

The Importance of Quality Assessment

It is commonly recognized that a formal education system has to contend with the reality of preparing students for an unpredictable future. Growth in research and technological developments have led to the emergence of vocations, professions, and ways of being that were once unimaginable. With that in mind, one of the most marketable skills one could acquire, perhaps the only enduring marketable skill, is the ability to learn. A quality assessment plan, which provides for students having a clear understanding of the criteria and means by which they are evaluated, identifies the critical opportunities for students to receive feedback and reflect on their learning, describes the various ways that students can show their learning and improve their results, and outlines how parents can expect to receive communication of progress and achievement, is fundamental to this goal.

What is Assessment?

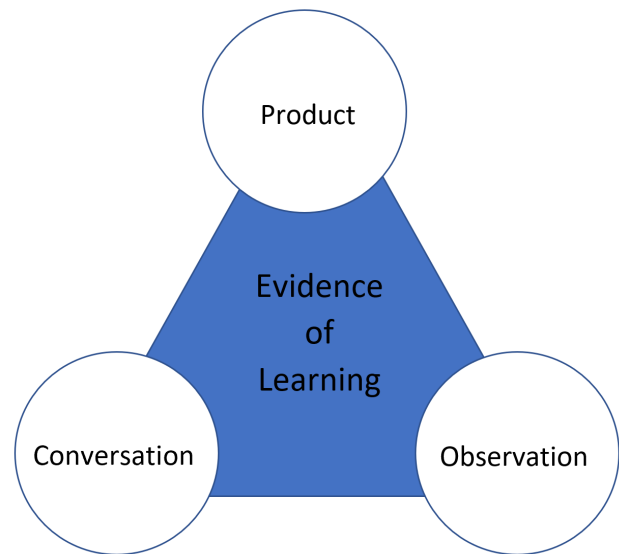
Assessment is a continual and ongoing process in the classroom. Assessment takes many forms and can be for a variety of purposes. It is ultimately how a teacher gathers evidence of learning to inform their judgment of student achievement.

Assessment for Learning is the most impactful on student learning. It is concerned with providing feedback to students in a timely and relevant manner to help students improve their learning before they are graded. This can take the form of verbal feedback as teachers observe performance or have conversations with students, or it can show up as written comments on a draft of student work. Assessment for learning is most powerful when students are focused on the learning and thinking about their next steps for improvement, rather than thinking about how they are being graded.

Assessment as Learning involves the student reflecting on the criteria for success and taking stock of where they or a peer is at in the process of learning. Engaging in this process helps the student to become more aware of the target criteria and helps them to determine what their next steps should be for improvement. Discussing and analyzing exemplars of quality work is an essential part of this process. Assessment as learning supports the development of metacognition, the ability to think about one's own thinking, which is known to have a high effect on learning and self-regulation throughout the learning process.

Assessment of Learning is the point in the learning process when the teacher has determined that the student is ready to be graded on their learning. Good assessment practices include a triangulation of evidence gathered from three potential areas: (1) products of student work, (2) observations of student learning, and (3) conversation with students about their learning. An over-reliance on traditional

products of assessment, while efficient, will limit the teacher's ability to grasp what is often invisible in the thinking process of the student. Teachers develop tools such as criteria and checklists to help guide their observations and allow for the evidence to be captured more easily. Education technology tools, such video and audio recording, can be employed to help teachers capture the evidence of real time learning. Triangulating the evidence of learning also supports an inclusive approach to education, as it opens up multiple means for students to express what they know and can do.



It is important to note that assessment tasks are not inherently of one particular type or another. Rather, it is how the teacher uses the information in the end that determines purpose. For example, a task may initially be used for growth and feedback, but at the end of the term, may be considered a part of the grading as the student's performance with that task was in alignment with their performance on other graded tasks. Likewise, a task that is initially completed "for marks" may be removed from the calculations of a grade at the end of the term if it no longer represents where the student is at in their learning.

Grading and Reporting of Achievement

Aspen View Public Schools uses a variety of grade scales, depending on the grade level of the student. Kindergarten uses a three-point scale of Insufficient, Basic and Proficient. Grades 1-3 uses a four-point scale of Insufficient, Basic, Proficient and Excellent. Grades 4-12 use the percentage system. The table below gives a generalized description of each level of achievement.

