the student's learning; and
- how to involve students, using self and peer assessment in the assessment process, to improve their learning.

2. *Do students need to demonstrate achievement of all curriculum expectations?*

All subject/discipline curriculum documents include the following: "ensure that all the expectations are accounted for in instruction, and that achievement of the expectations is assessed within the appropriate categories".
- All curriculum expectations are not created equally.
- Teachers need to determine which curriculum expectations should be assessed and which ones should be evaluated.
- Teachers should consider the following questions to make wise decisions regarding teaching/learning and assessment/evaluation emphasis:
- What resides in the heart of the subject/discipline and is the underlying focus, goal, or purpose of the curriculum for the course?
- What in the curriculum is critical for the student to know and be able to do and will have enduring value beyond the classroom?
- Some curriculum expectations can be addressed in one lesson while other expectations will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the course (i.e., simple knowledge of facts versus developing an understanding of concepts; the demonstration of a discrete skill versus the application of skills integrated into a performance).
- Rather than addressing each curriculum expectation separately, it is more manageable to cluster expectations into groupings that represent key learning for the course (i.e., some specific expectations can be clustered and connected to overall expectations which represent broader and more significant learning in some curriculum documents).

3. *What is the difference between accommodation and modification?*

Accommodations:
- refer to the teaching strategies, supports, and/or services that are required in order for a student to access the curriculum and demonstrate learning
- accommodations do not alter the provincial curriculum expectations for the grade

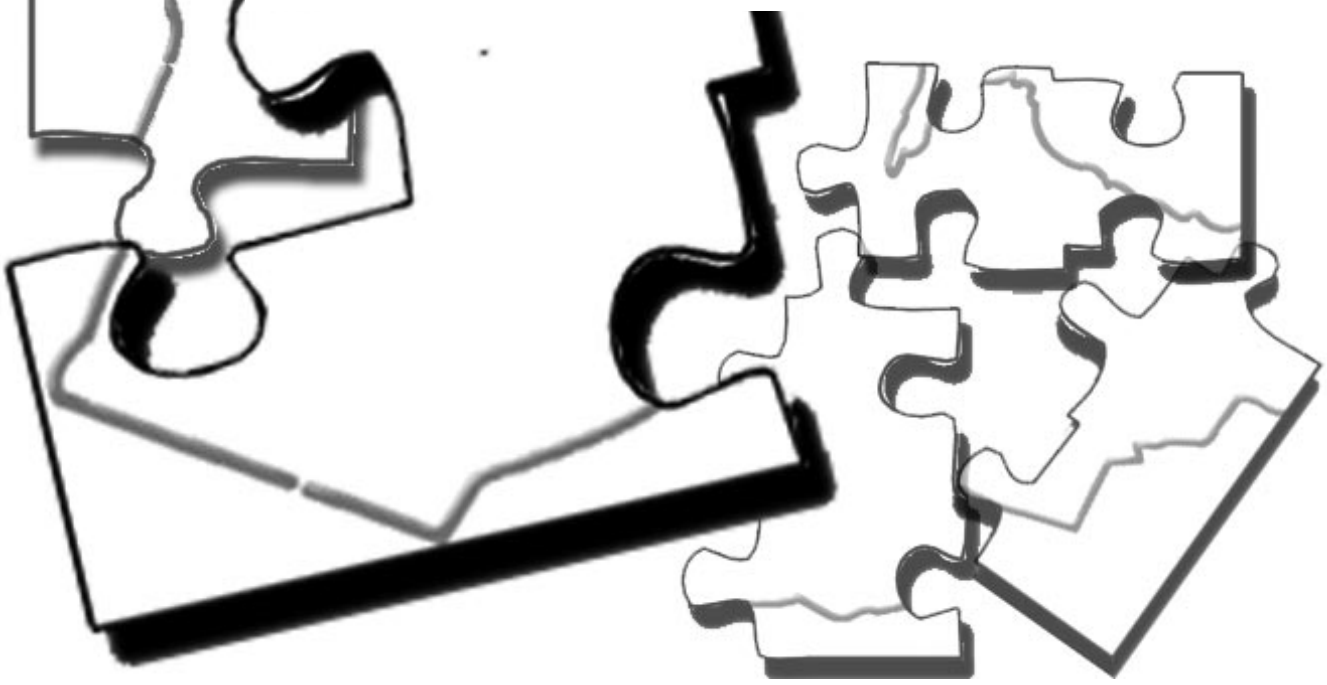
Modifications:
- are modified expectations
- refer to the changes made to the grade level expectations from the Ontario curriculum for a subject or course in order to meet the needs of the student
- may be drawn from a different grade level, above or below the student's current grade placement
- may also include significant changes, an increase or decrease, to the number and/or complexity of the regular grade level curriculum expectations

Assessment FOR Learning

BLUEWATER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

POLICY TO PRACTICE

SECTION 3:
GATHERING THE EVIDENCE



a) Introduction

Ongoing assessment and evaluation is used to determine student needs and generate/influence teaching practice. One hundred percent of the grade will be based on evaluations conducted throughout the course. The final report card grade should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to most recent level of achievement. Information in this part of the resource document will assist teachers in gathering relevant evidence of student learning in an appropriate manner.

This part of the resource document includes:

- Four Categories of Learning
- Levels of Achievement
- Understanding Assessment and Evaluation and the Roles of the Teacher and Student
- Planning Your Course Assessment and Evaluation
- Teacher as Observer: Look, Listen, Interact
- Understanding Assessment Methods, Strategies and Tools
- Exemplar Resources

b) Four Categories of Learning

The four Categories of Learning are outlined in the Ontario Curriculum documents for each subject. They can be generalized into 4 key categories across all subject areas and from grades1-12 to include:

Knowledge/Understanding
Thinking/Inquiry
Communication
Application/Making Connections

The achievement chart provides a standard province-wide method for teachers to use in assessing and evaluating their students' achievement.

In order to ensure that assessment and evalaution are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of student learning, teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies that... are based both on the categories of knowledge and skills and on the achievement level descriptions given in the achievement chart that appears in the curriculum policy document for each discipline.

(*Program Planning and Assessment*, 2000)

Elementary

From grades 1-8, these 4 categories appear in slightly different wording for each subject area but remain basically the same.

Subject Area	Knowledge / Understanding	Thinking / Inquiry	Communication	Application/ Making Connections
Language	Organization of Ideas	Reasoning	Communication	Application of Conventions
Math	Understanding Basic Concepts	Problem Solving	Communication of Knowledge	Application of Math Procedures
Social Studies	Understanding Basic Concepts	Inquiry/Research Map and Globe Skills	Communication of Knowledge	Application of Concepts/Skills
Science	Understanding Basic Concepts	Inquiry/Design Skills/Safety	Communication of Required Knowledge	Relating Science and Technology to each other and the World
The Arts	Understanding Basic Concepts	Critical Analysis and Appreciation	Communication of Required Knowledge	Performance of Creative Works
Phys. Ed and Health	Understanding Basic Concepts	Active Participation	Communication of Knowledge	Movement Skills
FSL	Organization of Ideas	Comprehension	Communication	Application of Language

Secondary

From grades 9 –12, subject associations have developed their own interpretation of the four categories to suit their discipline and broken them down further to aid understanding. These subject specific breakdowns can be found in Part 4 B of the CODE Policy to Practice Document. A sample for Math is included below:

Achievement Chart Category	**Knowledge**	**Thinking / Inquiry**	**Communication**	**App**
i) What are the names of the category in the **Mathematics** document?	Knowledge/ Understanding	Thinking / Inquiry / Problem Solving	Communication	Applicati
ii) What are the criteria for this category?	• Understanding concepts • Performing Algorithms	• Reasoning • Applying the steps of an inquiry/problem-solving process (e.g. formulating questions, selecting strategies, resources, representing in mathematical form)	• Communicate reasoning orally, in written, and graphical formats • Using mathematical language, symbols, visuals and conventions	• Applyin and proc relating t unfamilia
iii) What do the criteria mean?	• Performing an algorithm by hand, mentally or using technology • Demonstrating understanding of a concept	• Formulating and defending hypothesis • Selection and creation of a model to solve a problem • Selection and sequencing of a variety of tools and strategies to solve a problem • Justification of reasoning and/or conclusion	• Degree of clarity in explanations or justifications • Appropriate use of mathematical vocabulary • Correct use of mathematical symbols, units, labels and conventions • Ability to integrate narrative and mathematical forms of communication	• Selecti of a sing a probler • Use of unfamilia just like t • Use of tool in a setting o way (wor backwar developi
iv) How do the curriculum expectations fit into each category?	• Every expectation has a knowledge base • Each specific expectation is not necessarily aligned	• Each specific expectation is not necessarily aligned to a single category	• Each specific expectation is not necessarily aligned to a single category	• Each s expectati necessar a single

c) Levels of Achievement

The achievement chart for each discipline is included in the curriculum policy document for that discipline. The chart provides a reference point for all assessment practice and a framework within which to assess and evaluate student achievement. The descriptions associated with each level of achievement serve as a guide for gathering assessment information and enable teachers to make consistent judgements about the quality of student work and to provide clear and specific feedback to students and parents.

Achievement Level	Percentage Grade Range	12 Point Scale Equivalent		Summary Description
Level 4	80-100%	4+	90-100%	A very high to outstanding level of achievement. Achievement is consistently ***above*** the provincial standard **(not above grade level)**
		4	88%	
		4-	82%	
Level 3	70-79%	3+	78%	A high level of achievement. Achievement is ***at*** the provincial standard.
		3	75%	
		3-	72%	
Level 2	60-69%	2+	68%	A moderate level of achievement. Achievement is ***below, but approaching,*** the provincial standard.
		2	65%	
		2-	62%	
Level 1	50-59%	1+	58%	A passable level of achievement. Achievement is ***below*** the provincial standard.
		1	55%	
		1-	52%	
R or below 50%				Insufficient achievement of curriculum expectations. Remediation is required at the elementary level. A credit will not be granted at the secondary level.

d) Frequently Asked Questions - Achievement Charts

1. Categories and levels do not appear on the report card; therefore, why are we using them?

- Categories ensure that we plan and deliver a balanced program as well as ensuring that students develop higher cognitive and creative thinking skills beyond rote memorization.
- Each of the levels of the achievement chart is related to a range of percentage grades.
- The achievement chart describes the characteristics of performance that can be used to validate the percentage grade given at reporting times.
- The achievement chart categories can provide valuable information on student performance for reporting, communicating, assessing, and goal setting.

2. What is the difference between meeting the provincial standard and achieving a pass?

- The provincial standard is Level 3 of student performance.
- Provincial standard implies that the students are well prepared for work in the next grade or the next course.
- Achievement at Level 1 indicates a student is considered to be “at risk” of not achieving the expectations at the next grade level.
- At the secondary level, achievement at or above level 1 (50%) earns the student a credit; however, only achievement at or above level 3 indicates the prerequisite knowledge and skills necessary to perform successfully at the next grade level.

What is the meaning of an “A”?

The grades of A- to A+ (or 80%-100%) correspond to Level 4 achievement of the curriculum expectations – the highest level. The student’s achievement exceeds the provincial standard. Level 4 achievement does not mean, however, that the student is working beyond the expectations for the grade.

To allow students to demonstrate Level 4 performance, learning opportunities such as open-ended questions and assignments that allow for a range of achievement from Levels 1 to 4 **must** be provided within the regular classroon program. It is not appropriate to predetermine the number of students who can receive an “A” (or 80%-100%). Since grading on report cards is based on the achievement of the curriculum expectations for each reporting period, it is also not appropriate to withhold assigning these grades until the final term(s).

Descriptors
thorough / complete
general / considerable
some / developing / approaching
limited / few / simple

– Guide to the Provincial Report Card, 1998.

3. What is the basis for determining the emphasis of the achievement chart categories in each course?

- The categories in the achievement chart have been created to ensure that a balance of knowledge and skills is a focus of student learning.

4. Should the achievement charts be used as the basis for each assessment or only when determining final report card grades?

- The achievement charts should be used to design all assessment strategies and tools. It is Ministry Policy.
- The categories will help to determine the criteria for the assessment and the levels will assist the teacher in developing a more detailed assessment tool (e.g. rubric, rating scale, checklist, etc.).
- All four categories do not have to be addressed in each assessment task.
- The mark reported should reflect the most consistent level of achievement as described in the achievement chart.
- The use of the achievement chart should be communicated clearly to students and parents.

e) Understanding Assessment and Evaluation

Successful practice will require a common understanding of the terms of assessment, evaluation, diagnostic, formative and summative.

Assessment:
The systematic and ongoing process of collecting, describing and analyzing information about student progress and achievement in relation to The Ontario Curriculum Expectations and related achievement charts. The primary goals of assessment are:
- to provide students with feedback to improve their learning; and
- to provide teachers with information needed to adapt and refine programs to meet student needs.

Evaluation:
Refers to the process of judging the quality of student work on the basis of established criteria, and assigning a value to represent that quality.

