
Assessment of Learning, Academic Responsibility, Honesty,
and
Promotion/Placement/Retention, Kindergarten to Grade
12

PREAMBLE

The Swan Valley School Division supports student achievement through sound assessment practices. These include ongoing assessment for, as and of learning. The focus of **Assessment of Learning, Academic Responsibility, Honesty, and Promotion/Placement/Retention** is assessment of learning which refers to the process of judging the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria and assigning a value to represent that quality.

This document is designed to provide a common understanding for staff, students, parents and guardians, post-secondary institutions and employers. The Swan Valley School Division's Policy as it relates to reporting of student learning through the Manitoba Provincial Report Card is outlined. These principles and practices of assessment of learning, academic responsibility, honesty and promotion/retention are addressed in the Manitoba Education **Provincial Assessment Policy, Kindergarten to Grade 12**, www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/publications. The Swan Valley School Division Policy references the Manitoba Education document and mandate throughout.

Assessment of Learning, Academic Responsibility, Honesty, and Promotion/Placement/ Retention builds upon educational research into best practices, professional experience and dialogue within our school communities. For further information, the reader is invited to review the Manitoba documents *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind: Assessment for Learning*, *Assessment as Learning*, *Assessment of Learning and Communicating Student Learning: Guidelines for Schools* (both of which are available at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/index.html>), as well as *Success for All Learners: A Handbook on Differentiating Instruction and Student Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans (IEP)* www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specialed/documents .

The Swan Valley School Division acknowledges all administrators and teachers within the Division who, over the 2010-11 academic year studied from ***Classroom Assessment for Learning Doing It Right – Using It Well*** by Rick Stiggins, Judith Arter, Jan Chappuis and Steve Chappuis and ***A Repair Kit for Grading 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*** by Ken O'Connor. This Policy is grounded in their foundational work. Particular appreciation is extended to the members of the academic staff Policy review committee who completed the task of scripting the document; H. Barkowski, Principal, SVRSS, M. Jones, Principal, MMYS, J. Mydynski-Arp, Vice-Principal, SVRSS, J. Simpson, Guidance Teacher, SVRSS, A. Barbour-Stevenson, Pathways Teacher, SVRSS, C. Ayers, Resource Teacher, ESRSS, K. Dahl, ELI Teacher, Heyes and Taylor Schools, T. Badowski, Teacher, Benito School and member of the Teacher's Professional Development Committee, C. Rogers, Teacher, SVRSS D. Burnside, Student Services Coordinator and M. Marquis-Forster, Superintendent.

RATIONALE

Clear and accurate reporting of student progress is the foundation upon which improved student learning is based. Constructive evaluation of pupil achievement informs instruction, monitors progress, provides feedback on learning, evaluates achievement of learning outcomes, curriculum and methodology, and encourages student reflection.

Student engagement throughout the teaching/learning process is critical. The Swan Valley School Division seeks to include children and youth, along with their families in developing a common understanding of and commitment to student self-direction, personal integrity and social responsibility.

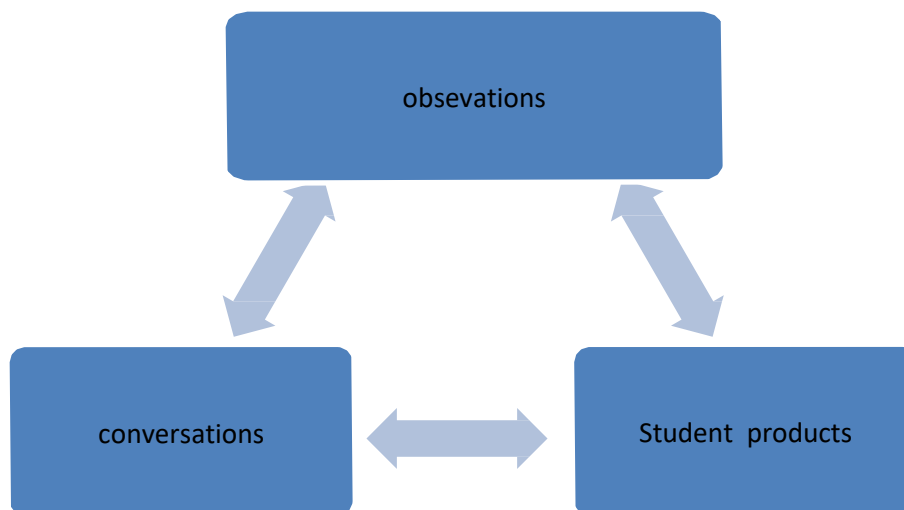
Our assessment policies must cultivate that ***sense of responsibility*** early by providing appropriate and challenging expectations and ensuring that students rise to these challenges. Manitoba students need to become adults who take responsibility for lifelong learning and citizenship.

