# Assessment Policy - Primary

## Purpose of Assessment

### Introduction

The purpose of assessment at Discovery College is to improve student learning, to provide information on student learning and to contribute to the efficacy of learning programmes. Assessment is the ongoing process of gathering evidence for and of learning. This evidence will be used to give recognition and timely feedback to the learners and all other stake holders. Assessment will reflect best practice that supports the learner and the teacher in the promotion of student achievement

### PYP

At Discovery College we believe assessment is integral to all teaching and learning.  It is central to the PYP goal of thoughtfully and effectively guiding students through the five essential elements of learning:

- the acquisition of knowledge
- the understanding of concepts
- the mastering of skills
- the development of attitudes
- the decisions to take action

Discovery College's approach to assessment recognises the importance of assessing the process of inquiry as well as the products of inquiry. The main aim of assessment in the PYP at Discovery College is to provide feedback on the learning process and the development of the five essential elements to inform further learning. Students and teachers are actively engaged in assessing the students' progress as part of the development of their wider critical thinking and self assessment skills.

The assessment component in the school's curriculum can itself be subdivided into three closely related areas.

- Assessing – how we discover what the students know and have learned
- Recording – how we choose to collect and analyse data
- Reporting – how we choose to communicate information

### Assessing

The assessment of the students' development and learning is an essential component of the curriculum, and helps to inform continued development, learning and teaching. Students are observed in a variety of situations and a wide range of assessment strategies are implemented.

At Discovery College the classroom employs a range of formative and summative assessments, which demonstrate student achievements.

**Summative assessment**: aims to give teachers and students a clear insight into students' understanding. Summative assessment is the culmination of the teaching and learning process, and gives the students opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned.
It can assess several elements simultaneously: it informs and leads to improvement in student learning and the teaching process; it measures understanding of the central idea, and prompts students towards action.

**Formative assessment**: provides information that is used in order to plan the next stage in learning. It is interwoven with learning, and helps teachers and students to find out what the students already know and can do. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked and function purposefully together.

Formative assessment aims to promote learning by giving regular and frequent feedback throughout the learning process. This process helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding, to foster self-motivation and enthusiasm for learning, to engage in thoughtful reflection, to develop the capacity for self-assessment, and to recognize the criteria for success. There is evidence that increased use of formative assessment particularly helps those students who are low achievers to make significant improvements in their understanding.

Assessment in the classroom includes:
- collecting evidence of students' understanding and thinking
- documenting learning processes of groups and individuals
- engaging students in reflecting on their learning
- students assessing work produced by themselves and by others
- developing clear rubrics
- identifying exemplary student work
- keeping records of test/task results

**Recording**

The Discovery College community use a range of methods and approaches to gather information about a students learning.  They record this information using a variety of tools.

| Assessment strategies and tools | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assessment tools / Assessment strategies | Rubrics | Exemplars | Checklists | Anecdotal records | Continuums |
| Observations | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Performance Assessments | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Process-focussed Assessments | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Selected responses | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Open-ended tasks | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |

Teachers use a range of methods to document the evidence of student learning and understanding.  This at times includes video, audio, photographs and graphic representations.  Teachers also have written records of standard conversations, comments, explanations and hypotheses as well as annotated pieces of students' work that form part of a student portfolio.

**Reporting**

Reporting on assessment at Discovery College includes communicating what students know, understand and can do.  Reporting involves parents, students and teachers as partners and is honest, comprehensive and understandable to all parties.

Reporting to parents, students and teachers occurs through:
- Parent Information Evenings
- Conferences (parent- student-teacher) (student-teacher) and (Student Led)
- The Portfolio
- Gateway ARR – ongoing assessment online
- The Exhibition

**Parent Information Evening**

Parents gain information about the school from the Head of Primary and classroom teachers regarding the curriculum and classroom routines via this important evening that is held at the beginning of Term 1.

**'You tell us' interview (previously Barriers to Learning)**

This is an optional interview where the teachers gain information in regards to their students through this interview and a parent survey. Teachers also have the opportunity to share with parents how their child is settling in to class routines. This interview can be requested by teacher or parent and is optional.