Excellent (80-100%)	Proficient (65-79%)	Basic (50-64%)	Insufficient (<50%)
The student has a detailed and in-depth understanding. The student has the ability to transfer learning to new and unfamiliar situations. The student is able to see connections and shows creativity in their thinking.	The student has consolidated their understanding of key ideas and is most comfortable in situations that are familiar and routine. The student is developing connections and is working towards extending what they have learned to new and unfamiliar situations.	The student is able to show an independent understanding of basic ideas and skills. The student is working towards consolidating their understanding and making connections amongst the various concepts.	A student at this level may not have produced enough evidence for the teacher to make a reliable and valid judgement that the student is working at grade level. This level may also apply to students who require significant support and prompting to produce grade level work.

Re-assessment

Teachers provide multiple and varied opportunities for students to show what they know and can do. Teachers may also exercise their professional judgement by omitting a grade that they feel is no longer representative of the student's learning. Strategies such as providing opportunities for rewrites can have an impact on the motivation to do one's best the first time, and can also interrupt the natural process of learning. While a student is attempting to remediate their learning, they may be in the process of trying to learn new material, and this can cause disruption to the learning of both units of study. To that end, rewrites should be used carefully and with consideration. Teachers may provide the opportunity for a student to be reassessed when there is evidence that the learning has progressed in a significant way.

Missing or Incomplete Work

As per *Administrative Procedure 360: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting of Student Achievement*, Principals must ensure that teachers communicate with parents/caregivers promptly and regularly about missing or incomplete student work. They must work with their teachers to comply with the following:

- a. evidence of student achievement has been collected by the teacher;

b. communication plans for reporting student achievement and growth to parents/caregivers are developed and aligned with school assessment and intervention plans

c. a student has been given multiple opportunities and ways to demonstrate his/her learning;

d. follow up has occurred to determine the reason when a summative assessment item is missing or incomplete, and that opportunities for the student to fulfill the requirement of the summative assessment item are provided;

e. if the student continues to be unsuccessful, the student/parents/caregivers will be informed and the teacher will choose a solution for holding the student accountable and/or plan for further learning;

f. teachers will engage in on-going, timely communication with the student/parents/caregivers and the principal regarding missing or incomplete work; and

g. providing all of the above have been followed, the teacher can assign the student a mark of zero for that missed summative assessment item.

Arrangements for students to complete work may include:

- Teacher/student discussion
- Contact with parents/caregivers
- Drop-in room designed for students needing help completing assignments, or, a designated missed assignment room
- Peer tutoring in academic support centre or teacher's classroom
- Targeted tutorials through subject/department teachers

Vacations

It is the expectation that students will attend school on scheduled school days and take holidays according to the school year calendar. In the event that parents/guardians choose to take their child out of school at times other than school holidays, teachers will not provide work for that time. Any missed work or tests may be made up when the student returns, at the teacher's discretion.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest and responsible academic behaviour. Students are expected to submit original work, acknowledge sources and conduct themselves ethically in the completion of assessments and examinations. The school recognizes that advanced technology, namely artificial intelligence, can be used to research or provide students with information, like any other source, but it is an expectation that students are not using such technology in place of their own critical thinking and writing skills.

Consequences of academic dishonesty will be progressive in nature and will take into consideration the grade level of the student and the number of incidents. This said, concerted efforts to disrupt and undermine the learning of others by attaining and distributing secured tests and resources will be dealt with more severely from the outset.

Consequences may include some or all of the following:

- The student being directed to reattempt the assessment;
- The student completing an alternate assessment;
- Suspension; and
- The withdrawal of other privileges - such as membership in school clubs or teams.

School Principals will communicate information to the parent/guardian about the infraction and the consequences and will work with the family to chart the way forward for the student. The domain of student discipline and academic progress, plus assessment are the domain of the school principal, as per Section 197 of the Alberta Education Act, thus the final disciplinary decision rests with the school leader.