> "When the cook tastes the soup, that's formative; when the guest tastes the soup, that's summative."
>
> (Robert Stake)

Assessment:
- checks learning to decide what to do next;
- designed to assist teachers and students;
- used in conferencing;
- detailed, specific, descriptive feedback in words, not scores;
- focusses on the improvement of student's previous best;
- needs to involve the student, the person most able to improve learning.

Evaluation:
- checks what has been learned to date;
- designed for those not directly involved in daily teaching/learning;
- is presented in a periodic report;
- summarizes information into numbers, letter grades;
- compares students with a standard;
- need not involve the student.

(Damian Cooper as adapted from Ruth Sutton)

Gathering Evidence	Diagnostic	Formative
What?	• Assessing what students know and are able to demonstrate prior to instruction	• Assessing what students know and are able to do as they progress through the learning and practice opportunities
When?	• Occurs before instruction begins	• Is ongoing as students learn and practice
Why?	• Helps determine starting point and helps the teacher program appropriately for individual students	• Provides ongoing, meaningful feedback to help students improve as the learning/ practice builds
How?	• Assessment strategies provide information about the learning students have acquired in the past	• Assessment strategies to provide opportunities for students to learn and practice
Note:	• Information from diagnostic assessments is not included in the determination of the final grade	• Formative assessment may be used to support professional judgement in determining the final grade

Weighing a pig does not make it grow.

(Source unknown)

"

As students work with teachers to what learning is and what it look they shift from being passive lear being actively involved in their learning. By being engaged, they build more neural pathways in thei

"

(Jense

f) The Roles of the Teacher and Student in Assessment and Evaluation

There is no "right way" to gather evidence. Rather, teachers can choose from several methods using varied strategies and tools. However, which one he/she chooses must be appropriate to gathering evidence of the expectations and the criteria of the achievement chart of the subject discipline. Instruction must promote achievement of expectations and provide opportunity for practice with similar tasks. Professional judgement used in the determination of students' final grades must be supported by evidence gathered through appropriate strategies.

Students are accountable for providing sufficient evidence for this process. Self assessment and peer assessment tools may be used to engage students in the assessment of formative activities. However, the evaluation of summative activities is the responsibility of the teacher. People tend to hit the targets they set for themselves. When students are involved in the development of the standards and directions(not the curriculum or academic standards) for the classroom and tasks, they take ownership while developing a deeper understanding of the expectations. In other words, the process of developing procedures, directions, standards, and options is often more important than what is actually developed.

Summative
• Assessing what students know and are able to do at certain points in the learning process
• Occurs at one or more checkpoints throughout the learning process (e.g. end of a block of learning, unit, course)
• Provides students with the opportunity to synthesize knowledge and skills and demonstrate their achievement
• Assessment strategies to synthesize and to apply the key learning and are relevant to the expected learning at the point the students have progressed to in the learning process and the subsequent summative strategies occuring at the end of the unit/course
• Should be used in determination of the final grade

"

Begin to train encourage chil to be involved a early age, and going.

"

(Ruth Sutton,

REFLECTION —

Do I provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their achievement of expectations?

Cooperative Group Learning

Cooperative group learning is an integral part of the process of the curriculum. Guidance has been provided for the handling of evaluation in group situations. Policy directs that participation in group work must provide evidence of individual student achievement related to the curriculum expectations. A common product in a final task is not appropriate unless a group project culminates in an individual final product or individual pieces of a final product that can provide that evidence. Each member of the group must be accountable to produce evidence of their own achievement. A group mark must not be assigned. Group work provides students with the opportunity to share, conference, mentor and work as team members to share learning. Conferencing with individual students during group activities is critical in gathering evidence and the demonstration of learning skills. Time for conferencing with students and observing the process must be included.

FAQ: Can peer and/or self assessment and group assignments be included in determining the final grade?

- Yes, evidence gathered by peers or self can be taken into consideration by the teacher for the evaluation. However, the teacher must assign the grade.
- During the term, group research and/or brainstorming may lead to the completion of an independent final product.
- Group work is a valuable assessment tool when used properly and each student is accountable and assessed individually.
- Even in the 30% of the grade, peer or self, and community member assessment and group work can be part of the evaluation process.

Peer, and/or self assessment and group assignments can provide valuable information for the individual student to use to improve his/her work prior to submitting it for grading.

- The final report card grade represents the quality of the student's overall achievement of the expectations for the course and reflects the corresponding level of achievement as described in the achievement chart for the discipline.

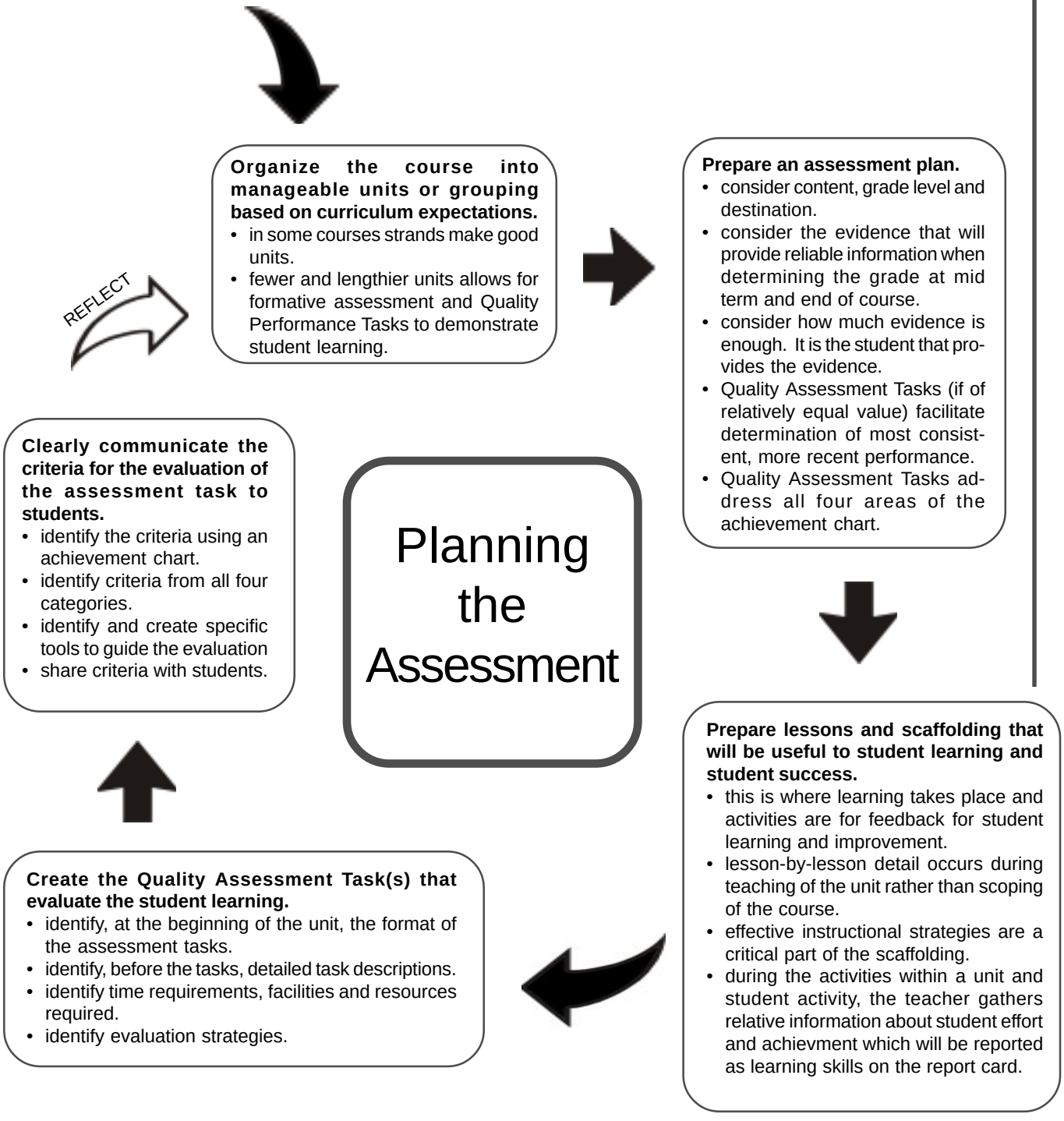
- Assessment and evaluation strategies are appropriate for the selected learning activities, the purposes of instruction, and the needs and experiences of the students.

- Assessment and evaluation strategies are varied in nature, administered over a period of time, and designed to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning.

- Students must be provided with numerous and varied opportunities to demonstrate the full extent of their achievement of the curriculum expectations across all four categories of knowledge and skill.

- The achievement chart is meant to guide teachers determining, towards the end of a course, the student's most consistent level of achievement of the curriculum expectations as reflected in his/her course work.

g) Planning Assessment (Classroom Practice)



NOTE: Special Consideration for Secondary 70% / 30%

The final percentage grade for Grades 9-12 courses will be derived as follows:

- *Seventy percent of the grade* (70%) will be based on evaluations conducted *throughout the course*. This portion of the grade should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement throughout the course, although special consideration should be given to the *more recent evidence of achievement*.
- *Thirty percent of the grade* (30%) will be based on a final evaluation in the form of an examination, performance, essay, and/or other method of evaluation suitable to the course content and administered *towards the end of the course.*

Planning the Final Evaluation

The final evaluation should reflect the student's learning for the entire course.
- identify the overall curriculum expectations to be evaluated
- identify core skills and concepts

The final evaluation should provide the student the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills in a variety of ways.
- identify the products and/or performances that would require studnts to demonstrate identified overall curriculum expectations
- select one or more assessment tasks
- identify accomodations/modifications that will be necessary for students

Classroom achievement must model the process and content of the final evaluation tasks.
- identify required prior knowledge/skills
- identify the teaching and learning experience that will equip students for the task

The final assessment task(s) should be communicated to students.
- identify, early in the course, the format of the final assessment task
- identify, before the task, a detailed task description
- identify time requirements, facilities and resources required

The criteria for the evaluation of the final assessment must be clearly communicated to students.
- identify the criteria using an achievement chart
- include criteria from all four categories
- identify and create specific tools to guide the evaluation
- share criteria with students

REFLECT

h) Teacher as Observer : Look, Listen, Interact

Assessment and evaluation of student achievement provide teachers with an opportunity to think critically about their methods of instruction and the overall effectiveness of their program. Observational skills are critical for good teaching, learning and assessing.

Observations are….
- the basis on which a teacher makes decisions about each student's progress and program needs;
- ongoing procedures to identify a students' strengths, interests and learning needs;
- a systemic method of monitoring student progress, growth and behaviour over time;
- an accurate record of what a teacher sees; and
- formal or informal.

Observations allow teachers to:
- view the student "in action" and assess ongoing progress;
- monitor and assess intellectual, social and emotional growth, development and progress that is not otherwise easily measured or inferred;
- observe the student in a variety of settings; and
- observe during many interactions.

Observations can take many forms. Whether they are formal or informal, they can be tracked using checklists, anecdotal records, journals, rating scales, folders or a variety of teacher designed recording devices.

Reflection —

Do I use a balanced variety of assessment methods, tools and strategies?

i) Understanding Assessment Methods, Strategies and Tools

The following section contains a sampling of assessment strategies and tools. Teachers are encouraged to modify these samples to meet their particular assessment needs. These are available in computer based format on the CODE Policy to Practice Disc and are found in Part 4B (ii) pages 9-27 and 32-45.

Terms:

Assessment Methods:
a general means or category of assessment strategies through which student learning may be assessed. (i.e. Say, Write, Do)

Assessment Strategy:
a particular process used to assess student learning and/or product used to demonstrate student learning (eg. journal)

Assessment Tool:
something that is used to initiate or guide the assessment strategy or to track, monitor or record the assessment data.

