

Cedar International School Assessment Policy

Primary



CEDAR
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Mission Statement

The mission of Cedar International School, a non-profit private school, is to provide each student we serve the opportunity to achieve his/her academic best with an international curriculum within a culturally diverse environment; to encourage leadership, character, creativity, and community service; and to nurture inquiring minds and caring personalities in all students.

Philosophy

At Cedar International School, we believe that assessment, evaluation, and communication of student achievement and growth are essential components of teaching and learning. Evaluations should be on-going and authentic, should match learner outcomes and align with instruction, and should be broad-based, utilizing a variety of strategies and tools for both formative and summative assessments. We also believe that assessment of children should be collaborative, include self and peer evaluation, and should include criteria developed by both the student and the teacher when appropriate. When students participate in the assessment process, they take ownership of their learning and develop a clearer sense of direction and understanding of the assessment process.

To support student learning, implement sound assessment practices and communicate effectively about student progress, it is important that students, parents, teachers and administrators work closely together. Our assessment policy reflects the PYP approach to assessment as laid out in the Making the PYP Happen (2009).

Cedar International School's primary staff takes a close look at the assessment policy each year and fully reviews and revises it as necessary, according to the primary curriculum and policy review cycle.

What is Assessment?

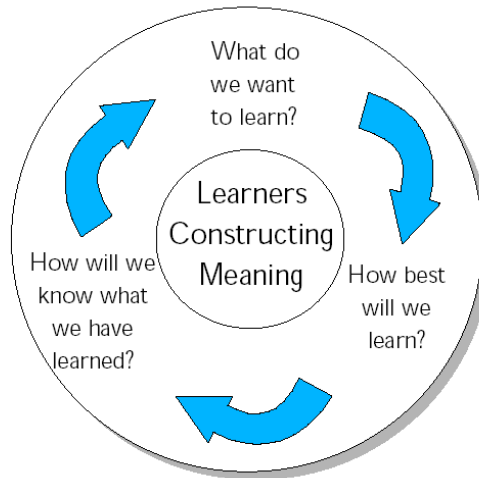
Assessment is integral to all teaching and learning. Assessment is the gathering and analysis of information about student performance from a variety of sources. It identifies what students know, understand, can do and feel at different stages in the learning process. It provides the basis for feedback on student learning to encourage further development. Students and teachers should be actively engaged in assessing student progress; students begin to engage in metacognition when they are asked to reflect on their own learning. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve *teaching and learning*.

Planning, teaching and assessing are a cyclical process. We believe that our assessment informs our planning, our **planning** guides our **teaching**, and our assessment evaluates the teaching and learning processes, and informs future planning.

Teachers are encouraged to utilize the three steps of Understanding By Design (Wiggins & McTighe) throughout their planning, teaching and assessing across the curriculum: identify desired results, determine assessment evidence and plan learning experiences and instruction.

The following diagram provides a visual representation of the learning cycle. "The words at the center of the diagram convey the belief that students construct their own meaning. The PYP believes that students bring to the learning situation their own prior knowledge and engage with the curriculum through a variety of activities, some designed by the teacher and others

designed and/or initiated by the student. In the context of this total learning environment, the students make sense of their experiences or construct meaning.” (*Making the PYP Happen, 2000*) The arrows demonstrate that the learning is not a linear action, but one that is recursive in nature.



Purpose of Assessment

Assessment informs and drives instruction and learning. It is an ongoing process that identifies what students understand, know, can do, and where they are in the learning process. It helps students and teachers set goals for learning and growth. Assessment should encompass student, self and peer assessments, teacher assessment and teacher ‘s self-assessments.

A. Teachers:

- * To inform planning and instruction
- * To identify learner needs and progress in order to adapt the curriculum and instructional approaches to meet all students’ needs
- * To report on student progress and achievement
- * To evaluate effectiveness of teaching methods
- * To provide feedback to students and parents in relation to specific criteria

B. Students:

- * To understand themselves as learners
- * To identify what needs to be done to progress as learners
- * To set goals

C. Parents:

- * To understand their child’s progress and achievements
- * To understand which curricular areas their child needs to improve
- * To gain information on how to support their child’s learning

D. Administrators:

- * To track progress and growth within a community of learners
- * To identify learner needs and to set long-term curriculum goals
- * To determine effectiveness of the programme and curriculum

Assessment for Admissions

Students wishing to become part of the Cedar International School’s K-5 community are invited to take ‘readiness tests’, which are effectively cognitive tests designed internally to determine whether a student fits into the grade applied for. The testing process for grades K-5 includes a personal interview, as well as handwriting, spelling and writing samples. In many situations, the school seeks information from the applicants’ previous schools, including

analysing school records, report cards and seeking direct feedback from teachers/administrators.