Grades/Marks Appeal Process

To appeal the grade/mark your child has been given, contact the classroom teacher. If you can't resolve the appeal with the teacher, the principal will make a decision and explain it to you. The principal's decision is final. A principal's authority to do this is set out in the Education Act.

Individualized Program Plans (IPPs)

For students who require them, the IPP is a working document that is developed within the first two months of the school year. It identifies how the student's needs are being addressed and provides information about accommodations and supports the student needs to succeed. The IPP is reviewed at least 2 times a year. Parents and students (as appropriate) provide input into the IPP.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Proficiency Assessments

For students learning English, the EAL Proficiency Assessment measures English abilities in three Competency Areas: Vocabulary, Sentence Structure and Connections & Transitions. English language learners will be assessed yearly in at least one of the four strands of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Communication

As per *Administrative Procedure 360*, teachers shall ensure that learner outcomes for each course and/or program and the criteria for successful completion of each are clearly specified and communicated to students and parents/caregivers at the beginning of each course or program. Teachers shall submit, to the Principal or designate, year plans and/or course outlines for approval. These documents, which shall be communicated to students and parents/caregivers at the beginning of each course or program, will include:

- Information about how a grade is calculated (i.e. Category weightings & Standards calculations)
- The expected general frequency of updating the electronic gradebook for each subject area
- The general timeline students and parents/caregivers can expect to receive formative and/or summative feedback following the completion and/or submission of assignments, tasks and observations.
- Guidelines for reassessment opportunities

While monitoring the electronic gradebook is an important communication tool, it should not be relied upon as the sole means of communication about academic achievement between teacher and parent/caregiver. When significant concerns arise, the teacher and parent/caregiver should be in communication with each other to determine next steps and support the student.

Reporting Periods

Term 1: August 28, 2023 - January 30, 2024

Term 2: February 1, 2024 - June 26, 2024

Progress Reports: Report Cards available February 1, 2024 and June 26, 2024

Parent-Teacher Interviews: November 2, 2023 and March 7, 2024

Large Scale Assessments

Brigance Screener

Kindergarten students are assessed in the Fall for early childhood development domains of Physical Development, Language Development, Academic Skills/Cognitive Development, and Self-help and Social-Emotional Skills.

Fountas and Pinnell Reading Levels

All students in Grades 1 to 6 are assessed in January and June according to the Fountas and Pinnell Reading Levels. The Fountas and Pinnell assessment checks for accuracy of word recognition, fluency and comprehension.

Literacy and Numeracy Screening Assessments

Alberta Education now requires students in grades 1 to 3 to participate in literacy and numeracy screening assessments. These screener tools are designed to determine if a student is at-risk and requires intervention programming. The assessments are administered in September for Grades 2 and 3 and in January for Grade 1. They include:

- Letter Name-Sound assessment for Grades 1 and 2. This assessment determines basic decoding skills.
- Castles and Coltheart 3 (CC3) for Grades 1 to 3. This assessment determines reading ability with regular, irregular and non-words.
- Provincial Numeracy Screening Assessment for Grades 1 to 3. This assessment determines abilities in counting, comparing and ordering, basic facts, multidigit calculations, fractions and equations.

Number Concept and Operational Fluency Screens

Students in Grades 4 to 9 will be periodically assessed throughout the year on their understanding of Number Concepts and their fluency with performing operations. The assessment is intended to be completed without a calculator.

Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs)

Students in Grades 6 and 9 are assessed with a standardized provincial exam in the subject areas of Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Science. This provides the opportunity to measure how well students across Alberta are learning content as described by the curriculum. PATs in Grassland School are administered in May and June. PAT marks will be used as part of the final course mark, with a weighting of 10% of the final course mark.

Reading Readiness

Students in Kindergarten are assessed in January and June for their reading readiness. Kindergarten teachers use this information to inform their programming and ensure that students are reading ready for grade 1.

Words Their Way Spelling Inventory

Students in Grades 1 to 8 are assessed twice a year for their developmental stage of word knowledge.

Writing

Grades 1 to 9 students will be assessed on their independent writing abilities at the beginning, midpoint and end of year. Students are given a prompt and are given time to discuss that prompt as part of their planning process. The writing sample is assessed on Content & Organization, Sentence Structure, Vocabulary and Conventions.