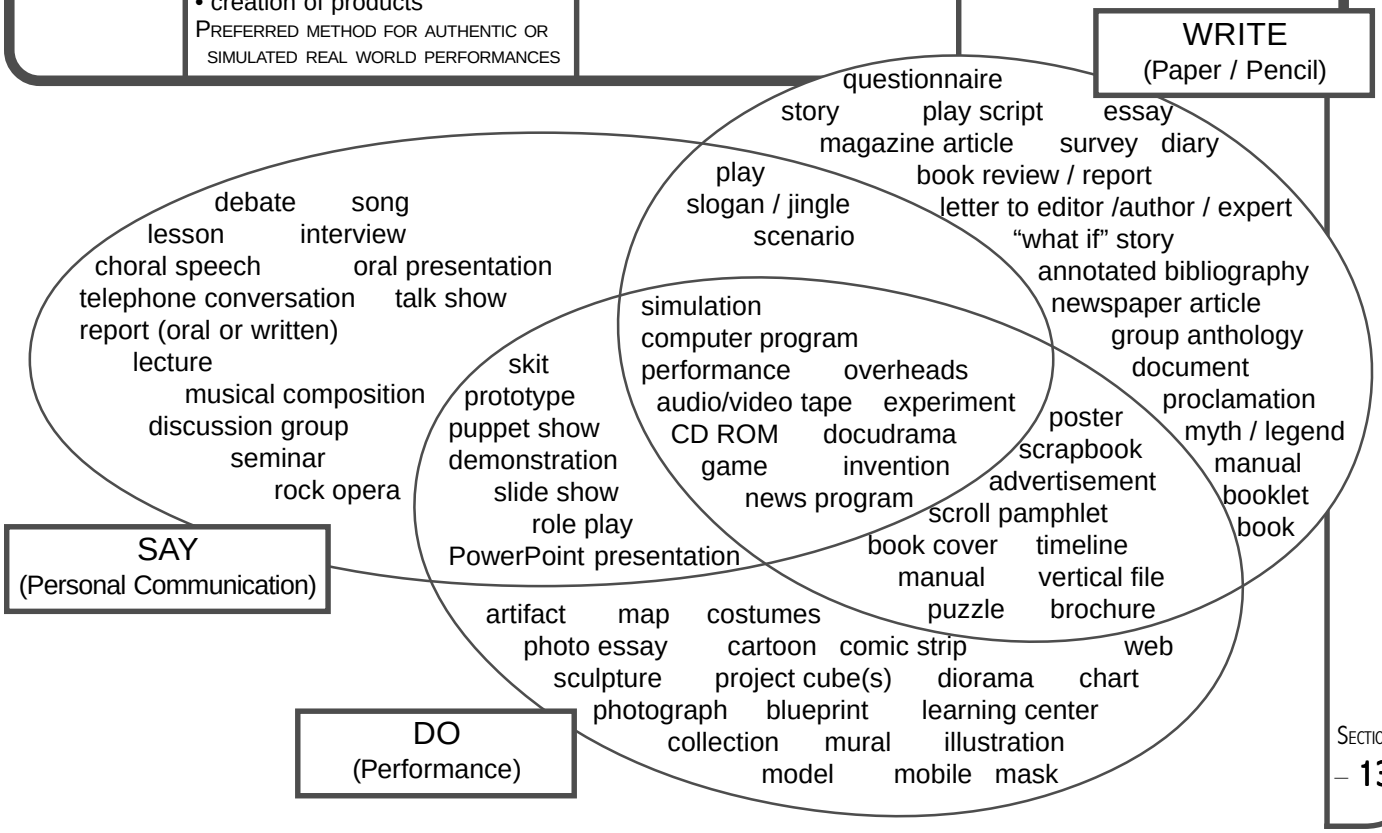
> "Using criteria that allow for a range of representation encourages students to represent what they know in a variety of ways, and gives teachers a way to fairly assess a variety of projects."
>
> (Davies, 2000)

Reflection —

Do I include observation as a valid strategy of assessment and evaluation?

Assessment Methods and Sample Strategies

Categories	DO — Performance	SAY — Personal Communication	WRITE — Paper and Pencil
Knowledge / Understanding	• open-ended questions, essays • organizers (concept maps, webs, flowcharts) and visual (tables, graphs, illustrations) • journals Perhaps not the preferred method but can determine student's understanding of relationships between concepts	• in-class question and answer • in-class discussions • student-teacher conferencing • oral "test" or "examination" Can ask probing questions and allows for evaluation of depth of understanding but may be time consuming	• quiz • test – multiple choice, true/false, matching (selection-based methods), fill in blanks, short answer, organizers (webs) and visuals (tables), examination Best choice for focussing on mastery of basics of knowledge
Thinking / Inquiry	• essays, articles, editorials, poems, research papers, lab reports • plays, dioramas, debates, stories, videotapes • oral presentations • creations of products Allows for teacher evaluation of complex critical/creative and inquiry skills	• in-class questions and answer • in-class discussions • student-teacher conferencing • oral examination Allows for more in-depth questioning; encourages students to explain their reasoning	• open-ended questions - tests • examinations • organizers (webs) and visuals (tables) Allows for assessing basic critical/creative thinking skills; allows for written description of problem solving solutions
Communication	• essays, articles, editorials, poems, research papers, lab reports • plays, dioramas, debates, stories, videotapes • oral presentations • creations of products Many of the performance tasks allow for communication in all forms – written, oral, and visual	• in-class questions and answer • in-class discussions • student-teacher conferencing Allows for expression of thought and communicating ideas verbally	• open-ended questions - tests • examinations • essays • organizers (webs) and visuals (tables) Allows for clarity of thought and expression of written form
Application / Making Connections	• essays, articles, editorials, poems, research papers, lab reports, design projects • plays, dioramas, debates, stories, videotapes, models • oral presentations • computer programs • creation of products Preferred method for authentic or simulated real world performances	• interviews, student-teacher conferencing Not the preferred method to get at 'authentic' and 'outside the school' contexts	• open-ended questions allowing for knowledge to be applied to a new situation/problem Not the preferred method to get at 'authentic' and 'outside the school' contexts



Assessment Tools:

	Rubrics	Checklists
What are they?	• A measure of student achievement following a set of clear guidelines. • Descriptions of clear performance criteria for each level. • Levels of quality used to assess student work. • Scales which use brief statements based on criteria to describe the levels of achievement of a process, product and/or performance.	• Assessment instruments that record the presence or absence of an expected concept, skill, process or attitude. • Based on criteria to be looked for and assessed in the completion of a task. • Teacher-made lists based on content, knowledge, skills or attitudes. • Student-made lists that are the initial step in the completion of a project.
How are they used?	• For all types of assessment. • For holistic and analytical scoring. • For clear communication of student performance. • To assess complex tasks.	• When a specific task or function can be predetermined. • Should focus on individual tasks rather than multiple tasks within one item. • When the process or product can be broken into components that are judged to be present or absent; adequate or inadequate.
What do they look like?	• Follow the format of the achievement chart. • Include one or more category of the achievement chart. • Use qualifiers from the achievement chart. • Clear, concise criteria. • Brief descriptors for each level of achievement.	• Checklists contain a numbered or bulleted list of key attributes of good performance to be assessed. They can contain a space for entry.
Why would you use them?	• Guides to student learning. • Used to promote reliability in assessment. • To enhance the efficient use of teacher time. • To outline criteria clearly. • To provide more informative feedback about strengths, weaknesses and next steps. • To ensure accountability for student achievement of expectations.	• Quick, and useful for large numbers of criteria. • Provide a list of key attributes of good performance that are checked as either present or absent. • To indicate if something has occurred.

Anecdotal Records	Rating Scales	Marking Schemes
• Short, written narratives which describe both student behaviour and the context in which it has occurred. • These descriptions, which should be relevant to observed behaviours, are often used to supplement data supported from other assessment strategies.	• Rating scales are based on a set of criteria, which allows the teacher to judge performance, product, attitude or behaviour along a continuum. • Assess the extent to which specific facts, skills, attitudes and/or behaviours are observed in a student's work or performance.	• A set of criteria by which student work is evaluated.
• Provide an ongoing record or written observations of individual student progress. • Provide a rich portrait of student performance because they can state in concise language what has actually occurred. • Interpret student achievement only after multiple observations over time. • Record information accurately and objectively during an event (or soon after). • Record observations related to planned and specific goals, which are considered important.	• Provide detailed diagnostic information on a student's performance, product and attitude in reference to presented criteria. • Record the frequency or even the degree to which a student exhibits a characteristic. • Describe performance along a continuum.	• To quantify student responses.
• May take a variety of forms. Record brief comments and stick into student records. Record comments on a Palm Pilot which can then be transferred directly to class computer records. • Draw gridline on an open-faced folder. Provide one vertical column for each student in the class. • Write comments on stick notes, then place them on the appropriate cell(s) on the grid. • Record comments on reverse of student's assessment record page in teacher assessment binder.	• Be analytical or holistic. • Use statements to rank, describe, or identify criteria. • Contain a numbered or bulleted list of key attributes of good performance to be assessed. • Contain a space for entry to indicate frequency or attainment on a continuum.	• Criteria linked directly to question. • Value of expected outcome.
• Useful observations which cannot easily be obtained using other assessment strategies. While these narratives are sometimes time-consuming to read, write and interpret, they can, over time, provide a rich portrait of student achievement.	• To assess a single performance. • To judge the quality of a performance.	• Selected or constructed responses.

These assessment strategies are outlined further on pages 32 to 45 in the CODE document.

j) **Exemplar Resources**

Teachers are encouraged to collect exemplars or samples of student work from their own class for specific assessment tasks.
The Ontario Curriculum Exemplars documents provide:

- samples of student work for some courses;
- samples of student work where all four categories are at the same level of performance;
- samples of the kinds of tasks for which a rubric would be used; and
- examples of how performance tasks can be used in assessments.

How could they be used?
Exemplars:

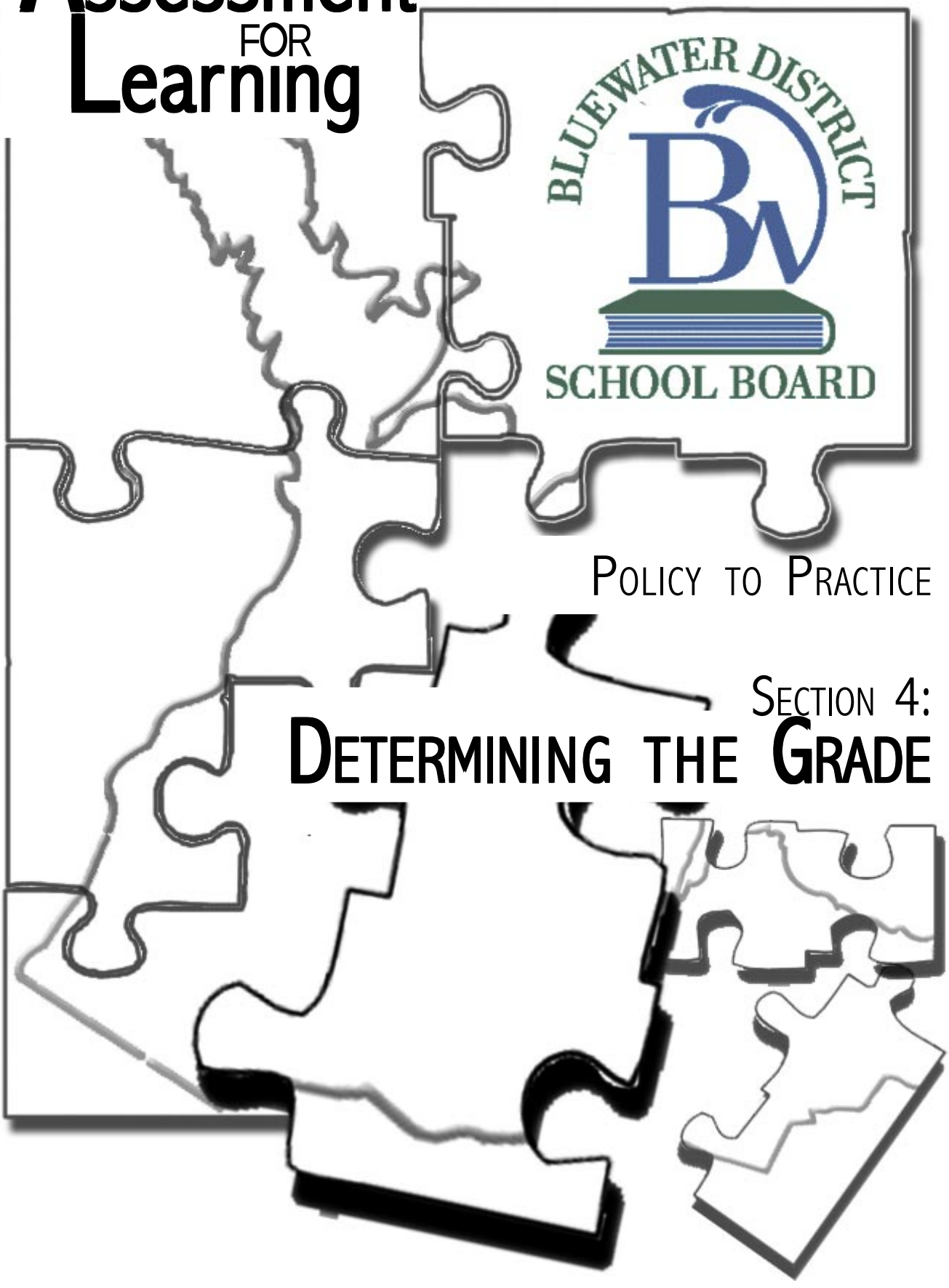
- could be used for self and peer assessment;
- provide the opportunity for students to reflect on the quality of their own work;
- provide the opportunity for students to improve their learning;
- can clarify the purpose of their learning and what is expected;
- clarify performance at the provincial standard;
- facilitate communication with parents and students; and
- promote fair and consistent assessment within subjects and courses.

What do they look like?
Exemplars:

- provide sample tasks for teachers and students as well as the curriculum expectations related to the task;
- provide sample student responses at each of the four levels of achievement;
- represent , as closely as possible, singular leveled responses, but it is fairly rare to have all four categories at the same level;
- provide teacher notes and instructions to guide the teacher through the task;
- provide student notes and instructions to guide the student through the task;
- provide follow up activities for teachers;
- provide task-specific assessment chart or rubric; and
- provide comments/next steps, which offer suggestions for improving achievement.