**Portfolio**

The Portfolio is an important part of the school's reporting program. It provides a record of student effort and achievement in all areas of school curriculum and life as well as a dynamic means of three-way communication between parents, students and teachers.

Each student has his/her own Portfolio, which is taken home three times a year and shared with their parents at the Three-way and Student-led conference.

**Gateway – ongoing online assessment (See policy for further information)**

**Assessment information is reported at the completion of each of the following:**
Program of Inquiry units
Mathematics
English
(Mathematics and English reports may form part of the trandisciplinary unit of inquiry)

**One report per Semester will be completed for each of the following curriculum areas**
Visual Arts
Chinese
Drama
Music
Physical Education
Transdisciplinary Skills

**Teacher Comments**

A teacher comment will be posted on Gateway for parents to access at the completion of each transdisciplinary unit of inquiry and mathematics unit. This summary will include references to the IB Learner Profile, the transdiciplinary skills and the essential elements of the PYP.

**Student Led Conferences**

Student Led Conferences are formal reporting sessions to parents, led by the students themselves. The teacher's role in this process is to guide and prepare the students. The emphasis is on the discussion between a child and his/her parent.

The focus of the Student Led Conference is on students' progress – academic and social. Student Led Conferences are designed to give students ownership of the assessment of their learning, so they can become more actively involved and committed. These conferences make students accountable for their learning and encourage student/parent communication.

Other benefits are that students learn to evaluate their own progress and build critical thinking skills, self confidence and self esteem. Parents become an active participant in their child's learning and skills, and have an opportunity to help their child set positive goals. Students are trained to become confident participants and conference leaders. The development of their training will naturally be progressive as students move through the year levels. Clearly we would have different expectations about how a Year 1 student would report as distinct from a Year 6 student. Our aim is to build skill development beginning in Year 1 and moving through the year levels. Parents will be supported and guided with checklists and suggested questions so that they are informed about their child's learning in the most effective way possible.

**Three Way Conferences**
Three Way Conferences are formal reporting sessions with both parents and students and are led by the teacher and the students.

**The Exhibition**
Students in the final year of the PYP carry out an extended, collaborative inquiry approach – the PYP Exhibition. At Discovery College this takes place towards the end of the school year.
One of the purposes of the PYP Exhibition is to provide a forum for student driven reporting. Other key purposes include the following:
- For students to engage and report on an in-depth, collaborative inquiry
- To provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate independence and responsibility for their learning
- To provide students with an opportunity to explore multiple perspectives of their topics
- For students to synthesize and apply their learning of previous years, and to reflect on their journey through the PYP
- To provide an authentic process of assessing student understanding
- To demonstrate how students can take action as a result of their learning
- To unite the students, teachers, parents and other members of the school community in a collaborative experience that incorporates the essential elements of the PYP
- To celebrate the transition of learners from PYP to MYP education

**Standardised Achievement Tests**
Standardised assessments are used as a part of the whole school assessment policy in an effort to gain as much information as possible about the student as a learner and about the programme. The types of assessment used in the school are many and varied and like the "jigsaw" analogy the information gained goes towards making up the whole picture.

Standardised assessments are specifically used for the following reasons:
- To inform teaching.
- To provide information which shows growth over time
- To provide comparison with a peer group
- To inform decisions about programs
- To allow Learning Development Team to determine those students whose basic skills fall outside the normal range expected for students of that particular age. This information is used alongside other assessment information to determine those students who will access support from the Learning Support Department. (see Learning Support policy)
- To form part of the process of reporting to parents

**The database of standardized assessment data is available to teachers on the server.** Teachers have information that helps them to form groups, plan the program and be aware of those with special needs.
See Appendix 2 for details of standardized assessment tasks.