Pre-Kindergarten applicants are ideally assessed in groups to determine their readiness with respect to oral language, listening and comprehension skills, attentiveness, level of independence, the development of social skills, fine motor control and visual perception. When it is deemed necessary, individual follow-up assessments are done.

What Do We Assess?

At Cedar International School, we aim to thoughtfully and effectively guide children through five PYP essential elements of learning:

- The understanding of concepts in U.O.Is, specialist lessons and ‘stand alone’ components
- The acquisition of knowledge throughout the curriculum
- The mastering of transdisciplinary skills/approaches to learning that are academic, artistic, athletic and social
- The development of positive attitudes and good citizenship as befitting an IB student through the IB Learner Profile and Attitudes
- The decision to take responsible action in a manner that reflects Cedar International School’s, local and global initiatives

Principles of Assessment

Assessment in our PYP programme is accomplished by emphasising connections between subject knowledge and transdisciplinary skills, key concepts, central ideas, and themes.

Assessment shows teachers what the student knows, understands, and can do at every step of the learning process.

- Where am I going?
- Where am I now?
- How can I close the gap?

Formative Pre-Assessment (Diagnostic – assessment FOR learning):

Teachers will assess students’ prior knowledge and experience before embarking on new learning.

Formative Assessment (On-going - assessment FOR and AS learning)

Formative assessment is on-going and interwoven into the daily teaching. It assesses students’ knowledge and strengths and assists teachers in planning for the next stage of learning.

Summative Assessment (assessment OF learning)

Summative assessment takes place at the end of the learning unit or process. It provides students with opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned. It allows students, teachers and parents to evaluate what has been learned over the course of time. Criteria for evaluating summative assignments are known to the students’ prior to commencement of summative tasks/projects.

Exhibition

In the final year of the PYP, students will participate in Exhibition, allowing them to demonstrate what they know and understand about the PYP; it is a synthesis of their knowledge of the five essential elements, and for students to exhibit the Learner Profile attributes. As a summative assessment of the PYP experience, the Exhibition reflects all of the major features of the programme, including on-going and carefully planned assessments.

Powerful assessment:

- Is integrated into a meaningful context using authentic tasks
- Is based on information collected by using a variety of assessment strategies and mediums

- Provides meaningful feedback based on specified criteria
- Is timely and descriptive in nature
- Is differentiated to allow opportunities for students to perform using their multiple intelligence strengths
- Examines growth over time
- Is engaging, challenging, relevant and significant to the learner
- Encompasses a diverse range of learning styles

Characteristics of Effective Assessment	
All Assessment serves to:	
* Build confidence in students' own work and self	
* Support students to become active and effective assessors of their own work	
* Build on strengths	
* Demonstrate and share student learning, understanding and perspectives	
Formative Pre-assessment (diagnostic) before embarking on new learning experiences and serves to:	
* Determine specific learning expectations and outcomes	
* Set teaching goals for reaching expectations (planning for instruction & learning)	
* Use prior knowledge and experience to construct and guide the inquiry process	
Formative Assessment as an on-going, dynamic process interwoven into and throughout instruction and learning which serves to:	
* Assess student knowledge and strengths (understand student learning)	
* Adapt instruction for diverse learners	
* Use prior knowledge and experience to construct and guide the inquiry process	
* Actively engage participants in the trajectory of learning/planning	
* Analyse needs and identify ways to improve	
* Know and understand the criteria for producing a quality product or performance	
* Access a variety of learning styles, strategies and abilities to express understanding	
* Provide and respond to feedback; provide support and encouragement	
* Provide evidence of progress along a continuum toward specific learning goals	
Summative Assessment as an evaluative mechanism that occurs at the end of a teaching/learning cycle and serves to:	
* Know the endpoint in the learning	
* Measure progress and achievement in relation to specific criteria	
* Demonstrate learning, understandings, perspectives and attitudes	

Examples of Assessment Strategies

Selected Response	Constructed Response Products	Constructed Response Performances

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple choice • True/False • Completion/Cloze • Matching • Short answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simulation • Story/Script • Poem • Video production • Model • Project (individual or group) • Report • Portfolio • Learning log/journal • Paragraph • Essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lab Reports • Brochure • Article • Magazine • Newspaper • Maps • Collage • Diorama • Photograph • Advertisement • Design • Illustration • Story Board • Research Papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration • Oral presentation • Debate • Dance/Movement • Dramatic Reading • Video Production • Teach a lesson • Interview • Speech • Role Play • Mime Sports Drill • Story boards • Audio tapes • Games
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Examples of Assessment Tools for Data Collection

- Rubric - an established set of criteria for rating students in all areas; these can be teacher and/or student generated
- Checklist - lists information that should be present in students' work or performance
- Exemplars - samples of students' work that exemplifies the standard of expected work products
- Anecdotal records - written notes on the observation of student work
- Continuums - representation of the progress students achieve over the expected developmental stages of learning
- Observations - taking a close look at patterns and performance of the whole class and/or individuals of a given task

