

Changing Times in Instruction and Assessment

What Parents Need to Know

Moving From *Sorting* to *Learning*

From	To
Instruction and teaching	Deep learning
Summative assessments for grading and reporting	Formative assessment to improve learning
Teaching in isolation	Teaching teams working as a learning community
Schools on their own	Schools working together and with communities
Leadership by position - hierarchy	Leadership by contribution – distributed and networked
Some students leaving school with limited skills	All students leave with pride, purpose, options and skills ²

Assessment: 2 Key Purposes

Assessment *of* learning

Purpose is to report and assign grade
(measure learning)

Checks learning to date

Audience is parents and students

Periodic

Uses numbers, scores and grades

Criterion/standards referenced

No need to involve the learner

Assessment *for* learning

Purpose is to improve learning

Suggests next learning

Audience is teachers and learners

Continual – conversation and
marking

Specific feedback, using words

Self-referenced

Must involve the learner – the
person most able to improve
learning

Summary of the Research

- Giving more tests does not improve performance
- Factors that do make a difference:
 - Involving students in the assessment process
 - Clarifying what is to be learned and what criteria describe performance
 - Increasing descriptive, specific feedback
 - Decreasing evaluative feedback

Research continued

- In classes where AFL is used in an ongoing, planned manner, student achievement may increase as much as 2 to 3 grade levels
- Increased performance is greatest for struggling or vulnerable learners
- This is 4 to 5 times the impact of reducing class size.
- The overall implication is that students who are taught in classrooms that implement AFL learn more than their peers who are in classrooms that do not.

What is Assessment for Learning?

Assessment for Learning is part of everyday practice by students, teachers and peers that seeks, reflects upon and responds to information from dialogue, demonstration and observation in ways that enhance ongoing learning.

“Assessment explicitly designed to promote learning is the single most powerful tool we have to raise student performance”

Black and William, 2001

What is Assessment for Learning?

- A process involving a series of varied activities that teachers and students with feedback
- Happens DURING the teaching/learning sequence, not separate from it (like an exam)
- Feedback allows:
 - Teaches to adjust instruction to meet needs of learners
 - Students to make adjustments to their own learning, by answering the questions:
 - What level of learning am I at?
 - Where am I trying to get?
 - How do I get there?

What are the Most Effective Strategies for AFL?

- Posting of learning intentions
- Development of clear criteria for performance
- Descriptive feedback given on those criteria
- The use of powerful questioning techniques that promote deep understanding
- The use of peer and self assessment
- Students developing ownership of their learning

What is Assessment of Learning?

- It is an event that measures student learning
- It happens when teachers want to assign a grade or mark for purposes of communication and reporting
- Options include tests and quizzes, but should also include a variety products, such as portfolios, performances, simulations and projects
- Assessments of learning should focus on students performance related to the learning outcomes of the course
- Provincial exams, unit tests, culminating projects are all examples of assessment of learning

What is SD 8 Doing to Promote AFL?

- District direction for the past 4 years
- Variety of professional learning opportunities for staff, including:

Ruth Sutton

Damien Cooper

Caren Cameron

Network of Performance Based Schools

Development of Assessment and Grading Handbook for SD 8

Focus in School Growth Plans

We will also be developing a Parent Pamphlet in the new year

How Can Parents Help?

- Go to your school and ask your principal and teachers which AFL practices are used
- Ask the principal what types of professional development activities the school is using to promote these practices.
- When discussing a student's grade on an assignment, ask to see the criteria for the assignment
- Ask teachers what process they are using to provide descriptive feedback to students
- Ask teachers to provide examples of your child's work, and have them explain how a grade or mark was determined.
- Ask teachers what types of strategies are used for peer and self assessment.
- Get involved in the school planning process, and lobby for AFL practices