In order for students to complete their education with a ***profound sense of accomplishment***, Manitobans expect that students will make consistent progress based on evidence of achievement. Educational leaders are responsible for ensuring that students are placed in learning environments that best support ongoing progress.

Assessment of Learning/Summative

The focus of this policy document is **summative assessment**, or assessment of learning, which refers to the process of judging the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria and assigning a value to represent that quality. It accurately summarizes and communicates to students, teachers, parents and guardians, employers, and institutions of further education what students know and can do with respect to the curriculum. Assessment of learning provides evidence of student achievement at strategic times throughout the grade/course, often at the end of a period of learning.

Evidence of student achievement is collected over time from three different sources— observations, conversations, and student products. Multiple sources of evidence increase the reliability and validity of the assessment.

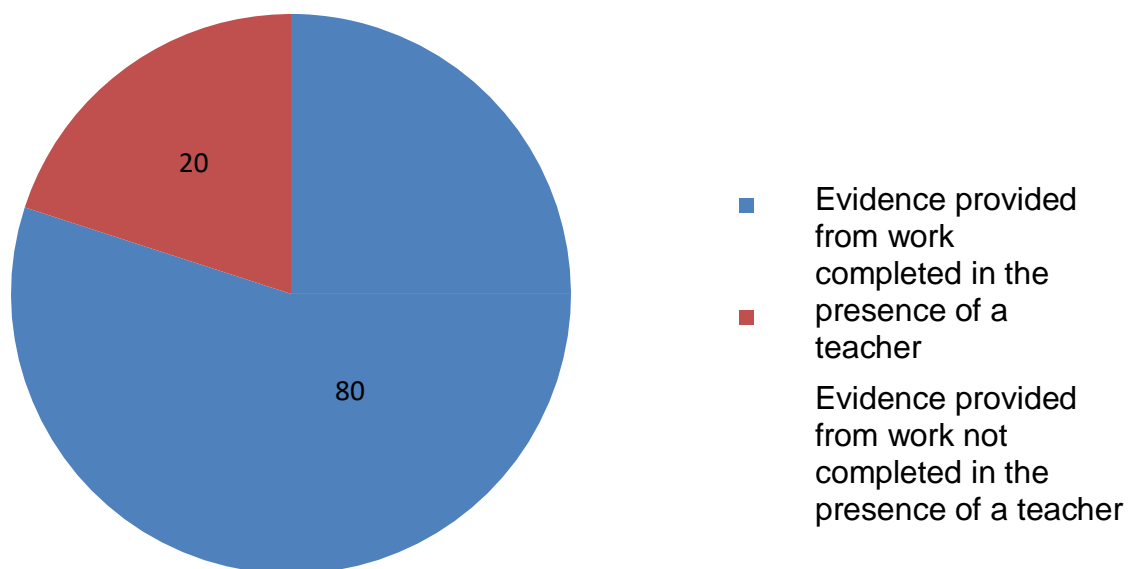


Assessment tasks used for summative purposes may be in the form of:

- rich performance tasks,
- demonstrations,
- projects,
- essays,
- tests, and
- examinations.

