ASSESSMENT POLICY

AMERSFOORT INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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Learning for All

"Through others, we become ourselves." — Lev Vygotsky

In crafting our assessment policy, we are committed to the core values that define our educational institution. At our school, we wholeheartedly embrace the tenets of social constructivism, celebrate the richness of multilingualism, and ardently believe in the removal of barriers to learning. These principles serve as the guide toward fostering a dynamic, inclusive, and empowering learning environment.

Our assessment policy is a living document, a testament to our unwavering dedication to fostering a learning community where every voice is heard, every perspective is valued, and every learner is empowered.

Purpose and scope of this document

Purpose

This assessment policy's primary purpose is to guide and inform learning and teaching, serving as a framework for educators to evidence student progress, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and make informed instructional decisions. At AIS, the assessment policy plays a crucial role in fostering a holistic, equitable, and culturally responsive approach to education that prepares students for success.

Scope

This document will endeavor to support AIS's commitment to holistic education that fosters students' intellectual, personal, social, and emotional development. It will then delineate the diverse range of assessments employed, including formative and summative assessments, peer and self-assessment, as well as the inclusion of transdisciplinary skills and attitudes in the evaluation process. Lastly, the policy will detail the methods and strategies for implementing these assessments, emphasizing a balanced approach that values both qualitative and quantitative data, encourages differentiation, and incorporates student agency.

Effective assessment

Effective assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching, involving teachers and students collaborating to monitor, document, measure, report and adjust learning. It is an ongoing process of gathering, analyzing, reflecting and acting on evidence of student learning to inform teaching. (IBO, 2018)

Effective assessment is based on a few key principles. Firstly, it prioritizes continuous feedback and formative assessment practices for both teachers and students to understand progress and adjust instruction. Secondly, it encourages a growth mindset, urging learners to see challenges as opportunities for learning and development, focusing on effort and resilience rather than fixed abilities. Thirdly, it uses authentic assessment methods, going beyond traditional tests to include real-world tasks and projects that apply knowledge and skills.

Moreover, effective assessment involves clearly defined learning objectives and assessment criteria, ensuring learners understand expectations. It promotes student involvement through self-assessment, peer assessment, and reflection, thus empowering them. In alignment with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), we encourage diverse means of expression and provide modified assessments when necessary, ensuring equitable access and expression of knowledge for all learners. Effective assessment provides timely feedback for improvement, and uses data to guide instructional decisions. Finally, effective assessment is culturally responsive, recognizing diverse backgrounds and promoting fairness and equity in education. In summary, it is a powerful tool for learning, growth, and inclusive education.

Guiding and informing learning and instruction

Types of assessment

Assessments serve various purposes in education, aligning with the principles of assessment for learning, assessment as learning, and assessment of learning. We implement ongoing or formative assessments routinely, involving informal observations of student work or comments, as well as more structured evaluations, like monitoring skills during a first draft presentation or a spelling quiz. Teachers employ a variety of strategies such as observing, questioning, reflecting, and discussing to monitor the learning of concepts, skills, and knowledge, forming meaningful feedback and guiding next steps in the learning process. Our formative assessments are documented and shared to render learning visible. Class work is communicated with peers and parents through student portfolios on Toddle. This type of assessment is closely connected to the concept of assessment for learning, occurring during the learning process to offer continuous feedback for real-time adjustments in teaching and learning activities. These assessments facilitate the identification of strengths and weaknesses, enabling timely instructional adjustments.
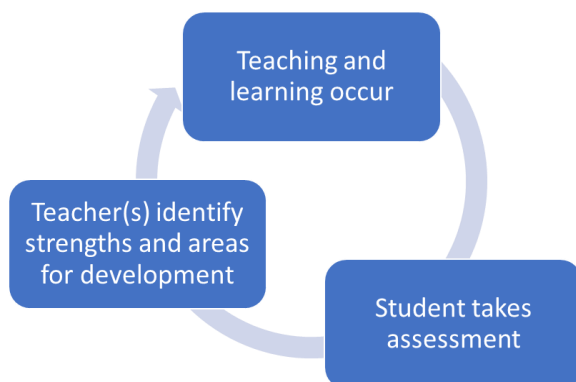
(Adapted from IBO, 2019)

Teachers engage in moments of gathering measurements of learning, often referred to as <u>summative assessment</u> moments. These instances commonly occur at the conclusion of a unit or term, where students may partake in a summative assessment, such as presenting their learning, publishing a story or essay, or delivering a performance. Notably, these assessments do not receive grades but are evaluated against criteria derived from developmentally appropriate learning outcomes. Summative assessment moments also arise in the acquisition of language and math skills. These test moments are dispersed throughout the year and closely tied to the skills being taught and practiced in the classroom during that period. Summative assessments function as the main tools for assessment of learning, designed to measure and evaluate a student's accumulated knowledge over a specific timeframe, typically concluding a unit or academic year.

- Teaching and learning occurs
- Student takes assessment
- Result is recorded
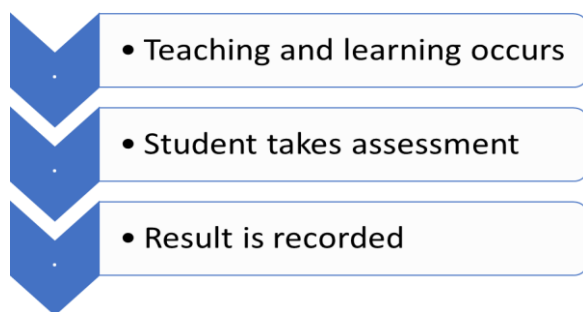
(Adapted from IBO, 2019)

Assessment as learning involves students actively engaging in the assessment process to enhance their own learning. Formative assessments can be designed to promote this engagement by encouraging students to reflect on their own understanding, set goals for improvement, and monitor their progress. Assessment as learning is less directly associated with summative assessments. However, students can still use the feedback and results from summative assessments to reflect on their learning, identify areas for improvement, and set future learning goals.

