

Assessment Policy

2014-2015

Updated November 19, 2014

Philosophy

Assessment involves the gathering and analysis of information about student performance and is designed to inform practice. It identifies what the students know, understand, can do and feel at different stages in the learning process. Students and teachers should be actively engaged in assessing the students' progress as part of the development of their wider critical-thinking and self-assessment skills.

(Page 44, IB Making the PYP Happen)

Notre Dame Marist Academy-Lower Division is committed to the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme assessment philosophy. At Notre Dame, assessment is an integral part of the students' educational experience. In order to promote student achievement and create a positive learning environment, teachers form a partnership with the students and parents.

Description and Purpose of Assessment

- Are designed at the beginning of the planning stage and modified when necessary.
- Are differentiated for ability and learning styles.
- Provide criteria that is known and understood in advance.
- Assess what the students know.
- Provide opportunities to share knowledge.
- Promote self and peer evaluation.
- Include opportunities for collaboration between the students and teacher as well as among peers.
- Allow students to analyze their learning and understand what needs to be improved.
- Allow parents to see evidence of student learning and development.
- Allow parents to support and enhance student learning.

Benefits of Providing Assessment Feedback

- For students: to encourage the start of lifelong learning.
- For teachers: to support their reflection on what to teach and how to teach it.
- For parents: to be informed of their child's learning and development.

Types of Assessment at Notre Dame Marist Academy-Lower Division

Teachers assess through pre-assessment, formative and summative assessments, student reflections, and student portfolios.

Pre-Assessment

- Assesses prior knowledge.
- Assesses what students want to learn.
- Directs the teacher in planning of learning activities.
- DRA2

Formative Assessment

- Is interwoven within daily learning and instruction.
- Allows the teacher to make necessary adjustments to teaching plans and methods.
- Promotes learning by giving regular and frequent feedback, which helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding, fosters enthusiasm for learning, engages in thoughtful reflection, develops the capacity for self-assessment, and helps learners recognize the criteria for success.

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Summative Assessment

- Is designed before a unit is taught.
- Addresses a variety of learning styles.
- Assesses several elements simultaneously.
- Informs and improves student learning and the teaching process.
- Occurs at the end of the teaching and learning processes.
- Measures understanding of the central idea and prompts student action.
- Provides students with opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned.

Reflection

- Provides students with opportunities to reflect on their learning.
- Provides students with opportunities to reflect on the PYP Attitudes and the IB Learner Profile.
- Provides opportunities for teacher, student and peer interaction.
- Provides teachers with feedback to direct future planning.

Formal Assessments

- Writing Assessment Rubric
 - Students in JK-fifth grade are assessed three times a year. Students write on a given prompt. They are evaluated using the 6-Traits Writing rubric. Rubrics are designed for JK-K, K-second grade and third-fifth grade.
- DRA2 Reading Assessment, Pearson
 - Students in junior kindergarten are as assessed as appropriate.
 - Students in first grade are assessed three times a year.
 - Students in kindergarten, second-fifth grade are assessed two times a year. Students who fall below grade-level expectations are assessed a third time or as needed.

Assessment Tasks and Strategies

- Observations: Students may be observed regularly, with teachers taking notes on the individual, the group, and the whole class. Observations may include individual performance, as well as how groups work and the roles of participants within the group.
- Performance Assessments: Students often are required to show what they can do on authentic tasks that often have more than one acceptable solution. This shows how well they can apply what they have learned.
- Open-ended Tasks: Students are asked to communicate an original response or idea. The finished product might be in the form of a brief written answer, a drawing, a diagram, or a solution.
- Tests/Quizzes: These assessments provide a snapshot of students' subject-specific knowledge.
- Student Reflection on the Learner Profile: At the end of each unit of inquiry, students are asked to reflect on the Learner Profile words explored throughout the unit. Parents receive a copy of their student's reflections with his/her report card.
- Development of the Learner Profile: At the end of each unit of inquiry, students self-evaluate their performance of the Learner Profile words and citizenship skills. Classroom teachers also evaluate the students on the same criteria. The completed document is shared with the parents.

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Assessment Tools

- **Rubrics and Weighted Rubrics:**
 - Are designed by the teacher and/or class as an evaluation tool for summative assessments.
 - Contain specific descriptors.
 - Provide students with the assessment criteria before a task is assigned.
- **Check Lists:** lists of information, data, attributes or elements that should be present in a student's work or performance.
- **Anecdotal Records:** brief written notes based on a teacher's observation of a student.
- **Continuums:** visual representations of developmental stages of learning that show a progression of achievement or identify where a student is within a process.
- **Exemplars:** samples of students' work that serve as concrete standards against which other samples are judged.