**Discovery College Assessment Essential Agreement**

**Parent/Teacher Communication**
All teachers are responsible for informing parents about the PYP and their program of inquiry units for the year using the following forms of communication:
- Parent Information Nights at the beginning of the year
- Class Newsletters and emails
- The College website
- Inserts in the school newsletter
- Inviting parents to view the learning of their children formally (mini-'exhibition', SLC or celebration of learning events) or informally (when parents visit classes or student learning is sent home to share)
- Student portfolios
- Three-Way Conferences
- Student Led Conferences

- Open days
- The PYP coordinator will provide regular information about the PYP using a range of communication strategies, eg newsletter articles, parent workshops etc

**Assessment**
- Assessment and Online Learning Objectives should be planned at the start of the unit and should demonstrate clear links between the assessment tasks and all components of the planner, ie central idea and lines of inquiry, key concepts, teacher and student questions, learning activities.
- Assessment strategies and tools should be varied and can include pre and post assessment tasks and formative and summative assessments.
- Assessments should include peer and self-assessment where appropriate.
- Students should be involved in the development of some of the assessment activities and tools (eg rubrics). When students are not involved in the development of assessment activities they need to be informed of assessment criteria
- Assessment will inform and direct future learning
- Assessment at the college is working towards addressing all five of the essential elements (knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action) and the learner profile
- Teachers will be familiar with and put in place the assessment policy of the school

**Online Ongoing Reporting**
- All staff need to be familiar with the ARR ongoing online assessment policy and practices.
- Learning objectives should be planned at the start of the unit and should demonstrate clear links between the assessment tasks and all components of the planner, ie central idea and lines of inquiry, key concepts, teacher and student questions and learning engagements.
- Teacher comments should be written to inform and direct future learning.
- Where possible teacher comments should include learner profile and PYP attitudes language.
- The online ongoing assessment is working towards addressing all five of the essential elements (knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action) and the learner profile.
- Parents need to be informed when a new assessment criteria goes live. This can be communicated with a sticker in the diary or an email.
- Teacher's need to forward the comments to their editing buddy as soon as completed and the comments need to be returned within three days.
- Collaborative teams discuss and decide when learning objectives and comments need to go live for each unit
- ICT team member to be invited to year level planning sessions to help with learning objectives and criteria.

**3-Way Conferences**
Preparation
- Have parents' names recorded to refer to
- Have evidence/work samples to share with parents - work samples (digital and hardcopy) and portfolios
- In your teams collaboratively discuss information that will be shared and how action will be recorded
- Complete a social survey (optional)
- Read student file in case professional reports need to be referred to (Drop files)
- Confer with Learning Development Team prior to interviews (If needed)
- Teacher/ Buddy and Peer practice before three -way conference
- Prepare student prompt sheets (Single subject and classroom)
- Organise online booking system at least two weeks in advance
- Dates need to be published in the school newsletter and on the school calendar well in advance
During the Conference
- Always begin and end with a positive comment about the child
- Ask how parents and students are feeling about how the child is progressing
- Give parents a strategy to take away to deal with a specific issue or problem (if there is an issue)
- Refer parents to web pages for resources/ strategies/ communication (teachers could demonstrate on IWB during conference)

- PYP coordinator to organise a reflection sheet

Follow-up
- Record information/action for follow up during the interview
- Reiterate with parents at the end of the interview those actions that you will be following up on and the action the parent will now need to take
- If an interview is going to take longer than the allocated time offer to meet again to continue the interview at another time in the near future
- If follow up is needed with CLT please refer students or parents

The Student
- Students should be involved in choosing what is shared with parents
- Where possible students should report to parents addressing all five of the essential elements (knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and action)

**Student Led Conferences**
- Students should be involved in choosing what is shared with parents
- Students should report to parents addressing all five of the essential elements (knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and action)
- Teachers should meet and greet parents and roam around the room throughout the conference
- Classroom teachers and Specialists should meet together to plan what is being shared.
- All year levels should be consistent in their approach to the SLC
- Notices informing parents need to be distributed at least 2 weeks before the conference takes place
- Booking system will be open at least a week before the conferences
- SLC dates need to be published in the school newsletter and calendar early in Term 2