So as to ensure equity for all students, assessment tasks being used to provide evidence of achievement are to be completed, whenever possible, in the presence of a teacher. Care should be taken to distinguish between homework assignments designed to be graded, used for summative assessment purposes, from homework assigned in order to consolidate knowledge or skills, or as preparation for future class work and/or formative assessment purposes. The minimum ratio of evidence of student learning provided to determine a grade that was **completed in the presence of a teacher**, as compared to evidence collected from student work that was **not completed in the presence of the teacher** is shown following. At least **eighty percent of evidence considered** by a teacher to determine a grade will come from a **teacher's direct knowledge** of what the student knows and can demonstrate.

Gathering Evidence of Student Learning for Summative Purposes



Students have an important **responsibility** in striving to meet learning outcomes. Pupils are to be **active participants** in the assessment process; for example, studying in preparation for a test or examination, planning criteria that would be considered evidence of learning and completing summative tasks.

Assessment **of** student learning is the **responsibility** of the **teacher**. Teachers will take various considerations into account before making a decision about the grade to be entered on a report card. The teacher will consider evidence of achievement collected through assessment in a particular grade or course. Grades are not to include a reflection of student behaviour. This important information is communicated separately.

In addition, the teacher will consider that some evidence carries greater weight than other evidence; for example, some performance tasks are richer and reveal more about students' skills and knowledge than others. **Teachers will weigh evidence of student achievement** in light of these considerations and will use their professional judgment to determine the student's report card grade.

The report card grade represents a **student's overall achievement**, as demonstrated to that point in time. Determining a grade will involve teachers' professional judgment based on evidence. This evidence should reflect the **student's most consistent level of achievement**, with special consideration given to **more recent evidence**. Not all assessment task scores need to be included.

Principals have a **critical role** in ensuring that there is a common understanding among all staff about the process for determining the **final grade**. They are consequently expected to **exercise their leadership** and work **collaboratively** with teachers to **ensure common and equitable grading practices** that follow Departmental and Divisional Policies.

Schools may develop school-specific assessment Policy that clarifies assessment practices. Such Policy shall be consistent with Manitoba Education and Swan Valley School Division Policy.

ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITY

Student engagement is fundamental to achievement of learning outcomes. Pupils will be involved in discussions of academic rights and responsibilities as they pertain to this assessment policy.

Teachers have fundamental responsibilities to support student learning. This mandate includes but is not limited to:

1. Establishing and clearly communicating expectations regarding learning outcomes.

Teachers have important responsibilities in supporting the learning of all students. Teachers will ensure that critical tasks are completed by:

- Identifying the essential learning outcomes and the assessment criteria required for mastery of these outcomes.
- Collaborating with students to clarify the essential learning outcomes, the nature of the products and performances, and the criteria for judging the evidence of learning.
- Clarifying the expectations, by providing samples and exemplars.
- Planning for appropriate instruction addressing individual learning needs.
- Providing timely and specific feedback to students.

2. Developing reasonable timelines with students for completion of student products.

- The timelines teachers set should provide adequate time for students to complete the work, while being mindful of other demands and of student strengths and challenges.
- Regular communication about student progress among teachers, students, and parents will support timely completion of assignments.

2. **Establishing, communicating, and applying consequences for late and missing work.**

Students must understand that there will be ***consequences for not completing assignments*** that provide evidence of learning or for submitting those assignments late. If, after establishing and clearly communicating expectations regarding assignments, setting and communicating timelines for assignments, and supporting student learning using the strategies provided above, student work is still late or missing, teachers may apply the following strategies based on their professional judgment:

- Dialogue with the student.
- Involve the parents regarding the late or incomplete evidence.
- Schedule a meeting between the student, parent and teacher to identify if the student requires additional assistance in understanding the material or the assessment task.
- Develop an agreement with the student, parent and the teacher indicating a reasonable date when the student product will be completed and given to the teacher or provide alternative assessment tasks that accommodate diverse learning needs.
- Come to the understanding that if an assignment is not completed and handed in according to the student/parent/teacher plan, there is no evidence of student learning for that particular learning outcome. Teachers will use their professional judgment as to how to respond.
- Deduct marks for late or missing assignments in consultation with school administration
- Students failing to successfully master the essential learning outcomes during the academic year may be granted an incomplete (IN) or failing grade.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Upon entering school, students will be supported in developing an understanding that the products they submit as evidence of learning must be their own work. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. It is the **responsibility of educators** to be **proactive** in teaching academic honesty and mitigating the opportunity for dishonesty.