Reflection —
Have I considered using the performance task from the exemplar project?

Assessment FOR Learning



POLICY TO PRACTICE

SECTION 4:
DETERMINING THE GRADE

a) Introduction

The primary purpose of grading is to communicate achievement of the curriculum expectations to students, parents and other educators. Information in this section of the resource document will assist teachers in determining final grades and completing the term and final report cards. Throughout each term, classroom teachers will have worked diligently with each of their students and will want to be **confident** they can justify the grade they will assign to each student.

Keeping in mind that the primary purpose of Assessment and Evaluation is to improve student learning, the following steps and questions will assist you in the process of determining the grade.

Step 1: Identify and review relevant assessment and evaluation information

- Have I been careful to exclude Diagnostic Assessment data in the determination of the final grade?
- What, if any, Formative Assessment data may be used to support my professional judgement in determining the final grade for each student?
- Have I separated Learning Skills from the grading process, unless they are specific curriculum expectations?

Step 2: Apply achievement levels to judge student performance

- With reference to the achievement charts, at what level is each student's performance?
- Does the assessment data I've collected reflect a balance of the four categories?
- Have I considered the more recent, most consistent achievement of each student, indicative of progress and learning, as opposed to using an average.
- Is my professional judgement supported by a body of evidence?
- If I number crunch, do I use the median rather than the mean?

Step 3: Assign a grade or mark that corresponds with that level of achievement

- Will the grade and comments generated by this process contribute to improving learning for each student?
- Have I identified strengths, areas for improvement/weaknesses and next steps?
- Is my professional judgement supported by a body of evidence?

> "The bottom line is that grading should be seen not merely as a numerical, mechanical exercise, but as an exercise in professional judgement."
>
> (Ken O'Connor)

This section of the resource document includes:

- Determining the Grade
  - Step 1: Identify and review relevant assessment and evaluation information
  - Step 2: Apply achievement levels to judge student performance
  - Step 3: Assign a grade or mark that corresponds with that level of achievement
- Frequently Asked Questions

b) Determining the Grade

Levels of achievement describe the degree to which students have met the curriculum expectations and have been able to demonstrate what they know and can do. The following outlines a three-step process that can be used for determining a percentage grade or final report card level.

Step 1: Review relevant assessment and evaluation information

Teachers must review the assessment information for the student, determining a representative sample of work to use as evidence of achievement, and consider the significance of more recent evidence. It is important to distinguish among what is assessed, what is used to report to parents and students, and what is used to determine the student's grade. The grade is just one component of the report card. **The primary purpose of the grade is to communicate achievement of curriculum expectations to students, parents and other educators**.

Keep track of the assessment tasks on an ongoing basis.

- Indicate whether it is diagnostic, formative, summative
- Record which of the four categories is represented, or record a mark separately for each of the four categories assessed by the task. (An assessment task will often not include all four.)
- Record the mark as it was communicated to the student (6/10, A, 71%, 3-)
- If the assessment task was submitted late, record this on the learning skills tracking sheet. If it was not done, record this appropriately.

Can be Included in Grade	Must not be Included in Grade
☑ Performance and products through which a student's knowledge and skills are demonstrated ☑ Processes through which a student's knowledge and skills are observed For example, data observed and collected from: • Paper/pencil tasks (write) • Personal communication tasks (say) • Performance tasks (do)	☒ Data from practice assessments, pre-tests, coaching activities or feedback ☒ Attitudes and behaviours ☒ Learning skills not identified as a curriculum expectation For example, data from: • Diagnostic assessments • Learning skills • Attendance and punctuality • Participation or effort

Step 2: Apply achievement levels to judge student performance

Teachers must use the achievement chart in curriculum policy documents to judge the assessment information gathered and to evaluate the student's performance of the expectations.

Using Achievement Charts

Level	Summary Description	Clarifying Information	Grade
Level 4	The achievement is **above** the provincial standard.	**Level 4 represents a very high to outstanding level of achievement of the curriculum expectations for the course.** Level 4 does not mean the student 'got 80% of it'. Percentage grades are related to more than the 'amount', the frequency, or the accuracy of learning. Percentage grades are related to the achievement levels that also describe the breadth and depth of understanding, and the complexity, clarity, and precision of responses. Level 4 is not limited to students who are 'near the top of the class'. Student performance at all levels must be referenced to the descriptors of the achievement levels, a standard that is stable and not dependent on the general ability of a given group, rather than compared to the performance of other students in the class or school.	80-100% A- / A / A+
Level 3	The achievement **meets** the provincial standard.	**Level 3 (the provincial standard) represents a high level of achievement.** Level 3 indicates that the student is well-prepared for work at the next grade or course.	70-79% B- / B / B+
Level 2	The achievement is **below but approaching** the provincial standard.	**Level 2 represents a moderate level of achievement that is approaching the standard.** The standard is within reach, given that appropriate actions are taken by the student.	60-69% C- / C / C+
Level 1	The achievement **falls much below** the provincial standard.	**Level 1 represents a low, but passable, level of achievement of course expectations.** The student's performance allows for a pass in the course, but the student's plans to take any subsequent courses involving these skills should be reviewed.	50-59% D- / D / D+
R	No credit given, remediation required.	The student's performance does not reflect the achievement of the curriculum expectations.	Below 50% R

Evaluation Process

Teachers must consider each of the following steps in this checklist as they examine the data gathered **for each achievement chart category:**

☐ ***Look at the body of evidence.***
When looking at the body of evidence, teachers must make decisions on the relative emphasis of the data collected by considering:

- the complexity of the task (a short paper/pencil task does not provide the same kind of information about student achievement as does a complex one);
- the information from the four knowledge and skills categories; and
- the assessment methods used to collect the data based on what students write, say and/or do.

☐ ***Understand the meaning of Levels 1-4.***
Teachers must refer to the achievement chart for their subject discipline for specific criteria and examine the descriptors of each for the achievement levels. Information for specific curriculum documents can be found in Part 4B(i) of the CODE document.

☐ ***Find the most consistent level of performance.***
The most consistent does not always mean the most frequent. Often student performance is not consistent and will vary greatly throughout the term. In those cases, the numerical 'most frequent' performance may not fairly represent a student's performance over the term. Instead, teachers should select an achievement level that best summarizes the student's overall performance in relation to the achievement of the curriculum expectations being evaluated.

☐ ***Give special consideration to the more recent information.***
Grades should be based on the student's demonstrations of learning after multiple opportunities to learn and practice. Demonstrations near the end of the course may be a more appropriate indicator of student achievement. For some skills, recent evaluation *may* provide the best data to judge overall achievement of the expectations. This reflects the capacity of students to build their skills and understanding of concepts over the time spent in the course.

☐ ***Apply professional judgement to assign the achievement level.***
The nature of teaching and learning requires the application of professional judgement on decisions about student performance. Based on knowledge of the program and the descriptors in the achievement levels, the teacher can use numerical data, along with the understanding of the classroom context and the body of evidence, to apply professional judgement in determining the achievement level that best describes the overall performance of the student.

☐ ***Apply 'number crunching' carefully.***
When using numerical data, calculating the average (mean) or middle (median) mark can assist teachers to judge student performance. In order to properly determine the final report card grade, you need to use professional judgement to determine achievement in each category of learning. Term marks that are recorded in levels attached to the four categories of learning allow the teacher to more easily apply professional judgement when determining the final report card grade.

Cautions

When the numerical calculation and the level of achievement are not consistent, the teacher must consider other factors in the evaluations that are causing a lack of alignment, such as the following:

- Did the weightings or the design of the evaluations cause imbalance? (e.g., the emphasis of the categories was inappropriate)
- Did the assessments allow students a variety of ways to demonstrate what they know and can do? (e.g., some students do not 'test' well, but can effectively demonstrate their skills if afforded other means)
- Was the student penalized too heavily for early attempts at learning when recent assessments clearly show that the student has attained the necessary skills?

Assigning zeroes does not support Assessment for Learning in any way.

Step 3: Assign a grade or mark that corresponds with that level of achievement

Percentage marks on the report card reflect the levels of achievement. Percentage grades are intended to communicate to students and to parents more than a numerical average. Grades communicate student achievement of the course curriculum expectations as they relate to the four levels of achievement and to the provincial standard (e.g., Level 3 – the student is well prepared to continue work in this subject area).

> "
>
> Averaging falls far short of providing an accurate description of what students have learned . . . . If the purpose of grading and reporting is to provide an accurate description of what students have learned, then averaging must be considered inadequate and inappropriate.
>
> "
>
> (Thomas R. Guskey, "Communicating Student Learning." ACSD Yearbook, 1996)

What is insanity?
Doing the same thing over and over and expecting things to improve.

(Albert Einstein)

Not everything that counts
can be counted
and not everything
that can be counted, counts.

(Albert Einstein)

"

Data should be used
to inform
not to determine
decisions.

"

(Hay Group)

Assessments involve students and their peers as well as their teacher but responsibility for evaluation rests with the teacher.

Steps in Determining the Final Grade

Sample 1 — ELEMENTARY

STEP	INSTRUCTIONS	KNOWLEDGE	THINKING / INQUIRY	COMMUNICATION	APPLICATION
		There should be a balance between the four categories in determining the overall level and determining the grade			
Determine level	Consider the most consistent and more recent evidence to determine the level achieved for each category.	4	3	3	2
Determine overall level	Use professional judgement to determine the overall level of achievement that best describes the student's overall performance for the term.	3			
Conversion (Grade 7/8)	This mark needs to be reported as a % at grade 7/8 level.	75			

Use achievement levels in all categories of learning to develop report card's strengths, weaknesses and next steps.

Steps in Determining the Final Grade

Sample 2 — Secondary

The following chart outlines one approach to determining the final grade. The relevant emphasis of the achievement chart categories is being addressed equally.

Calculating 70% of the Final Grade

STEP	INSTRUCTIONS	Knowledge 25%	Thinking / Inquiry 25%	Communication 25%	Application 25%
Determine level	Consider the most consistent and more recent evidence to determine the level achieved for each category.	4	3	3	2
Convert to a percentage	Use the conversion chart (see Section 3 page 4) to translate each achievement chart category to a percentage.	88	75	75	65
Achievement chart category emphasis	Multiply each of the percentages by the predetermined achievement chart category weighting (here, 25%)	25% 22	25% 18.8	25% 18.8	25% 16.8
Calculate the mark out of 100	Total each of the four categories together for a mark out of 100.	76.4			
STOP	Stop here if calculating **midterm grade** (semestered) or **1st / 2nd term grade** (non-semestered) or if you are teaching a course that does not require a 30% final assessment. Enter 75% on report card When completing a **final** report card, continue with the steps below:				
Calculate the mark out of 70	Multiply this mark by 70% (76.4 x .70)	53.5			
Determine strengths / weaknesses / next steps	Use the level of achievement in the four categories to determine strengths, areas for improvement and next steps.				

Reflection —

Am I comfortable using professional judgement and "eyeballing" to determine the grade?

Calculating 30% of the Final Grade

Follow the breakdown of the final 30% evaluation — for example, 10% paper and pencil task (e.g., written examination), 20% performance task (e.g., simulation).
Identify the related key learnings (clusters of expectations) and their related achievement chart categories for each assessment strategy.

<table>
<tr><th>STEP</th><th>INSTRUCTIONS</th><th colspan="5">EXAMPLE</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Determine the level of performance</td><td rowspan="4">Examine the evidence on the final evaluation.
NOTE: final evaluations should incorporate similar weightings of the categories relevant to the curriculum expectations being assessed.</td><td>Category</td><td>K</td><td>T</td><td>C</td><td>A</td></tr>
<tr><td>Performance Task (20%)</td><td></td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pencil / Paper Task (10%)</td><td>3</td><td></td><td>3</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">3</td></tr>
<tr><td>Determine the percentage out of 100%</td><td>Use a conversion chart (see Section 3 page 4) to translate the level to a percentage.</td><td colspan="5">75</td></tr>
<tr><td>Calculate the 30% mark</td><td>Multiply this percentage by 30% to determine the final mark out of 30.</td><td colspan="5">22.5</td></tr>
</table>

The student's final grade is calculated by adding the mark out of 70 and the mark out of 30 to get a mark out of 100%.

Mark out of 70%		Mark out of 30%		Mark out of 100%
53.5	**+**	**22.5**	**=**	**76%**

"

Grading by the median provides more opportunities for success by diminishing the impact of a few stumbles and by rewarding hard work.

"

(Russell G. Wright, "Success for All: The Median is the Key." Phi Delta Kappan)

> "Educators must abandon the average or arithmetic mean as the predominant measurement of student achievement."
>
> (D. Reeves, "Standards Are Not Enough: Essential Transformations for School Success." NASSP Bulletin)

Steps in Determining the Final Grade

Sample 3 — Secondary

The following chart outlines one approach to determining the final grade. The relevant emphasis of the achievement chart categories has been weighted differently. Secondary is the only place where the category weights may be weighted differently.