A few times a year, students will participate in <u>standardized tests</u>. We have chosen to use tests from GL-Assessment, a provider trusted by international schools in over 100 countries worldwide. We have chosen to administer standardized tests for reading, spelling and mathematics twice each year, once at the start and once in spring. We also have chosen to administer an an assessment of developed abilities in areas known to make a difference to learning and achievement which provides us with an accurate analysis of potential student achievement. This assessment takes place once a year.

At AIS we see summative assessments, both standardized and our own, more of a measure of the quality of our teaching rather than the students' learning. For this reason, they are only a small part of what will appear on reports. Our reports are based on all of our assessment data and endeavor to describe the learner as a whole.

AIS has four formal <u>reporting</u> moments in the year:

- In the autumn, 3- way conferences are held to discuss student progress.
- In the winter, the first written report will be published.
- In spring students will lead their learning conferences.
- Before the end of the school year, a final written report will be published.

Ensuring Equity and Fairness

At AIS, we celebrate our students' diversity and one way in which we do that is through setting assessments that are equitable and fair. We understand that every student has strengths and areas that need development and we use that understanding in our design.

In order to accomplish this, first we ensure our students know what will be assessed by sharing expectations at the start of the teaching and learning cycle and referring back to them during the cycle. We set the success criteria together with students, adjusting to fit the learning that has taken place.

In alignment with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and our inclusion and language policies, students are strongly encouraged to creatively express their understanding through a variety of means that are contextually and culturally appropriate to each individual. We advocate for the utilization of all languages accessible to students to effectively showcase their learning to both peers and teachers. In instances where language poses a barrier, we implement a UDL approach by providing modified assessments, which may involve assessments without language or translated assessments, ensuring equitable access and expression of knowledge for all learners. We provide choice in our assessments when we can, to ensure that tasks play to student strengths and interests. We provide various means of support to remove barriers and ensure success.

Promoting Accountability and Agency

In AIS, assessments are intentionally crafted to embody a collaborative and student-centered approach, with an emphasis on inquiry and reflection. Acknowledging the significance of student agency, we believe in empowering learners to actively shape their educational journey. At the commencement of each unit, students are provided with exemplars and clear expectations, fostering a shared understanding of goals for success.

We provide choice in our assessments when we can, consistent with the principles of UDL, to ensure that tasks play to student strengths and interests. We provide various means of support to remove barriers and ensure success. Students are actively encouraged to engage in self-assessment, reflecting on their learning, setting personal goals, and evaluating their progress. Emphasizing the collaborative nature of learning, students are also encouraged to engage in peer assessment activities, providing valuable feedback and constructive critique to their classmates.

Our students are not mere recipients but active contributors to their assessments. They engage in self-assessment, reflecting on their learning, setting personal goals, and evaluating their progress. This active participation extends to assessment activities, discussions, and reflections, where students actively contribute to the development and upkeep of their portfolios—platforms that showcase their work and reflections. Emphasizing the collaborative nature of learning, students are also encouraged to engage in peer assessment activities, providing valuable feedback and constructive critique to their classmates.

As active participants in their educational journey, students are reminded of the importance of academic integrity. A comprehensive Academic Integrity Policy is available for all members of the school community to reference.

Teachers play a pivotal role in the assessment process. They are expected to align assessment practices with the AIS curriculum, ensuring that assessments authentically reflect the learning experiences. Employing a collaborative approach, teachers implement assessment strategies to not only gauge but also evidence student understanding. Following collaboration with colleagues for moderation, teachers provide timely, constructive, and actionable feedback—both backward-looking and forward-looking—to students, aiding in the comprehension of their strengths and areas for improvement.

Parents and guardians have a responsibility to support their child's learning by providing a conducive environment and encouraging a positive attitude toward assessment and reflection. They should maintain open lines of communication with teachers to stay informed about their child's progress and assessment outcomes.

The curriculum coordinator has a responsibility to ensure that assessment practices align with IB standards and expectations, to offer guidance and support to teachers in implementing IB assessment practices and to organize or facilitate IB training sessions for staff members.

School leadership has a role in developing and maintaining the assessment policy and guidelines that align with the PYP framework, to allocate resources, including training and materials, to support effective assessment practices and to oversee the implementation of assessment practices and ensure their consistency and alignment with IB standards. An additional responsibility is to analyze assessment data to identify trends, strengths, and areas for improvement at the school level.

Policy Review

The AIS Assessment Policy will be updated annually to best reflect current school data, but the main content of the policy will be updated less often. Our first review will occur after the IB authorization visit and every three to five years after that. This will be a collaborative process, whereby input is gathered from the full range of our community. For this version, staff have read and provided feedback which has been incorporated. This document has been shared with the parent community via our website.

Other policies that relate directly to assessment are our inclusion, admissions and language policies, which can also be found on our website.

Bibliography

- ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES—QUALITY ASSESSMENTS IN A DIGITAL AGE, International Baccalaureate Organization, July. 2019
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Testing schedule AIS

Upon arrival:
Students will take part in baseline testing in from PYP3 on to determine entry level of
- English language if deemed necessary
- Phonics, spelling, technical reading and reading comprehension
- Basic age appropriate math facts

In the first few weeks of school:
- PYP 3 – 5 will baseline for phonics
- PYP 4 – 8 will baseline for spelling
- PYP 4 – 8 will baseline for reading

These will be repeated at various times throughout the year.

Appendix 2

Policy document history
Version 1: January 2024