Teachers and principals have the following responsibilities:

1. **To communicate and reinforce expectations of academic honesty with students.** Aspects of academic honesty include not *cheating* (e.g., copying others' work, using cheat notes), *lying* (e.g., misrepresenting contributions to group work, lying about circumstances to obtain extensions), and *plagiarizing* (submitting or representing someone else's work as one's own).

2. **In responding to academic dishonesty teachers will, in consultation with school administration:**
 - Address the situation with the student.
 - Use the situation as a learning opportunity.
 - Involve parents.
 - Document the incident.
 - Require student to demonstrate learning in an honest fashion.
 - Apply consequences in accordance with the Code of Conduct as is appropriate.
 - Consider the nature of the assignment, the age and maturity of the student, the individual circumstances of the student, and the potential impact of the consequence on subsequent learning and motivation.

ACADEMIC PROMOTION/PLACEMENT/RETENTION

In Kindergarten to Grade 8, promotion decisions rest with the principal, who consults with teachers, parents, and other specialists as is appropriate.

- The decision is based on the evidence of the student's progress and growth, and considers the Grade level placement that would support and extend the student's learning.
- When considering retaining or placing a student the principal will involve the Student Services Coordinator in discussions.
- Students being considered for retention or placement will be referred to the School Psychologist.
- When retaining or placing a student, an **Individual Education Plan** will be developed and implemented for the following academic year.

In Grades 9 to 12, the final decision as to whether or not credits are granted rests with the principal, who consults with teachers, parents, and other specialists as is appropriate.

- If the necessary evidence of learning to be granted a credit in a course has not been gathered, then the student may be assigned a **failing grade** or be assigned a grade of **"IN"** (incomplete).
- If an **"IN"** is assigned, a **documented plan** will be put into place at the school level to assist the student in providing the outstanding evidence of learning in order to receive the credit within a reasonable, agreed-upon timeframe.

COMMUNICATION

At the beginning of a course of study, **teachers**, in cooperation with school administration, **have a responsibility** to share with students and families all Swan Valley School Division **Policies addressing assessment**, the essential **learning outcomes** addressed within a given Grade level or course of study and the **assessment criteria required for demonstrating mastery** of these outcomes. **Ongoing collaboration** with students to clarify essential learning outcomes and the nature of the products and performances is expected.

Principals in collaboration with teachers will choose a variety of methods for communicating this information including but not limited to:

- School and classroom websites,
- Course outlines,
- Student handbooks,
- Newsletters and other print material,
- Parent and School Community information sessions,
- Parent/teacher conversations,
- Student led conferences, and
- Student performances.

Responsibility for ensuring that teachers communicate this information with students and their families rests with the ***school principal***.

PROCESS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Where a conflict arises related to a student's progress, achievement, and retention/placement promotion the following protocol will be followed. Conflicts are to be addressed within reasonable timelines. Generally when decisions regarding a final grade are in question, one week following receipt of the grade is considered to be reasonable.

Students, if age appropriate, and parents/guardians will arrange to meet with the teacher in an attempt to gain understanding and resolve the issue.

Should this meeting not result in an acceptable resolution, the matter will be referred to the Principal who will arrange to meet with the parties involved. The Principal will chair this meeting and attempt to find workable solutions to outstanding issues.

If at this meeting no resolution is achieved, the matter will be referred to the Superintendent who will arrange to meet with all parties involved, again in an attempt to find an acceptable resolution to the matter. A written record of discussions hosted, decisions, resolutions and/or outstanding issues will be provided to all participants.

Should the matter remain unresolved, parents/guardians may choose to take the issue forward to the Board of Trustees through written request.