Calculating 70% of the Final Grade

STEP	INSTRUCTIONS	Knowledge 35%	Thinking / Inquiry 25%	Communication 20%	Application 20%
Determine level	Consider the most consistent and more recent evidence to determine the level achieved for each category.	3	3+	2+	4
Convert to a percentage	Use the conversion chart (see Section 3 page 4) to translate each achievement chart category to a percentage.	75	78	68	88
Achievement chart category emphasis	Multiply each of the percentages by the predetermined achievement chart category weighting **(Note:** Some boards have published category weightings.)	35% 26.3	25% 19.5	20% 13.6	20% 17.6
Calculate the mark out of 100	Total each of the four categories together for a mark out of 100.	77.0			
	Stop here if calculating **midterm grade** (semestered) or **1st / 2nd term grade** (non-semestered) or if you are teaching a course that does not require a 30% final assessment. Enter 76% on report card				
	When completing a **final** report card, continue with the steps below:				
Calculate the mark out of 70	Multiply this mark by 70% (77.0 x .70)	53.9%			
Determine strengths / weaknesses / next steps	Use the level of achievement in the four categories to determine strengths, areas for improvement and next steps.				

Bluewater DSB
Grading and Reporting At-a-Glance

Mark Book Level	Grade 1-6	Grade 7-8	Grade 9-12	Level Interpretation	Midterm Report Card Comment	End of Semester/Year Report Card Comment
Section One — Achievement						
4++	A+	90-100	95-100	**++ Highest Range — Level 4 only.** An outstanding level of achievement of all the descriptors for level 4	*Subject specific comments for strengths, areas for improvement and next steps.*	*Subject specific comments for strengths, areas for improvement and next steps. Subject passed / Credit granted.*
4+			90-94	**+ Higher Range Level** Indicates solid consistent demonstration of all the descriptors for the level **Mid Range Level** indicates solid consistent demonstration of most of the descriptors for the level **- Lower Range Level** indicates demonstration of some of the descriptors for the level and possibly some signs of performance at the level below		
4	A	88	85-89			
4-	A-	82	80-84			
3+	B+	78	77-79			
3	B	75	74-76			
3-	B-	72	70-73			
2+	C+	68	67-69			
2	C	65	64-66			
2-	C-	62	60-63			
1+	D+	58	57-59			
1	D	55	54-56			
1-	D-	52	50-53			
Section Two — Insufficient Achievement						
"R"	R	45	45	Indicates that the student is able to achieve some course expectations in limited ways. However, achievement is insufficient to warrant passing the Subject / granting a Credit	*Insufficient achievement of curriculum expectations; credit at risk*	*Insufficient achievement of curriculum expectations; Subject not passed / Credit not granted*
	R	R OR 43	40	Indicates that the student has difficulty achieving most of the course expectations		
		R OR 40	35	Indicates that the student has difficulty achieving any course expectations		
Section Three — Insufficient Evidence						
"I"	R	38	30	Indicates that the student has missed or failed to complete some summative evaluation activities and that evidence of achievement is insufficient to warrant passing the Subject / granting a Credit	*Current evidence of achievement is insufficient; credit at risk*	*Insufficient evidence of achievement; Subject not passed / Credit not granted*
			20	Indicates that the student has provided little or no evidence of achievement		

R

- The **"R" indicator** should be used for Elementary and Secondary **markbooks** to indicate the student is struggling with the expectations.

- The **"R" may only be used for reporting on the Provincial Report Card Grades 1-8** to indicate that additional learning has to occur before the student will begin to achieve success with the grade expectations. **"R"** is used to flag the need for remediation and parental involvement. **"R"** should not be used repeatedly on the report card. ("R" excerpts taken from the *Guide to the Provincial Report Card Grades 1-8*).

Report Card Grades and Comments for Insufficient Achievement

R or 45 — **Elementary**
(Student's name) is able to demonstrate in a limited way some of the expectations in *(subject)*.

45 — **Secondary**
(Student's name) is able to demonstrate in a limited way some of the expectations in this course. Insufficient achievement of curriculum expectations; credit not granted.

R or 43 — **Elementary**
(Student's name) is having difficulty demonstrating most of the expectations in *(subject)*.

40 — **Secondary**
(Student's name) has difficulty demonstrating most of the expectations in this course. Insufficient achievement of curriculum expectations; credit not granted.

R or 40 — **Elementary**
(Student's name) is having great difficulty demonstrating any of the expectations in *(subject)*.

35 — **Secondary**
(Student's name) had great difficulty in demonstrating any of the expectations in this course. Insufficient achievement of curriculum expectations; credit not granted.

I

The **"I" indicator** can be used for Elementary and Secondary **markbooks** to indicate insufficient evidence. It **cannot be used on the Provincial Report Card in either Elementary or Secondary.**

Report Card Grades and Comments for Insufficient Evidence

38 — **Elementary**
(Student's name) has failed to complete some of the required tasks / activities and has shown insufficient evidence of the expectations in *(subject)*. Please refer to the Learning Skills section for further details.

30 — **Secondary**
(Student's name) has failed to complete a significant number of the required assessment tasks/activities and has shown insufficient evidence of achievement of the expectations for this course; credit not granted. Please refer to Learning Skills section of the report card.

20 — **Secondary**
(Student's name) has failed to complete any of the required assessment tasks/activities and has shown insufficient evidence of achievement of the expectations for this course; credit not granted. Please refer to Learning Skills section of the report card.

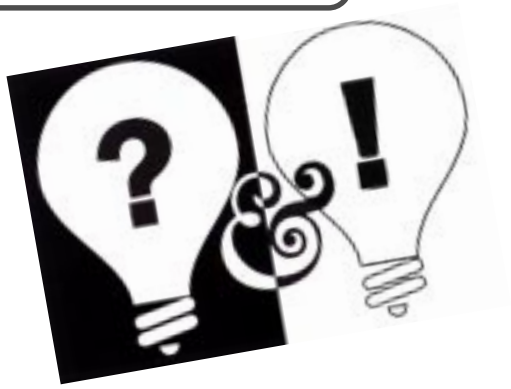
Calculating 30% of the Final Grade

Follow the breakdown of the final 30% evaluation [for example, 10% paper and pencil task (e.g., written examination), 20% performance task (e.g., simulation)].
Identify the related key learnings (clusters of expectations) and their related achievement chart categories for each assessment strategy.

STEP	INSTRUCTIONS	EXAMPLE				
		Category	K	T	C	A
Determine the level of performance	Examine the evidence on the final evaluation. **NOTE:** final evaluations should incorporate similar weightings of the categories relevant to the curriculum expectations being assessed.	Performance Task (20%)		3	3	3
		Pencil / Paper Task (10%)	3		3	
		3				
Determine the percentage out of 100%	Use a conversion chart (see Section 3 page 4) to translate the level to a percentage.	75				
Calculate the 30% mark	Multiply this percentage by 30% to determine the final mark out of 30.	22.5				

The student's final grade is calculated by adding the mark out of 70 and the mark out of 30 to get a mark out of 100%.

Mark out of 70%		Mark out of 30%		Mark out of 100%
53.4	**+**	**22.5**	**=**	**75.9** or **76%**



c) Frequently Asked Questions

1. Should late assignments and/or early submissions impact on the student's final grade?

- No. These are reported on the achievement of learning skills.
- There are no curriculum expectations that are tied explicitly to late and early submission of assignments.
- Date of submission is not related to achievement of curriculum expectations or. any of the four categories of the achievement chart.

2. What is a sufficient amount of evidence in order to provide an accurate picture of a student's achievement?

- There is no definite or set amount of evidence. There needs to be enough evidence to determine "justifiable" grades.
- Evidence must include each of the four categories of the achievement chart.
- Teachers should feel confident that the evidence that they have gathered is sufficient on which to base a judgement of the achievement of the expectations.
- Sufficient evidence includes a combination of "work in progress" and graded work that gives the teacher, the parents, and the student a clear picture of the student's level of ability.

3. What is the most consistent level of achievement?

- Teachers should use their professional judgement to review a student's learning over time.
- The student's grade should not be impacted negatively by a single, poor result.
- The grade should reflect, more often than not, the trend of the student's learning. Anomalies should be reviewed carefully to determine the reason for their occurrence and whether they should impact on the student's grade.

> "
>
> Grading and reporting will always involve some degree of subjectivity; therefore, grading and reporting should always be done in reference to established criteria and performance standards (*i.e., in Ontario, the expectations and achievement levels*). The grade should be an accurate reflection of what the student has learned.
>
> "
>
> (Thomas R. Guskey)

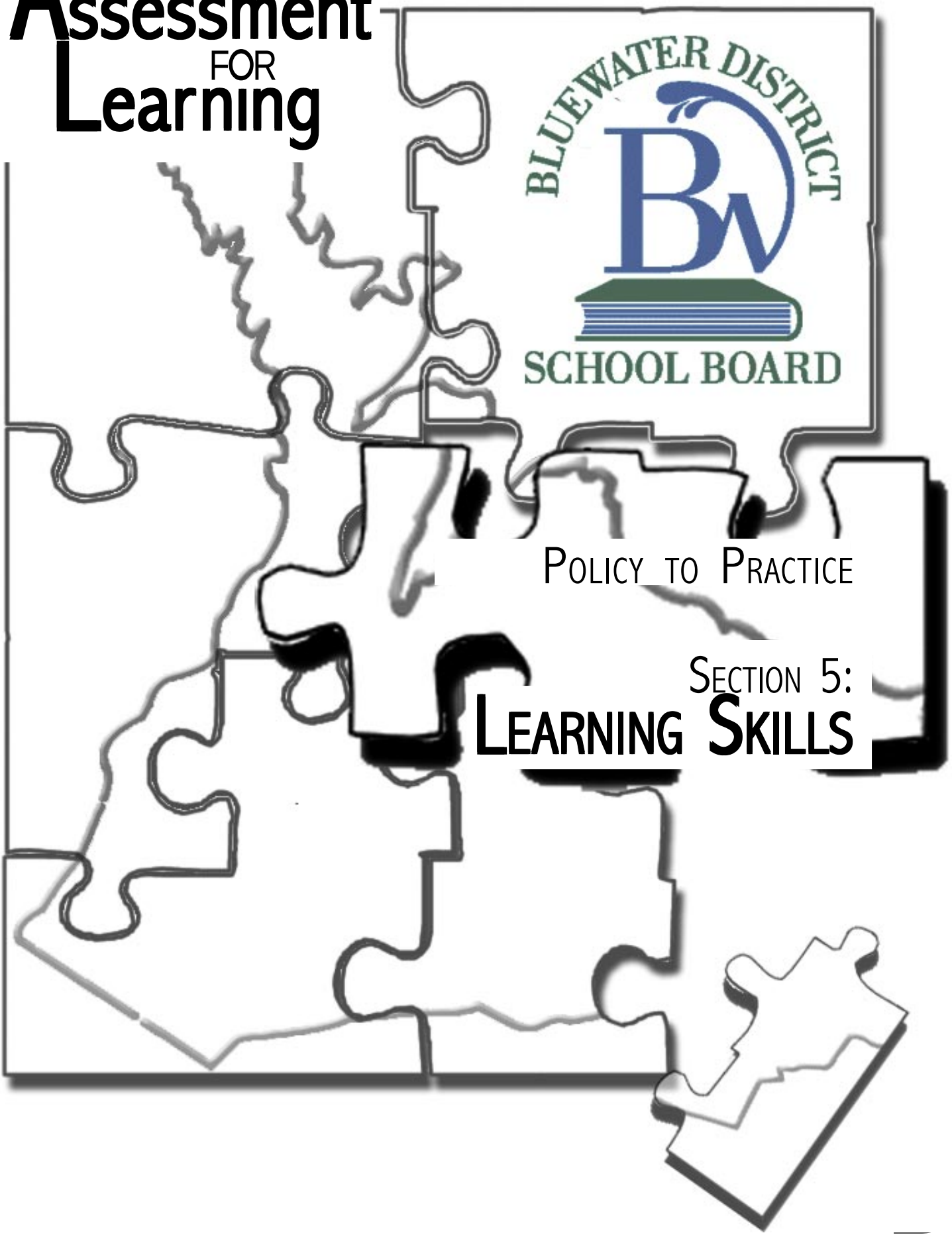
4. What is meant by more recent?

- More recent evidence is often most relevant to skill development.
- More recent evidence may not apply to the acquisition of discrete facts and information.
- More recent evidence should be used where you are looking for growth over time.
- More recent evidence should be used when earlier conceptual learning is used in higher-level ways.
- Greater insights might be expected towards the end of the course rather than at the beginning.

5. Should missed and/or incomplete assignments impact on the student's final grade?

- Missed and incomplete assignments do impact the student's grade depending on the number of missed assessments, significance of the assessment, and whether the same expectations are re-assessed later.
- Each individual situation will require different decisions and teacher professional judgement.
- Missed and/or incomplete assignments should impact on the FINAL grade where there are a significant number of curriculum expectations that have not been assessed because of missed assignments.
- Missed and/or incomplete assignments should not impact on the FINAL grade where the curriculum expectations have been addressed and/or assessed through another assessment process.