Student Report Cards for Core Grades

- **Core Teacher Grading for Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten:** Students receive skill grades using the 1-4 scale. The Junior Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and first grade teachers determine the skill-set for their grade level.

| | | |
|----|--------------|---|
| 4 | Proficient | Student exceeds expectations for understanding concepts and skills |
| 3 | Developing | Student consistently demonstrates an understanding of concepts and skills |
| 2 | Emerging | Student is developing an understanding of concepts and skills |
| 1 | Not Evident | Student does not yet demonstrate an understanding of concepts and skills |
| NA | Not assessed | Not assessed this reporting period. |

- **Core Teaching Grading for first through fifth grade:** Students receive letter grades using the scale below for the six core subject areas listed.

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|----|----------|
| English | A | 93-100 | B+ | 87-89 | C+ | 77-79 | D+ | 67-69 |
| Reading | A- | 90-92 | B | 83-86 | C | 73-76 | D | 63-66 |
| Mathematics | | | B- | 80-82 | C- | 70-72 | D- | 60-62 |
| Social Studies | | | | | | | F | 59-below |
| Science | | | | | | | | |
| Religion | | | | | | | | |

Student Report Cards for Specialists Teaching Grades Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten:

- In grades JK-K students receive an overall grade based on their academic accomplishments using the 1-4 scale.
- In grades JK-K students receive conduct grades (see the scale above) based on the following skills:
 - Demonstrates self-control
 - Strives for personal best
 - Understands and implements classroom essential agreements
 - Demonstrates appropriate listening skills and follows directions

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Student Report Cards for Specialists Teaching Grades first through fifth

- In grades first through fifth students will receive a letter grade and a percentage earned during that phase based on academic achievement.
- Students are evaluated on the following conduct using the 1-4 scale (see scale above).
 - Demonstrates self-control
 - Strives for personal best
 - Understands and implements classroom essential agreements
 - Demonstrates appropriate listening skills and follows directions

Fifth Grade Exhibition

- The fifth grade Exhibition is the culminating summative assessment of the Primary Years Programme. It is structured in such a way that fifth grade students are challenged to take responsibility for the design, organization and successful completion of an in-depth investigative group research project.
- The Exhibition requires that each student demonstrate the five essential elements of the Primary Years Programme: knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action. It is an opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of the Learner Profile they have been developing throughout the PYP.
- The fifth grade students are assessed throughout the Exhibition process and evaluated at the conclusion of the unit of inquiry. Mentors are provided with weekly performance-assessment rubrics to monitor student progress. A final rubric is provided to each mentor to assess the overall performance of the student throughout the entire process. Students engage in peer assessments within each group.
- The fifth grade teacher determines a final grade for the students based on observation, mentor feedback, peer assessments, and work completed in the student notebooks.

Parent/Teacher Communication Opportunities

- Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year, in October and March.
- Grades are available to parents online for all phases.
 - Progress reports can be viewed online after all phases. They are not sent home.
- The following documents are sent home to parents at the conclusion of each unit of inquiry:
 - A summary of the unit of inquiry written by the classroom teacher for that reporting phase and unit. Each specialist teacher contributes to the summary by listing transdisciplinary connections made throughout the unit of inquiry.
 - An individual student reflection on the Learner Profile attributes pertinent to the focus of each unit of inquiry.
 - *The Development of the Learner Profile* sheets completed by the student and teacher. This sheet also covers student conduct and is kept on file in student records.
- Informal, ongoing communication between parents and staff occur. Examples include: daily face-to-face interactions at arrival/dismissal time, notes made on student daily planners (starting in second grade), weekly e-mail blasts and/or newsletters, phone calls and e-mails.
- The PYP Coordinator publishes six IB PYP Newsletters throughout the school year highlighting PYP information and classroom happenings related to the IB Programme. The newsletter is sent out digitally to the school community.
- An e-mail from administration will be sent each phase to parents who have students who have a C grade in any subject.
- A meeting between parents and administration will be held each phase for any students who have a D or below grade in any subject area.

Assessment Policy Review

- Notre Dame staff review the Assessment Policy annually or as needed.