**Portfolios**
- PYP Coordinator to write a cover letter for portfolios (purpose etc)
- EA to meet with ICT tech to make covers
- Each student has their own portfolio which is taken home three times a year at the end of each term and will be shared with their family and/or care-givers
- Each student will share their learning portfolio at the three way and student led conferences
- Portfolios provide information about the content of the unit (CI and Lines of Inquiry including maths and language stand alone) and at least one work samples from each unit
- Each term the following work samples are included in the portfolio:
     Language A and B and Mathematics work samples
     POI Transdisciplinary Unit of Inquiry work sample.
- Twice a year the following work samples are included in the portfolio:
     Visual Art
     Drama
     PE
     Music
- A week before portfolios are sent home the single subject teachers need to give the cover page and work sample to the class teacher
- Portfolios should include a range of assessment strategies and tools and can include pre and post assessment tasks and formative and summative assessments.
- Assessment samples could include peer and self-assessments where appropriate.
- Students should be involved in the selection and development of some of the work samples and assessment samples.
- All work samples need to be teacher acknowledged in some way and should be dated

**Appendix 1**

**Reporting at Discovery College 2009/10**
The following table gives parents a guide to Reporting at Discovery College over the period of the school year.

| | Term 1 | Term 2 | Term 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Year 1** | Three-way Conferences<br>Report<br>Portfolios | Portfolios<br>Student-led Conferences<br>Ongoing online report | Portfolios<br>Ongoing online report |
| **Year 2** | Three-way Conferences<br>Report<br>Portfolios | Portfolios<br>Student-led Conferences<br>Ongoing online report | Portfolios<br>Ongoing online report |
| **Year 3** | Three-way Conferences<br>Report<br>Portfolios | Portfolios<br>Student-led Conferences<br>Ongoing online report | Portfolios<br>Ongoing online report<br>InCAS results |
| **Year 4** | Three-way Conferences<br>Report<br>Portfolios | Portfolios<br>Student-led Conferences<br>Ongoing online report | Portfolios<br>Ongoing online report |
| **Year 5** | Three-way Conferences<br>Report<br>Portfolios | Portfolios<br>Student-led Conferences<br>Ongoing online report | Portfolios<br>Ongoing online report |
| **Year 6** | Three-way Conferences<br>Report<br>Portfolios | Portfolios<br>Student-led Conferences<br>Ongoing online report | Portfolios<br>InCAS results<br>Exhibition<br>Ongoing online report |

**Appendix 2**
**School Data Collection**

| YEAR LEVEL | TERM | WEEK | ASSESSMENT | Assessed by | REASSESS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Year 1* | 1 | 1/2 | Dibels - Phonemic Awareness | LDT | As needed |
| | 1 | 3 | PIPS | Class Teach | Term 3 |
| | 3 | | EAL  (Possibly listening and speaking continuum PYP) | LDT | Each year for EAL |
| | 1 | 4 | PM/ Alpha - assess Running Records | Class teach | Term 2 and 3 |
| | 1 | | 3 pieces of writing (FSiW) | Class teach | Term 2 and 3 |
| | 2 | | Possibly modified 'Early Numeracy' Interview | Class teacher LDT | ? |
| **Year 2** | 1 | | Sounds of Spelling (Joy Alcock) Phonemic Awareness for identified at risk students | LDT | Term 2,3 and as referred |
| | 1 | | PM/ Alpha - assess Running Records | Class Teacher | Term 2 and 3 |
| | 1 | | Words Their Way | Class teacher | Term 3 |
| | 1 | 2 | PIPS | Class teacher | |
| | 1 | | Numpa (at risk Numeracy) | LDT | As needed |
| | 1 | | 3 pieces of writing (FSiW) | Class Teacher | 1 per term |
| *Year 3* | 1 | | PM Running Records and then PROBE | Class teach | As needed |
| | 1 | | InCAS or ISA (Read, Writing and Maths) | Class teach | |
| | 1 | | Numpa (at risk Numeracy) | LDT | As needed |
| | 1 | | Words Their Way | Class teacher | Term 1, 3 |
| | 1 | | SNAP Profile (Special needs assess profile) | LDT | As referred |
| | 1 | | 3 pieces of writing (FSiW) | Class teacher | 1 per term |
| *Year 4* | 1 | | PROBE (at teacher's and LDT discretion) | Class Teacher | As needed |
| | 1 | |  Words their way | Class teacher | Term 1, 3 |
| | 1 | | 3 pieces of writing (FSiW) | Class teacher | 1 per term |
| | 1 | | ISA (Read, Writing and Maths) | Class teacher | |
| | 2 | | York (Reading diagnostic test for referred students) | LDT | As needed |
| | 2 | | Numpa (at risk Numeracy) | LDT | As needed |
| *Year 5* | 1 | | PROBE (at teacher's and LDT discretion) | Class Teacher | As needed |
| | 1 | | Words their way | Class teacher | Term 1, 3 |
| | 1 | | ISA (Read, Writing and Maths) | Class teacher | |
| | 1 | | 3 pieces of writing (FSiW) | Class teacher | 1 per term |
| | 2 | | York (Reading diagnostic test for referred students) | LDT | As needed |
| | 2 | | Numpa (at risk Numeracy) | LDT | As needed |