Assessment FOR Learning



Policy to Practice

Section 5: Learning Skills

a) Introduction

The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning. Assessment of Learning Skills also follows this guiding principle. Information in this section of the resource document will assist teachers in teaching and assessing Learning Skills. Teachers, students and parents need to have a clear understanding that Learning Skills are essential to each student's success and in future employment. Learning Skills are developmental in nature and are demonstrated in different ways at different levels. They must be clearly communicated, taught and assessed.

The report card focuses on two distinct but related aspects of student achievement: the achievement of Curriculum Expectations and the development of Learning Skills. Although Learning Skills have a significant impact (positive or negative) on achievement, the evaluation of learning skills will not be included in the determination of the final grade.

Evidence of learning skills may be collected and organized in a variety of ways:

- planning sheets and work organizers;
- self assessment logs of learning skills;
- anecdotal observations (i.e.: class participation, initiative);
- records of participation;
- portfolio samples with self, peer and teacher assessments of skills demonstrated;
- planners (journals, homework).

> "The separate evaluation and reporting of learning skills reflects their critical role in students' achievement of the curriculum expectations. To the extent possible, the evaluation of learning skills, apart from any that may be included as part of curriculum expectation, should not be considered in the determination of percentage grades."
>
> (Program Planning and Assessment, 2000)
> (Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 1-8)

Learning Skills and Achievement

FOR EACH STUDENT

HOW
THEY LEARN

WHAT
THEY LEARN

Learning Skills

Curriculum Expecta

5 Secondary Categories	9 Elementary Categories
• Works Independently	• Works Independently
• Teamwork	• Cooperation
• Organization	• Homework Completion / Work Habits
• Work Habits / Homework	• Initiative
• Initiative	• Use of Information
	• Problem Solving
	• Class Participation
	• Goal Setting to Improve Work
	• Conflict Resolution

4 Categories of Knowledge and Skil

- Knowledge / Understandin Theory
- Inquiry / Thinking
- Communication
- Making Connections / Application

Assessed as

E = Excellent
G = Good
S = Satisfactory
N = Needs Improvement

Evaluated
using the Achievement C
to see
HOW WELL
students measure up to
Provincial Standard

The Provincial Report Card

Achievement of Expecta determines the percentage

b) Classroom Practice

i) Learning Skills in the Elementary Grades

The following nine learning skills appear on the Provincial Report Card for Grades 1-8. Included are some examples of behaviour that would constitute evidence of this skill. These serve as a guideline only and are not exhaustive.

(adapted from Guide to the Provincial Report Card Grades 1-8)

Learning Skill	Indicator
Independent Work	• attends regularly and is punctual • works well without supervision • completes tasks on time and with care • accepts responsibility for own behaviour • follows routines and instructions without supervision • identifies and pursues learning goals and tasks independently • responds and participates in a variety of learning activities • selects learning materials and strategies independently • persists with tasks • adheres to established time lines
Initiative	• welcomes new tasks and seeks new opportunities for learning • seeks and responds to challenges and risks • is interested in and curious about objects and events • seeks additional and new information on own • identifies problems to solve and conducts experiments • approaches new learning with confidence • demonstrates a positive attitude towards learning • develops original ideas and innovative procedures • attempts a variety of learning activities • seeks assistance when necessary
Homework Completion / Work Habits	• follows directions and completes homework on time and with care • puts forth a consistent effort • shows attention to detail • begins work promptly • uses time efficiently • attends to the task at hand • perseveres with complex projects that require sustained effort • organizes materials and equipment for effective use

Use of Information	• effectively interprets and synthesizes information • integrates learning from various subjects • gathers information effectively, using a variety of techniques and sources • considers all information and alternatives before reaching a conclusion • organizes information logically and creatively
Cooperation with Others	• takes turns • listens to, acknowledges, and considers others' opinions • willingly works with others • helps others • respects rights, property, opinion of others • shares resources and equipment • works and plays cooperatively with others • establishes positive relationships with peers and adults
Conflict Resolution	• resolves conflicts when they occur independently • resolves conflicts in socially acceptable ways • seeks positive solutions • mediates differences of opinion • uses a variety of strategies to resolve conflicts
Class Participation	• participates in class and groups activities • willingly works with new groups • works towards the goals of the class and the group • contributes information and ideas to the class and the group • listens to others without interrupting • shares responsibility for carrying out decisions and difficulties • recognizes contributions of others through encouragement, support or praise
Problem Solving	• solves problems independently • devises a plan • carries out the plan • records the process and results • makes connections between different problems and solutions • checks and evaluates the plan, solution or result • applies successful strategies to new problems • develops original ideas and creative approaches to solving problems
Goal Setting to Improve Work	• identifies appropriate criteria for assessing work • asssesses own work • provides specific steps or actions needed to reach goals or improve • evaluates own success at reaching goals • perseveres to achieve goals

ii) Learning Skills in the Secondary Grades

The evaluation of learning skills, apart from any that may be included as part of the curriculum expectations in a course, are not to be considered in the determination of percentage grades. The report card provides a record of the learning skills demonstrated by the student in every course, in the following five categories:

- **Works Independently**
- **Work Habits**
- **Organization**
- **Teamwork**
- **Initiative**

The following is a list of indicators for these five learning skills adapted from the Ontario Report Card Guide, Grades 9-12.

Learning Skill	Indicator
Works Independently	• accomplishes tasks independently • accepts responsibility for completing tasks • follows instructions • regularly completes assignments on time and with care • demonstrates self-direction in learning • uses time effectively • demonstrates persistence in bringing tasks to completion • reflects on learning experiences • uses prior knowledge and experience to solve problems and make decisions • independently selects, evaluates, and uses appropriate learning materials, resources and activities
Work Habits	• completes homework on time and with care • puts forth consistent effort • follows directions • shows attention to detail • uses materials and equipment effectively • begins work promptly and uses time effectively • perseveres with complex projects that require sustained effort • applies effective study practices

Organization	• organizes work when faced with a number of tasks • devises and follows a coherent plan to complete a task • follows specific steps to reach goals or to make improvements • revises steps and strategies when necessary to achieve a goal • manages and uses time effectively and creatively • demonstrates an ability to organize and manage information • follows an effective process for inquiry and research • uses appropriate information technologies to organize information and tasks
Teamwork	• works willingly and cooperatively with others • shares resources, materials and equipment with others • responds and is sensitive to the needs and welfare of others • solves problems collaboratively • takes responsibility for his/her own share of the work to be done • works to help achieve the goals of the group or class • helps to motivate others, encouraging them to participate • contributes information and ideas to solve problems and make decisions • questions the ideas of the group to seek clarification, test thinking or reach agreement • shows respect for ideas and opinions of others • listens attentively without interrupting • seeks consensus and negotiates agreement before making decisions
Initiative	• seeks out new opportunities for learning • responds to challenges and takes risks • demonstrates interest and curiousity about concepts, objects, events and media resources • seeks necessary and additional information in print, electronic and media resources • identifies problems to solve, carries out investigations, generates questions for further inquiry • requires little prompting to complete a task, displaying self-motivation and self-direction • seeks assistance when needed • attempts a variety of learning activities • uses information in creative ways to improve learning for self or others • approaches new learning situations with confidence and a positive attitude

c) Attendance, Punctuality and Submission of Assignments

Attendance and Punctuality

1. Attendance and punctuality cannot be used in the determination of the students' percentage grades. Teachers must use this evidence in the evaluation of the Learning Skills. When reporting, teachers may comment on the significant impact that absences and lates make on student achievement of the expectations.

Submission of Assignments

1. It's important that teachers monitor methodically the progress of all their students' assignments. Sufficient class time should be spent in observing and interviewing students as they work on their assignments whether they are formative or summative in nature. Opportunities to conference with students and building in checkpoints along the way is also important. Assignments should include scaffolding and feedback to improve learning. Students having difficulty with an assignment should always be encouraged to seek assistance from the teacher and their peers.

2. Where a student has missed or failed to complete a formative assessment activity (i.e. part of the instructional sequence - simply done, not done; not part of the grade), record for Learning Skills evaluations or comments.

3. Summative evaluation activities (i.e. at end of an instructional sequence) are due on the date or within the timeframe specified by the teacher. If students do not submit assignments on time teachers will take the appropriate actions depending on the circumstances:

    - If the reasons are deemed **legitimate**, the teacher will accept the assignment at a later date or an alternative assignment will be provided with no penalty. The teacher may decide that submission of the late assignment is not necessary if the student will have an opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the missed expectations through subsequent assignments.

    - If the reasons are deemed to be **not legitimate**, the teacher will:
        - take note and use this evidence in the evaluation of the Learning Skills;
        - communicate to the student and the parent that the student is still responsible for completing and submitting the assignment within a reasonable time (e.g. one week) but not after the assignments are marked and returned to the students. At this point in time the late assignment does

not provide valid evidence of the student's achievement. It cannot be considered for determination of the final grade and if necessary an alternate assessment may be assigned;
- if warranted, give the student a consequence based on the school code of conduct; and
- at his/her discretion record an "**I**" for incomplete if the student fails to take the opportunities offered as above.

- Parents and students will be advised that failure to complete evaluation activities reduces the body of evidence upon which the teacher can evaluate student achievement of the curriculum expectations, and may jeopardize the granting of a credit for the course.

d) Determining the Grade as a Result of Missed or Incomplete Summative Evaluations

If a student has missed or failed to complete summative evaluation activities, the teacher will review the student's data and determine whether there is sufficient evidence to make a valid and reliable judgement about the student's achievement. Throughout this process the teacher will be in communication with the principal and parent.

- If, in the teacher's professional judgement, the student has demonstrated achievement of the missed expectations through subsequent summative evaluations or in another context, (e.g. class work, formative assessment activities) the teacher will determine that sufficient evidence has been provided by the student to make a valid evaluation of student achievement. The teacher will determine the student's most consistent level of achievement based on the weight of this evidence.

- If the student has not demonstrated achievement of the missed expectations in subsequent summative evaluations, and/or the student does not have a valid reason for the missed evaluations, the teacher may determine that insufficient evidence has been provided to make a valid evaluation of a student's performance. The teacher will then consider the student's most consistent overall level of achievement on **completed** evaluations but will use professional judgement to adjust the grade within the range of the determined level or a lower level if warranted.

- If the student has missed a number of evaluations such that, in the teacher's professional judgement, there is insufficient evidence to validate even Level 1 achievement, the teacher will refer to the **"Bluewater DSB Grading and Reporting Chart-at-a-Glance" Section 3 "Insufficient Evidence".**

BLUEWATER DSB
GRADING AND REPORTING AT-A-GLANCE

MARK BOOK LEVEL	GRADE 1-6	GRADE 7-8	GRADE 9-12	LEVEL INTERPRETATION	MIDTERM REPORT CARD COMMENT	END OF SEMESTER/YEAR REPORT CARD COMMENT
SECTION ONE — ACHIEVEMENT						
4++	A+	90-100	95-100	**++ Highest Range — Level 4 only.** An outstanding level of achievement of all the descriptors for level 4	*Subject specific comments for strengths, areas for improvement and next steps.*	*Subject specific comments for strengths, areas for improvement and next steps. Subject passed / Credit granted.*
4+			90-94	**+ Higher Range Level** Indicates solid consistent demonstration of all the descriptors for the level		
4	A	88	85-89			
4-	A-	82	80-84	**Mid Range Level** indicates solid consistent demonstration of most of the descriptors for the level		
3+	B+	78	77-79			
3	B	75	74-76			
3-	B-	72	70-73			
2+	C+	68	67-69	**- Lower Range Level** indicates demonstration of some of the descriptors for the level and possibly some signs of performance at the level below		
2	C	65	64-66			
2-	C-	62	60-63			
1+	D+	58	57-59			
1	D	55	54-56			
1-	D-	52	50-53			
SECTION TWO — INSUFFICIENT ACHIEVEMENT						
"R"	R	45	45	Indicates that the student is able to achieve some course expectations in limited ways. However, achievement is insufficient to warrant passing the Subject / granting a Credit	*Insufficient achievement of curriculum expectations; credit at risk*	*Insufficient achievement of curriculum expectations; Subject not passed / Credit not granted*
	R	R OR 43	40	Indicates that the student has difficulty achieving most of the course expectations		
		R OR 40	35	Indicates that the student has difficulty achieving any course expectations		
SECTION THREE — INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE						
"I"	R	38	30	Indicates that the student has missed or failed to complete some summative evaluation activities and that evidence of achievement is insufficient to warrant passing the Subject / granting a Credit	*Current evidence of achievement is insufficient; credit at risk*	*Insufficient evidence of achievement; Subject not passed / Credit not granted*
			20	Indicates that the student has provided little or no evidence of achievement		

R

- The **"R" indicator** should be used for Elementary and Secondary **markbooks** to indicate the student is struggling with the expectations.

- The **"R" may only be used for reporting on the Provincial Report Card Grades 1-8** to indicate that additional learning has to occur before the student will begin to achieve success with the grade expectations. **"R"** is used to flag the need for remediation and parental involvement. **"R"** should not be used repeatedly on the report card. ("R" excerpts taken from the *Guide to the Provincial Report Card Grades 1-8*).

