

Handley School
Program for Creative and Academically Talented
IB PYP Assessment Policy
2009

Philosophy

Assessment is the gathering and analysis of information about student performance and is designed to inform practice. It identifies what students know, understand, can do and feel at different stages in the learning process. Students and teachers should be actively engaged in assessing the student's progress as part of the development of their wider critical-thinking and self-assessment skills. (**Making the PYP Happen, 2007**)

Handley School is committed to the IB PYP standards and practices and ensuring that the assessment policy is implemented, understood and supported by all staff members. Parents will be informed about the policy through parent meetings, the PYP newsletter, the school website and at student/parent/teacher conferences.

Purpose of assessment (IBO website, 2007)

The prime objective of assessing students' learning and performance is to give feedback to:

- Students—to encourage the start of lifelong learning
- Teachers—to support their reflection on what to teach and how to teach it
- Parents—to highlight their child's learning and development

Guiding principles of assessment

The staff at Handley School recognizes that teaching, learning and assessment are interdependent. We are guided by the following principles:

In the curriculum and instructional process, assessment

- Forms an integral part of the planning, teaching, and reporting cycle
- Monitors the progress of student learning and achievement
- Determines the effectiveness of teaching
- Informs curriculum review
- Utilizes a variety of methods
- Should be in a context that is relevant and motivating to students
- Takes into account the fact that our students have different cultural experiences, expectations, and needs

Effective assessments allow students to:

- Demonstrate a range of knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills
- Use a variety of learning styles, multiple intelligences and abilities to express their understanding
- Know and understand in advance the criteria for producing a quality product or performance
- Participate in self-assessment
- Analyze their learning and understand what needs to be improved

Effective assessments allow parents to:

- See evidence of student learning and development
- Provide opportunities to support and enhance student learning

Types of Assessment used at Handley School

Testing for Admission

Children applying for admission to Kindergarten and first grade will be individually tested by a certified school psychologist on four selected subtests of the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence – Third Edition (WPPSI-III) if they are ages four or five, or the Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI) if they are ages six or seven. They will also be given selected sections of the Kaufman Achievement: 2nd edition test to measure readiness for school learning tasks in reading and math. These include letter recognition, sight words, and number sense among other tasks presented in pictures or orally. Children applying for admission to grades two through five will be given the Otis-Lennon Test of School Ability as well as two subtests (reading comprehension and math concepts) of the California Achievement Test.

Pre-Assessment

Teachers will assess students' prior knowledge and experience before embarking on new learning experience in an appropriate manner.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is interwoven with the daily teaching and assists teachers in determining what the children have learned in order to plan for the next stage of learning.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment takes place at the end of the teaching and learning processes and provides students with opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned.

Learner Profile Assessment

Throughout the learning process, opportunities are provided for teachers, students, and parents to report on progress in relation to the attributes listed in the IB Learner Profile.

Assessment of the Essential Elements of the PYP

There are five essential elements of the PYP. These are all assessed through the units of inquiry and recorded on the planner for each unit.

- **Knowledge**—Assessment of the knowledge learned in each unit is done through the summative assessment that reflects an understanding of the central idea.
- **Skills, concepts, and attitudes**—Each unit provides opportunities for development of different skills, concepts, and attitudes. Reflection on growth in these areas is recorded on the planners and self-assessment done by students.
- **Action**—Any action taken by students which is an off-shoot of knowledge gained in the unit of inquiry is noted on the planner.

The Fifth Grade Exhibition

Students who are in fifth grade are expected to carry out an extended, collaborative inquiry project, known as the exhibition, under the guidance of their teachers. The Exhibition requires that each student demonstrate the five essential elements of the PYP: knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action. It is an opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of the learner profile that they have been developing throughout the Primary Years Programme.

Practice (strategies for recording and reporting)

- **Observations**—All students are observed regularly, with the teachers taking notes on the individual, the group, and the whole class. Observations include how groups work and the roles of participants within the group.
- **Performance Assessments**—Students are often 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.
- **Process-Focused Assessment**—The students' transdisciplinary skills are observed and recorded. This may include checklists, inventories and narrative descriptions.
- **Open-ended tasks**—These are situations in which children are asked to communicate an original response. The answer might be a brief written answer, a drawing, a diagram or a solution.
- **Test/Quizzes**—These assessments provide a snapshot of students' subject specific knowledge.
- **Student Reflections**—Often at the end of a unit, students will be asked to reflect on what they have learned.

Assessment Tools

- **Checklists**--lists of information, data, attributes or elements that should be present in students' work or performance
- **Exemplars**—samples of students' work that serve as concrete standard against which other samples are judged.
- **Rubrics**—an established set of criteria for rating students in all areas. The descriptors tell the assessor what characteristics or signs to look for in students' work and then how to rate that work on a predetermined scale
- **Anecdotal records**—brief written notes based on observations of students
- **Continuums**—visual representations of developmental stages of learning that show a progression of achievement or identify where a student is in a process

Reporting about assessment

- Parent/teacher conferences are held 2 times a year, once in the fall and again in the spring. These conferences are in a formal setting where parents and teachers discuss the progress of students. At the fourth and fifth grade levels, these are student-led conferences.
- Progress reports are sent out 4 times a year for third, fourth, and fifth grades. These are sent out in the middle of the marking period.

The Written Report

- Information on performance on the IB PYP units of inquiry will be found on the report card.
- Teachers complete the Saginaw Public Schools district mandated report card four times a year. The report card includes grades for all curricular areas.
- Staff will administer the MEAP test to third, fourth, and fifth graders in the fall.
- Monday folders are sent home on a weekly basis and contain graded work.
- State-mandated assessments are reported to parents in a timely manner.

Portfolios

Portfolios are a purposeful collection of a student's work that is designed to demonstrate successes, growth, higher order thinking, creativity, and reflection.

At Handley School, we believe that a portfolio:

- Is continuous and ongoing, providing both formative and summative opportunities for monitoring students' progress
- Reflects a wide variety of products and processes
- Provides ways for students to give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and development
- Contains work that represents a variety of different assessment tools

Students will develop a portfolio that will travel with them while they are at Handley, going home with them at the end of fifth grade.

Accessibility

Student portfolios will be available to any student, teacher, staff member, authorized school visitor or parent. All other assessments will only be accessible to the student, teacher, principal, parent and any staff member who works with that student.

Assessment Review

As a staff, we will review our assessment agreements and policy annually at the end of the school year.