| | | | SNAP Profile | LDT | As needed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year 6** | 1 | | PROBE (at teacher's and LDT discretion) | Class Teacher | |
| | 1 | | Words their way | Class teacher | Term 1, 3 |
| | 1 | | INCAS OR ISA (Read, Writing and Maths) | Class teacher | |
| | 1 | | 3 pieces of writing (FSiW) | Class teacher | 1 per term |
| | 2 | | York (Reading for identified students) | LDT | As needed |
| | 2 | | Numpa (at risk Numeracy) | LDT | As needed |
| | 1 | | Lucid (Literacy Reasoning) | LDT | As needed |
| | 1 | | SNAP Profile | LDT | As needed |

Data collected in Data Base on server, student drop files and buff files

**Appendix 3**
**Glossary**

| Assessment strategies | |
|---|---|
| *Observations* | All students are observed often and regularly, with the teacher taking a focus varying from wide angle (for example, focusing on the whole class) to close up (for example, focusing on one student or one activity), and from nonparticipant (observing from without) to participant (observing from within). |
| *Performance assessments* | The assessment of goal-directed tasks with established criteria. They provide authentic and significant challenges and problems. In these tasks, there are numerous approaches to the problem and rarely only one correct response. They are usually multimodal and require the use of many skills. Audio, video and narrative records are often useful for this kind of assessment. |
| *Process-focused assessments* | Students are observed often and regularly, and the observations are recorded by noting the typical as well as non-typical behaviours, collecting multiple observations to enhance reliability, and synthesizing evidence from different contexts to increase validity. A system of note taking and record keeping is created that minimizes writing and recording time. Checklists, inventories and narrative descriptions (such as learning logs) are common methods of collecting observations. |
| *Selected responses* | Single occasion, one-dimensional exercises. Tests and quizzes are the most familiar examples of this form of assessment. |
| *Open-ended tasks* | Situations in which students are presented with a stimulus and asked to communicate an original response. The answer might be a brief written answer, a drawing, a diagram or a solution. The work, with the assessment criteria attached, could be included in a portfolio. |

| Assessment tools | |
|---|---|
| *Rubrics* | An established set of criteria for rating students in all areas. The descriptors tell the assessor what characteristics or signs to look for in students' work and then how to rate that work on a predetermined scale. Rubrics can be developed by students as well as by teachers. |
| *Exemplars* | Samples of students' work that serve as concrete standards against which other samples are judged. Generally there is one benchmark for each achievement level in a scoring rubric. Each school is encouraged to set benchmarks that are appropriate and usable within their particular school context. |
| *Checklists* | These are lists of information, data, attributes or elements that should be present. A mark scheme is a type of checklist. |
| *Anecdotal records* | Anecdotal records are brief written notes based on observations of students. "Learning stories" are focused, extended observations that can be analysed later. These records need to be systematically compiled and organized. |
| *Continuums* | These are visual representations of developmental stages of learning. They show a progression of achievement or identify where a student is in a process. |