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I

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Report Card Grades and Comments for Insufficient Evidence

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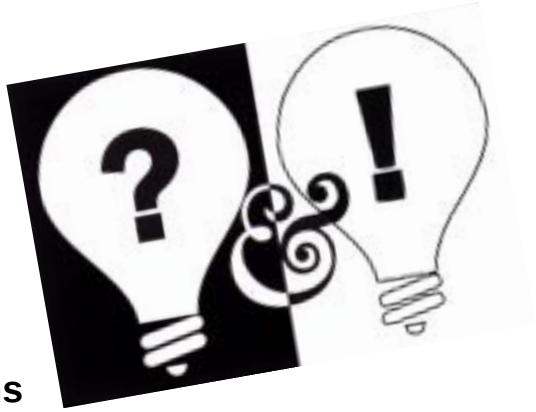


e) Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why have learning skills been separated from the student's level of achievment?

- Percentage grades provide more accurate information about what students know and can do. These are influenced by behavioural characteristics (e.g., works independently, teamwork, organization, work habits and initiative, etc.)
- This separation is meant to provide useful information to parents, students, employers, post secondary institutions, and others about valuable life skills.
- The separation of learning skills highlights meaningful information about a student.

2. What planning needs to take place to ensure that learning skills are being assessed?

- Planning for the assessment of learning skills should be part of the design down process in course planning so that the learning skills are modelled and practised throughout the course.
- Multiple and varied opportunities to demonstrate learning skills need to be provided along with feedback for improvement of student learning.
- Criteria for demonstrating successful achievement of the learning skills need to be shared with students and in some cases should include student input on the criteria.
- It is possible to use peer and self assessment for learning skills; however, these should only be used for improvement of learning skills.

3. What messages do we need to report to students and parents with respect to the importance of learning skills?

- For successful lifelong learning, learning skills are an integral part of all learning that takes place during a student's school years.
- Learning skills are aligned with the Conference Board of Canada – Employability Skills.
- Employers are beginning to request report cards and not just transcripts so that they can see the learning skills.

> "
>
> *The separate evaluation and reporting of the learning skills in five areas reflects their critical role in a student's achievement of the curriculum expectations.*
>
> "
>
> (Program Planning and Assessment, p.16)

4. When should report card comments reflect the learning skills?

- Teachers should provide detailed information that will encourage students to set goals for learning and parents to support learning at home. (GRC, page 3)
- Teachers may also include comments on the student's learning skills when there is a significant positive or negative impact on student achievement. (GRC, page 5)
- The comments focus on progress describing strengths, areas for improvement, and next steps. (GRC, page 5)
- Comments should reflect the student's achievement of the curriculum expectations and discuss the learning skills that he or she has demonstrated during the reporting period.
- Teachers should describe, as specifically as possible, significant strengths and areas for improvement and identify the steps that should be taken to improve the student's learning. (GRC, page 10)

f) References to Other Material

Program Planning and Assessment, 2000.
Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 1-8
Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 9-12
Teacher Advisor Document, Grades 7-11

"

If you want to appear accountable,
test your students.

If you want to improve schools,
teach teachers to ***assess their students.***

If you want to maximize learning,
teach students to ***assess themselves.***

"

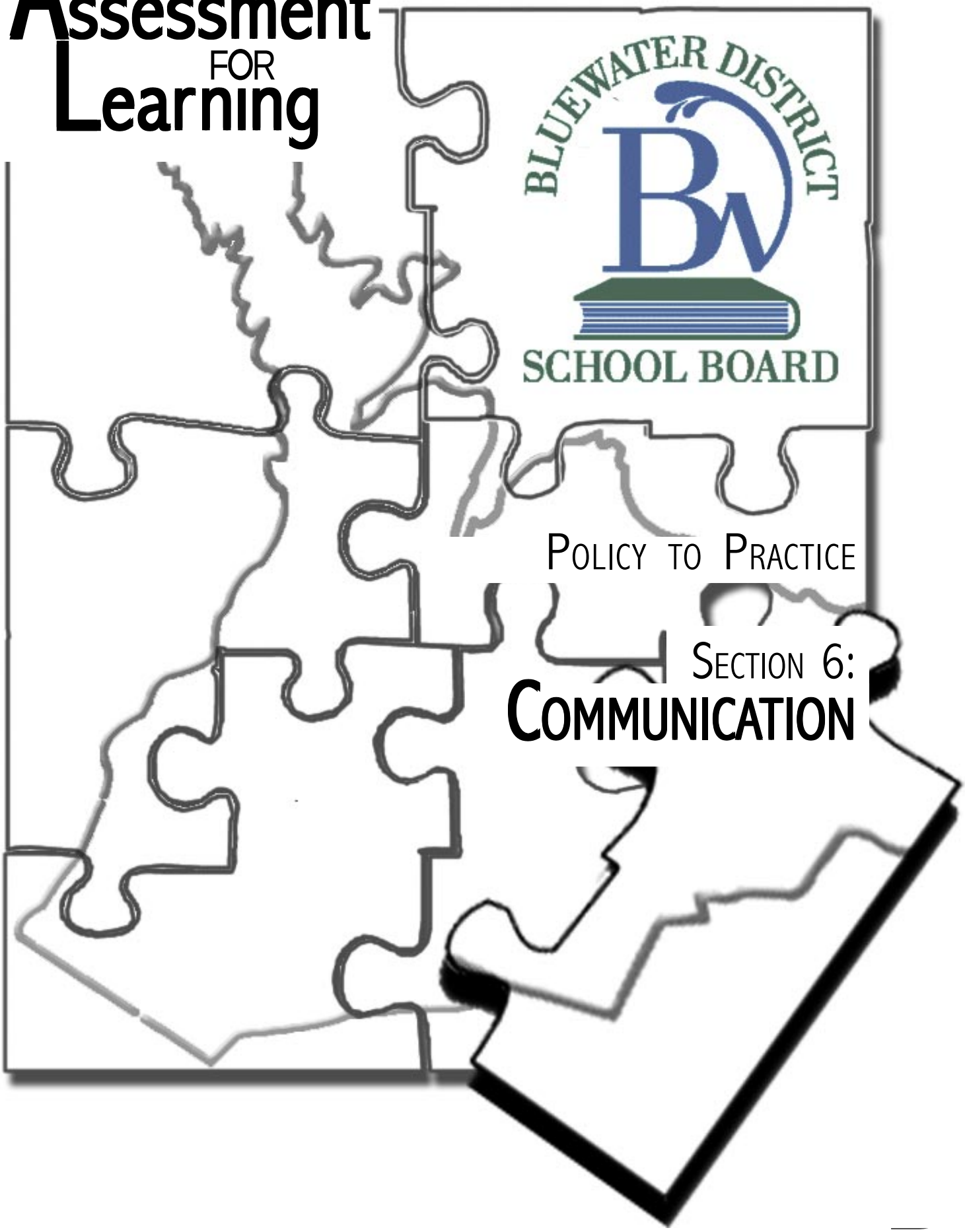
(Stiggins)

Assessment FOR Learning

BLUEWATER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

POLICY TO PRACTICE

SECTION 6: COMMUNICATION



a) Introduction

Effective communication must consider the:

- purpose
- audience
- medium
- content

It should be **continuous** to serve the evolving needs of the learning community. It must support strategies to encourage all stakeholders to actively participate.

Effective communication supports the goal of providing timely information regarding all of the activities that take place in a school and encouraging ongoing dialogue among those who share in the responsibility for creating a learning community.

The most important communication is the daily, informal, two-way dialogue that takes place between teacher and student in the ongoing learning process.

"The information on student achievement, gathered through assessment and evaluation, should be communicated to students and parents at regular intervals and in a variety of informal and formal ways. In addition, parents must be informed of the policies, procedures, and criteria involved in the assessment and evaluation of student achievement, and of policies concerning students' promotion from one course to the next. Informal communication of student achievement includes ongoing feedback to students based on assessment strategies implemented throughout the course, as well as feedback to parents during parent-teacher conferences and at other appropriate times."

> "
>
> The Provincial Report Card is only one of several means by which teachers report student achievement to parents and students. Communication about student achievement should be continual throughout the year and should include, in addition to the report card, such things as parent-teacher or parent-student-teacher conferences, interviews, phone calls, informal reports, and portfolios of student work.
> Communication about student achievement should be designed to provide detailed information that will encourage students to set goals for learning, help teachers to establish plans for teaching, and assist parents in supporting learning at home.
>
> "
>
> ***Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 1-8, 1998 and Grades 9 – 12, 1999.***

Effective Communication...

- promotes improved learning;
- provides information that helps teachers refine their program;
- recognizes the shared responsibility among parents, teachers, students, and the members of the school community;
- uses clear language appropriate to the intended audience;
- focuses on collaboratively developed, overall educational goals;
- helps all stakeholders to understand school, board, and Ministry policies and their implementation;
- informs the learning community about future opportunities;
- supports the sharing of good news about the successes of students, schools, and boards;
- invites the community to provide feedback; and
- includes both ongoing and periodic reporting of student achievement and learning skills.

b) Communication Framework

The Communications Framework provides suggestions upon which to build a plan that considers what is to be communicated, who needs to receive the message and the form that the information will take. The most appropriate option for communication about assessment will support other information that is being relayed among stakeholder groups at any given time.

Why? Reasons for Communication	Who? Members of the Learning Community	How? Methods of Communication	What? Things Communicated
• **Improve Student Learning** • **Student Achievement** • **Student Progress** • **Teacher Planning** • Accountability • Changes from Former Grades/Courses/ Procedures • Recognition Of Student Skills • School Profile • Student Destination • Teacher Appraisals • Inform Parents of Student Progress and School Activities • Inform the Wider Community of School Issues and Activities	• Students • Parents • Administration • Community • Guidance Staff • Post Secondary • Institutions • Potential Employers • School Councils • Teachers – Secondary, Grade 7/8 • Home and School Associations • Outside Agencies (i.e. CAS, CCAC, BGCS) School Board	• Action/Growth/Annual Learning Plans • Anecdotal Feedback • Assessment Tools • Community Newspapers • Conferencing • Course Calendar • Course Handouts • Curriculum Nights/ Parent Nights • Exemplars • IEP/IPRC • Letters/Newsletters • Open Houses • OSR Other Media (T.V., Radio) • Parent Interviews • Phone Calls • Progress/Interim Reports • Report Cards • School Profiles • Student Handbooks Student Planners/Agendas • Transition Plans • Verbal Feedback • Web pages/eMail	• Attendance Problems • Behaviour/Lates • Learning Skills • Marks/Levels/ Achievement Chart • Missed Assignments • Opportunities • Policy - Ministry, Board, School • Program Expectations • Requests For Feedback • Requests For Involvement • Student Achievement • Successes • Summer School Information • Night School Information • Community Events • Recreation Opportunities • Public Health Issues

Cyclical Communication

Effective communication about assessment will follow a predictable pattern throughout the school year. ***The Yearly Communication Cycle*** outlines yearly opportunities and issues for communication. Possible elementary and secondary frameworks are provided. A plan for improving communication should consider this pattern and take advantage of existing structures and procedures. Whenever possible, information about learning, assessment, evaluation, and reporting should be incorporated into other communication sent home such as permission forms and school/class newsletters. Samples of some of these communication tools are included in the appendix.