Recording System

The purpose of the recording system(s) is to assist the teacher in systematically collecting and recording data from a wide range of sources in order to monitor the students' progress. Teachers at Cedar International School will establish consistent and pre-defined recording systems among their grade level teams, describing the performance of each student in the class taking into account the different learning styles. Record keeping provides evidence of growth over time and can be used as a tool for determining progress and identifying strengths and goals. This recording system may contain teacher observations, anecdotal records, checklists, rubrics, portfolios, performance standards and benchmarks. Detailed recorded information provides feedback to the students, teachers, parents and administrators. Records may act as a reference to support teachers during "Meet the Teacher Night", Student-Led Conferences, mid-term reports, parent-teacher conferences and report writing.

In order to facilitate collaborative assessment of the PYP essential elements between the classroom and specialist teachers, the online ManageBac system is used as a recording system. All Units of Inquiry planning, assessment tasks, grading and teacher reflection are entered on ManageBac.

Reporting Data

Our reporting to parents reflects our beliefs and values as described in our Mission Statement and the Primary Years Programme. The reporting of student progress is holistic, focusing on process as well as product. Reporting relates the assessment results to both the curriculum and the learning goals.

When writing reports and preparing for conferences, teachers will consult and use their grade level recording system along with ManageBac. In the written reports and during conferences, specific references will be made to students' progress of the PYP essential elements.

We report the findings of our assessment and seek to attain further information through:

Parent- Teacher-Student Conferences

A goal-setting conference is held between parents and teachers in the beginning of October each school year. The students may be involved in these conferences, depending on their age. The purpose of this conference is for the teachers, parents and students to articulate their own key goals for the year of learning ahead. It also offers the teacher an opportunity to attain background information, which will help in the planning of the year's curriculum. The goals that are set are reviewed and reflected on between the teacher and student throughout the year.

Portfolio Conferences

Portfolios are purposeful collections of students' work. Throughout the year, students regularly look back at their work, select items that show progress and reflect on them. Portfolios allow students to play a key role in their own assessment. Our staff has developed essential agreements regarding assessment portfolios (see Essential Agreements: Appendix D). Our goals are to create portfolios, which will demonstrate growth over time, help students to become reflective and to prepare for the next stages of their learning. The portfolios are cumulative and are passed up to the next grade each year.

The Student-Led Conference in the Spring is a meeting in which the students use their portfolio and other work samples, or performance samples, as a basis for discussion about their learning and progress with their parents. The conferences allow students to play an active role by communicating their progress. The teacher is present as a facilitator, if necessary, but not as the reporting authority.

Additional Parent-Teacher Meeting

At any time, either parents or teachers may contact one another to discuss an individual student's progress.

Written Reports

Written reports are provided twice per year, using the ManageBac system. The first report goes home at the end of the first semester in early February and the second/final report goes home at the end of June. The following areas are reported upon: IB Transdisciplinary Skills, Units of Inquiry, English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Visual Arts, Physical Education, Spanish, Music and Information Technology. In addition, a student self-assessment of IB Learner Profile Attributes will be included in the reports for grades 3-5. Each subject or area will include a Cedar Criteria grade to indicate if the student is meeting academic expectations, an effort/participation grade and teacher comments. These will include the student's strengths, areas in which the student requires further attention or development, and ways in which the student's learning can be supported.

The following criteria apply to the report card and further articulate the reporting system to promote continuity and consistency across grades.

Effort and Participation for all grades

Abbreviation	Title	Description
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O	Outstanding	Student's effort and participation consistently exceed expectations
S	Satisfactory	Student's effort and participation consistently meets expectations
NS	Needs Strengthening	Student's effort and participation requires support and/or encouragement towards meeting expectations
IR	Intervention Required	Student is receiving additional support but does not meet effort and participation expectations
N/A	Not applicable	Not applicable

Pre Kindergarten and Kindergarten Criteria

Abbreviation	Title	Description
O	Outstanding	Student's achievement consistently exceeds expectations
P	Proficient	Student's achievement consistently meets expectations
NS	Needs Strengthening	Student requires support and/or encouragement towards meeting expectations
SR	Support Required	Student is receiving additional support but does not meet effort and participation expectations
NA	Not Assessed	This task was not assessed

Cedar Primary Criteria for Grades 1-5

Abbreviation	Title	Description
7	Outstanding	Student's achievement and presentation consistently exceed grade level expectations
6	Very Good	Student's achievement and effort are often above grade level expectations
5	Proficient	Student's achievement and effort are consistently meeting grade level expectations
4	Satisfactory	Student's achievement and effort often meets grade level expectations
3	Needs Strengthening	Student requires support towards meeting expectations
2	Support Required	Student is receiving additional support but does not meet grade level expectations
1	Intervention Required	Student is receiving additional support but does not meet expectations
N/A	Not applicable	Not Applicable