



Philosophy and Principles of Assessment Practice

Effective assessments are criterion referenced tools that meet the IB aim of “supporting curricular goals and encouraging appropriate student learning” (IBO 3). These assessment practices are clearly communicated to students and parents through various avenues such as handouts, presentations, conferences, and quarterly report cards. Our assessment aim is met by utilizing both formative and summative assessments that incorporate IB criteria and other required courses of study that meet our city, state, and federal guidelines. Effective assessment is designed to guide learning after reflecting on the results and to evaluate comprehension of skills and content to modify and map teaching. Reporting of assessment serves to inform the student level of performance as demonstrated through the assessment task grade descriptors. Reporting of the student level of performance occurs on both an informal basis as well as in formal documentation.

Key Terms and Examples

Formative Aspects

The purpose of formative assessment is to provide feedback to teachers and students about rate and depth of comprehension of skills and content. Consequently, formative assessments are administered frequently both in class and at home and the feedback will be directed to the student(s) so that instruction can meet the ever-changing needs of the students. Formative assessments are scored using IB criterion grade descriptors for that specific subject. Formative assessments allow students to receive individually-tailored feedback on practice assignments in preparation for summative assessments (both internal and external IB assessments). This feedback allows students the opportunity to self-assess and reflect on progress with the assignment. Students and teachers take time at the end of a unit of instruction to reflect by considering areas of challenge, successes, and future improvements.

Summative Aspects

Summative assessments that are administered internally can include tests, essays, labs, projects, and presentations. Summative assessments are evaluated using the IB criteria depicted in the specific subject guides. These summative assessments (both internal and external) are also graded and recorded by IB Diploma Programme teachers at Columbia as well as by IB examiners from around the world as determined by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). Summative assessments, including internal and external IB assessments, follow the IB rubrics in the subject guides along with any current marking schemes and moderated bands or marks published on the IBO Online Curriculum Center. Students will then receive final scores between 1 (the lowest score) to 7 (the highest score).

Recording and Reporting of Assessments and Frequency of Reporting

Columbia High School uses an online software program (ManageBac) to record and report IB grades. Teachers record the summative assessments using IB criterion and leveled grade descriptors. During the initial parent conference, parents and students are given a copy of the “Diploma Programme Grade Descriptors” as a reference. Students review



previously graded IB examinations to gain a realistic understanding of the criteria. Students and parents have access to review the grades as they are posted. IB report cards are generated at the midterm and at the end of the academic year. Formative assessments are also recorded on ManageBac and are reported to the student and parent as the assessments are posted. During classroom instruction students are encouraged and advised to participate in peer reviews as well as self-assessments using the IB criteria. Students have access to the posted grades and are encouraged and advised to record a written reflection on the work submitted. Classroom grades, determined each quarter, are reported to the students and parents as well as to the district and state through school-generated report cards and are noted on student transcripts. The recording of grades will follow the requirements and deadlines of the state of Alabama and Huntsville City Schools school district. IB Diploma Programme scores are released in July each year and students have to request that their scores are sent to selected colleges prior to the July results. Students have access to view the IB scores online per coordinator access through the IB candidate website.

Deadlines for Assessment

Classroom Deadlines

Diploma Programme students are notified of assessment deadlines in each class by their teachers via ManageBac and the IA calendar as produced by the coordinator and teachers. Individual Diploma Programme teachers determine classroom deadlines. If a student fails to meet classroom deadlines, fails to complete work honestly, or fails to comprehend the material, the teacher is expected to contact the parent during that grading period and conference with the student and/or parent. Parent conferences are scheduled at least once per semester for all Diploma Programme students.

Internal Assessments

The IB Diploma Programme faculty and administration sets internal deadlines for IB Diploma Programme Internal Assessments as per the suggestion of IB. The IB Diploma Programme faculty, working with the IB coordinator, creates the Internal Assessment (IA) Calendar for deadlines that align with the IB deadlines. The IA calendar is given to students and parents. If the student fails to meet the required deadlines, parents are notified. A conference with all stakeholders is scheduled to identify areas of concern and establish an individual plan of action.

Roles and Responsibilities

IB Diploma Programme students are required to successfully complete their courses and exhibit behavior that complies with the IB Learner Profile and the Columbia High School Honesty Policy in order to continue to participate in the program.



The IB Diploma Programme coordinator communicates pertinent information to faculty regarding any changes to the IB curriculum and assessment. Such changes may require additional training for teachers in addition to the minimum required by IB. A committee comprised of teachers and administrators follows a review schedule of all IB policies at the beginning of each academic year. Any necessary changes in the implementation of current policies and procedures are noted in revised policies. In addition, the faculty will convene formally to review and revise all policies as a part of the five year programme self-study.

IB Diploma Programme teachers commit to improving their practice through scheduled collaboration and continued training. Teachers formally meet in collaborative teams by subject twice per month. Due to the small size of the faculty, teachers meet informally on a more frequent basis through common subject planning time to review practice and share feedback.

Work Cited

IBO. Guidelines for Developing a School Assessment Policy in the Diploma Programme. Cardiff: IBO, 2010.
IBO. Programme Standards and Practices. Cardiff: IBO, 2014.