Suggested Elementary Yearly Communication Cycle

Month	Communication Issues and Opportunities
August	***Welcome to School:*** *Welcome Letter, Class Placement Information, Student Handbook, Code of Conduct, School Maps, Staff Directory* ***Final Timetable:*** *Meeting Schedules, Teacher Contact Information* ***Transition:*** *Opportunity for students/parents to get comfortable with new school/class*
September	***Welcome to School Handouts:*** *School Monthly Newsletter including introductions, communication opportunities Assessment and Evaluation Plan* ***Volunteer Information:*** *Requests, Information Evening, Procedures* ***Contact Information:*** *Teacher/Parent Availability, Homework Partner, Class Web Page* ***Student Information Cards:*** *Special Needs, Medical Information, Emergency Contact* ***Open House:*** *Opportunity to meet parents and establish relationships* **Personal Contact of Parent by Teacher**
October	***First Term Progress Report:*** *Learning Skills, Identification of Areas of Concern, Evidence of Achievement to Date* ***Parent Interviews:*** *Extend opportunity for informal or formal interview if concerned* ***Open House:*** *Discussion of School Goals, Available Supports, Areas of Emphasis* ***Let's Learn Early Kindergarten Registration:*** *For students entering junior kindergarten next school year* ***First Term Summative Assessments:*** *Rich Performance Tasks, Final Dates and Assessment Information* **Individual Education Plans Sent Home** ***Transition:*** *Initial contact with secondary school for grade 8 students*
November	***First Term Report Card:*** *Provincial Report Card, Opportunities for Parent Interviews, Response Form* ***Formal Parent Interview Opportunity:*** *Discuss report card progress, learning skills, and areas for growth* ***Transition:*** *Presentations to grade 8 classes*
December	
January	***Second Term Progress Report:*** *Learning Skills, Identification of Areas of Concern, Evidence of Achievement to Date* ***Transition:*** *Invitational meeting for "At Risk" grade 8 students and their parents*

February	***Open House:*** *Initial Information Regarding Program for Coming Year* ***Second Term Summative Assessments:*** *Rich Performance Task, Final Dates and Assessment Information* ***Transition:*** *Option card presentations to grade 8 classes*
March	***Second Term Report Card:*** *Provincial Report Card, Opportunities for Parent Interviews, Response Form* ***Formal Parent Interview Opportunity:*** *Discuss report card progress, learning skills, and areas for growth* ***Annual Education Plan:*** *Grades 7-8 Reviewed in Selection of Program for the Coming Year*
April	***IPRC Process:*** *Identification, Placement and Review Committee meetings* ***Third Term Progress Report:*** *Learning Skills, Identification of Areas of Concern, Evidence of Achievement to Date* ***Transition:*** *Development of individual transition plans for higher needs students into and out of school*
May	***Summer School Information:*** *Information Regarding the Availability of Courses* ***Third Term Summative Assessments:*** *Rich Performance Task, Final Dates and Assessment Information* *Parent Input for Student Placement in Following School Year* ***Transition:*** *Grade 8 orientation at secondary school*
June	***Third Term Report Card:*** *Provincial Report Card, Opportunities for Parent Interviews, Response Form* ***Inform of Required School Supplies and Important Dates for Next School Year*** ***Summer School Registration:*** *Identification and Registration for Grade 7/8 Students, Suggestions for Continuing and Supporting Learning Over the Summer.*
July	

Ongoing opportunities include:
Assemblies, Concerts, Drama Presentations, Music/Dance Presentations, Field Trips

Suggested Secondary Yearly Communication Cycle

Month	Communication Issues and Opportunities
August	Transition Information/Events for Grade 9 Students
September	Welcome to school –Student Handbook, Code of Conduct, School Maps, Locker Information, Staff Directory Course Handouts – Course Organization, Department Guidelines, Assessment and Evaluation Plan Contact Information – Teacher/Parent Availability, Homework Partner, Class Web Page Student Information Cards – Special Needs, Medical Information, Emergency Contact Required Materials – Calculators, Gym Clothes, Safety Equipment, Notebooks, Dictionary Final Timetable – Meeting Schedules, Teacher Contact Information, Timetables First Personal Contact of Parent by Teacher (phone call)
October	Progress/Interim Reports – Learning Skills, Identification of Areas of Concern, Evidence of Achievement to date "Credit at Risk" Letters Parent Interviews – Structured or informal, Drop in or Appointment Open House – Discussion of School Goals, Available Supports, Areas of Emphasis OSSLT Information Session – Letters regarding Accommodations, Deferrals and Exemptions Individual Education Plans for New Students must be sent home within 20 working days of the start of the year Transition – Initial Contact with Grade 8 Teachers and Students – early identification of students at risk
November	Mid-Semester Report – Provincial Report Card, Parent/Student/Teacher interviews, Response form (page 3) Course changes within 5 days of report card – to different level, to non-credit support, to study hall Post-Secondary Information Nights – OYAP, Workplace, College, University, Y Employment Service Annual Education Plan – Reviewed in each Semester Commencement Exercises Transition – Invitational Meetings for Grade 7 and 8 Students and their Parents
December	Final Evaluation Schedules – Study Habits Checklist, Final Evaluation Timetables At Risk Letters
January	Course Change Information – Changes to Semester 2 Course Selections Extra Assistance Opportunities – Preparation for Final Evaluations, Math or English Help Room notices Transition – Invitational Meeting for "At Risk" Grade 8 Students and Parents
February	First Semester Report – Provincial Report Card, Graduation Requirement Summary Course Handouts – Course Organization, Department Guidelines, Assessment and Evaluation Plans Contact Information – Teacher/Parent Availability, Homework Partner, Class Web Page

	Curriculum Open House – Initial Information Regarding Courses for next year Option Sheets – Presentations to classes, Assistance with Course Selection and Destination Planning Transition – Option Card Presentations to Grade 8 Classes
March	Progress Reports - Learning Skills, Identification of Areas of Concern, Evidence of Achievement to date "Credit at Risk" Letters Option Sheets – Assistance with Course Selection and Destination Planning, Credit Counseling Summaries Annual Education Plan – Reviewed in Selection of Program for Coming Year
April	Mid-Semester Report – Provincial Report Card, Parent/Student/Teacher Interviews, Response form (page 3) IPRC – Annual Review of Identified Students, Parent Contact, IEP updating, OSSLT (literacy test) Student reports available
May	Final Evaluation Schedules – Study Habits Checklist, Final Evaluation Activities Timetables Summer School Information – Information regarding Availability of Upgrade and Transfer/Crossover courses Transition – Grade 8 Orientation at the Secondary School Individual Education Plans for the coming year sent home
June	Summer School Registration – Contact and Counsel Students who have missed credits Timetable Conflicts – Resolution of timetable conflicts for the coming year Course Selection Counselling – Students changing courses due to failures or changes in goals, Recommendations for OSSLT (literacy test) preparation during the summer
July	Final Report – Provincial Report Card, Graduation Requirement Summary

Starting Out Well

As planning for the school year progresses toward the first day of school, teachers develop class newsletters or course outlines to go home during the first week. These set the communication tone for the year/semester and should provide both the student and parent with information on what will be learned, how learning will be measured, and what opportunities will be available for discussion of progress among teacher, student, and parent. Course outlines are required by both the Bluewater District School Board and the Ministry of Education for secondary courses. In elementary schools, teachers are expected to submit long-range plans for all subjects they will be teaching that year (i.e. monthly newsletters or long-range plans.)

The Course Handout Checklist and **Monthly Newsletter Checklist** describe the key features that should be included in the first formal communications to students and parents.

"Teachers must use assessment and evaluation strategies that are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the course and at other appropriate points throughout the course"
(*Program Planning and Assessment*, p. 13)

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"Parents must be informed of the policies, procedures, and criteria involved in the assessment and evaluation of student achievement"
(*Ontario Secondary Schools*, p. 32)

Monthly Newsletter Checklist (Elementary)

Suggested Elementary Class Newsletter Guide

Upcoming Events (Seasonal)

- Reminders and administration of class
- Reminders of classroom procedures and rountines (ie. library, phys. ed., Indoor/outdoor shoes)

Academic/Curriculum Focus

- Enduring understandings in each subject area
- Demonstrations of learning that will be used as the basis for assessment

Learning Skills

- Connection between learning skills and curriculum and possible focus for the month
- Reminders for classroom expectations re: homework, absences, missed work

Teaching/Assessment Strategies

- Statement regarding the range of learning opportunities and assessment strategies to be used to address student needs (ie. opportunities to DO, SAY, and WRITE)
- Use of diagnostic/formative and summative assessment
- Timing and duration of summative activities

Communication Reminders

- Important dates (ie. class presentations, test dates, project deadlines)
- Upcoming, formal & informal opportunities and procedures for communication
- Extra help opportunities

Checklist for Course Handouts (Secondary)

Course Details
- Prerequisite(s) for the course
- Reference to the course outline on file in the principal's office
- Strands
- Sequence and timing of strands
- Resources (textbook(s)/required materials/equipment)

Learning Skills
- Statement of learning skills and their value in this course
- Clear communication regarding procedures for homework, late assignments, absences, and missed work

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Teaching/Assessment Strategies
- Statement regarding the range of learning opportunities and assessment strategies to address student needs (i.e. opportunities to Do, Say and Write)
- List of those strategies frequently used
- Choices for students

Achievement Chart
- Statement regarding the achievement chart e.g. weighting of Knowledge, Communication, Application and Thinking and Inquiry

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Term Mark:
- Clear communication of how term mark is determined including:
- The importance of opportunities to learn before evaluation
- How more recent, most consistent is supported (e.g. policy on re-tests and re-submissions)
- Role of diagnostic, formative and summative assessments

Summative Evaluation (30%)
- The timing and duration of activities
- Form/components (e.g. independent study, portfolio, exam, practical skills evaluation, project, performance)
- Student choice
- Review and preparation (e.g. methods, opportunities for assistance)

Communication
- Teacher contact information and procedures for communicating
- Types of informal reporting used (i.e. interim reports, tests to be signed, phone calls, at risk letters)
- Access to marks
- Frequency of marks updating
- Formal reporting periods
- Extra help opportunities (i.e. Math or English "Help" rooms, Support room, before or after school help, etc.)

Samples of each are included in the appendix.

Explaining the Terms

Any communication about student achievement will involve some specific assessment terms that may not be familiar to the parents. Explaining these terms and providing suggestions regarding how students can be supported in their work is a key function of any communication with home.

Keeping in Touch

Short, informal communication should be used to inform both students and parents about student successes (i.e. "Good News" phone calls or notes in students planners.) As well, students and parents should be kept informed when learning is jeopardized by a weakness in learning skills such as missing or incomplete assignments. Providing prompt notification of these potential problems can often prevent a more serious situation from developing. If these notifications also include opportunities for a parental or student response, they validate the notion that classroom learning is a shared responsibility. For elementary students, the student planner is often the method for informally communicating a teacher's concern about student progress. For secondary students, a phone call or note requiring a response is the best method.

The "Missed or Late Assignment/Assessment Contract" offers an example of the kind of notice that will inform the student and parent of missing or late work and invite both reflection and response. If it is the student's learning skills that are of concern, a message highlighting the issue is modeled in the ***Learning Skills Notice.*** For secondary students, a **"Credit at Risk" letter** is also included in the appendix.

Early Reporting (Secondary)

Nearly all schools produce a progress/interim report of some kind early in the year/semester. This report is based on initial assessments that will be primarily diagnostic or formative. The intent of this report is to inform the student and parents of the student's early progress and to identify areas of potential concern. This is an opportunity to highlight the importance of learning skills as well as providing constructive comments about how they could be improved. Samples of interim progress reports are included in the appendix.

Early Reporting (Elementary)

It is very important to avoid surprises on report cards. If a student is experiencing difficulty in any area (academic or learning skills,) contact must be made well in advance of the report card.

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Parent/Student/TeacherConferences

Opportunities for teachers and parents to talk directly can be difficult to arrange. In order to make the most of these meetings, teachers need to prepare some specific information to inform the focus for discussion. Providing a focus for these discussions, recording what took place, and following up maximize the effectiveness of the interview process. A "Guide to Effective Parent/Student/Teacher Conference" is included in the appendix.

Provincial Report Card

The Bluewater Checklist *-Criteria for the Provincial Report Card* is included to guide report card preparation. The provincial report card has the potential to provide a great deal of information to students and their parents/ guardians regarding student achievement. Without specific direction, there is a tendency for teachers, student, and parents to focus primarily on the grade and to pay less attention to the broader indicators of student progress. To improve the effectiveness of the reporting process, parents need to be informed of how to interpret report cards. Then, they can help students identify weaknesses and set goals for improvement.

Next Steps

Communication should occur both from the teacher to the student and parents, and from the student and parents back to the teacher. Page 3 (**The Response Form**) of the Provincial Report Card is a key piece in this communication cycle. Teachers should strongly encourage the completion and return of the Response Form. When it is not returned, a follow-up phone call is necessary.

c) Criteria for the Provincial Report Card — Bluewater Checklist

Overall

The grade and comments on the reporting process are designed to contribute to improving learning for each student.

Components

Include three statements related to the **individual** student's strength, areas for growth and next steps.

Strengths

Does the statement:

☑ tell the student what he/she does well?

☑ aid the student in continued growth and learning in the course?

Areas for Improvement / growth

Does the statement:

☑ begin with "Student needs to…"?

☑ relate to the student's capacity to improve?

Next Steps

Provide clear, concrete next steps for students and parents. These may include learning skills comments linked with knowledge or skills specific to that subject/ discipline which would lead to improvement. Does the statement:

☑ motivate or encourage the student?

☑ provide specific instructions for future progress?
(e.g. instructions for new actions)

☑ provide instructions for measurable progress?

Topics of study are not listed

Comments focus on the achievement scale (performance standard) in relation to the overall expectations (content standard). *e.g. Sally communicates with some clarity and precision when she writes in various forms e.g. letter to the editor.*

Content

Learning Skills

☑ Learning skills comments are not included in achievement comments unless clearly linked to the achievement of curriculum expectations.

Evidence

☑ Refer to evidence that represents the processes as well as the products/ performances of student achievement.

Achievement

☑ Comments reflect, where appropriate, the demonstrated achievement of the achievement chart categories. This ensures that a balance of knowledge and skills is the focus of student learning. They reflect what the student knows, does, applies and communicates. Comments must match the achievement marks.

Style

Concise Language

☑ Written in clear, concise language without educational jargon for maximum information. **Comments are written for students and parents. LESS IS MORE…it is not necessary to fill the space.**

Conventions and Spelling

☑ Grammatically correct and free of spelling errors.

Individualized Comments

☑ Reflect individual student progress, indicate specific individual evidence, use names and appropriate pronouns, reflect accommodations and modifications if applicable. The same comment for every student is not acceptable. Comments focus on the skills needed to complete the task and the degree to which the skills are developed.

Positive Tone

☑ Phrased positively, especially when describing level one performance and Next Steps.