



Assessment and Reporting Policy & Guide

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Assessment Policy

"Assessment *for* learning acknowledges that assessment should occur as a regular part of teaching and learning and that the information gained from assessment activities can be used to shape the teaching and learning process.

Assessment *of* learning enables teachers to report on the status of student learning at various points in the teaching and learning program and involves teachers making professional judgements of student achievement, based on evidence collected from both formal and informal measures of each student's performance, over time on a number of assessment *for* learning activities." **[NSW DET Curriculum Support – Consistent Teacher Judgement]**

"Assessment *for* learning occurs as a regular part of normal classroom activities. It is an ongoing form of assessment that is used to inform, monitor and promote learning. Assessment *for* learning helps increase the effectiveness of teaching strategies and improve learning processes, resulting in better learning outcomes for students.

Assessment *of* learning involves teachers making professional judgements of students' achievement based on evidence they have collected ... This evidence can then be used to inform the expert professional judgement of the teacher operating within a standards-referenced framework." **[NSW BOS PRIMARY MATTERS Vol12 No.1 March 2003]**

"**Students should be involved in their own assessment.** Students should always know what they are to achieve. They are then in a position to make judgements about their own achievements. By involving students in the assessment of their own learning, teachers foster independence and assist students to maintain some control of their learning." **Early Learning Profiles Ideas for Assessing and Reporting (DSE, 1994)**

"Assessment focuses on the **achievements of individual learners** rather than on comparisons between learners. Safeguards should be established to ensure the **validity of assessment practices**. **Systematic and comprehensive record keeping** is fundamental to effective assessment." **Assessment and Reporting in English Language and Literacy (Australian Literacy Federation, 1995)**

Assessment of student learning will be undertaken for all learners in all school settings **[Policy Standards for Curriculum Planning and Programming, Assessing and Reporting to Parents K-12]**

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about students' learning. The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on student achievement and progress and set the direction for ongoing teaching and learning.

Assessment provides vital information at the point of planning, along the way and at the end of a cycle in preparation for the **next** teaching and learning cycle. In a standards framework, teachers can compare student achievement against syllabus standards that remain constant over time. Schools will collect information about students' learning through both formal and informal activities.

Reporting is the process of communicating information about student achievement and progress gained from the assessment process. The purpose of reporting is to support teaching and learning by providing feedback to students, parents and teachers. Students' learning achievements and progress are also reported to other schools and to employers. This information about students' achievements is valuable for school and system wide planning and reporting.

Student achievement and progress can be reported by comparing:

- the student's work against a standards framework of syllabus outcomes
- the student's prior and current learning achievements
- the student's achievements with those of other students.

Reporting can and should involve a combination of these methods.

Schools will report on the six Key Learning Areas of English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and Its Environment, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education and Creative Arts.

A report for students for whom learning adjustments have been made, will indicate that it shows achievement against a personalised learning program. A personalised program indicates that the student has learning needs that require access to content and competencies that are at a different level from their age peer group.

Achievement standards have two important components. These can be thought of in terms of **what** and **how well** and will consider:

- **what students have had the opportunity to learn.....as specified in NSW Dof E syllabuses and school teaching/learning programs**
- **how well students have achieved...based on what they have had the opportunity to learn**

The NSW syllabuses state **what** students at each stage are expected to learn. The school report describes **how well** students achieve against this state-wide standard.

When a school establishes its school report system, that reporting needs to be meaningful to students, teachers and parents alike and have these elements:

- Establishes clear targets for teaching/learning
- Gives children ownership and purpose for learning and assessment
- Provides a process based on teacher/student recognition of the outcomes, indicators, activities, criteria and evidence for success
- Offers feedback in the context of achievement targets.
- Encourages self evaluation
- Gives students the opportunity to take a learning/assessment path
- Provides an opportunity to celebrate learning.

Effective and informative assessment and reporting practice:

[NSW DET Teaching and Learning K-6 Principles for Effective Assessment and Reporting in NSW government schools]

Has clear, direct links with outcomes

The assessment strategies employed by the teacher in the classroom need to be directly linked to and reflect NSW syllabus outcomes. Syllabus outcomes in stages will describe the standard against which student achievement is assessed and reported.

Is integral to teaching and learning

Effective and informative assessment practice involves selecting strategies naturally derived from well structured teaching and learning activities and should provide information concerning student progress and achievement that helps inform ongoing teaching and learning, as well as the diagnosis of areas of strength and need.

Is balanced, comprehensive and varied

Effective and informative assessment practice involves teachers using a variety of assessment strategies that give students multiple opportunities, in varying contexts, to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in relation to the syllabus outcomes. Effective and informative reporting of student achievement takes a number of forms including traditional reporting, student profiles, state and or national criterion-based testing, parent and student interviews, annotations on student work, comments in workbooks, portfolios, certificates and awards.

Is valid

Assessment strategies should accurately and appropriately assess clearly defined aspects of student achievement and reflect the actual intention of syllabus based teaching and learning activities.

Is fair

Effective and informative assessment strategies are designed to ensure equal opportunity for success regardless of students' age, gender, physical or other disability, culture, background language, socio-economic status or geographic location.

Engages the learner

Effective and informative assessment practice is student-centred. Ideally there is a cooperative interaction between teacher and students and among the students themselves, with the intended outcomes and assessment processes to be used made explicit to students. Students should also participate in the negotiation of learning tasks and actively monitor as well as reflect upon their achievements and progress.

Values teacher judgement

Good assessment practice involves teachers making judgements, on the weight of assessment evidence, about student progress towards the achievement of outcomes. Teachers can be confident a student has achieved an outcome when the student has successfully demonstrated that outcome a number of times, and in varying contexts.

Recognises individual achievement and progress

Effective and informative assessment practice acknowledges that students are individuals who develop differently and therefore must be given appropriate opportunities to demonstrate individual achievement and demonstrate their progress and achievement of syllabus outcomes across stages, not just within stages. The school's assessment and reporting practice will also be sensitive to the self esteem and general well-being of students, providing honest and constructive feedback and demonstrate an understanding that values and attitudes outcomes are an important part of learning that should be assessed and reported as distinct from knowledge, understanding and skill outcomes.

Is time efficient and manageable

Effective and informative assessment practice is time efficient and supports teaching and learning by providing constructive feedback to the teacher and student that will guide further learning.

Conveys meaningful and useful information

Good reporting practice takes into account the expectations of the school community and system requirements, particularly the need for information about standards that will enable parents to know how their children are progressing. Student achievement and progress can be reported by comparing students' work against a standards framework of syllabus outcomes [*outcomes approach*], comparing students' achievement and progress in comparison to predetermined criteria [*criterion-referenced*] or comparing their achievements to those of other students [*norm-referenced*] – effective reporting should involve a combination of these methods.

Profiling Student Progress

Students will work toward the achievement outcomes at their own rate and NSW BOS Syllabus indicators are very useful in assessing a student's achievement of outcomes against a standards framework. Teachers should use these indicators when assessing students, but there is no set number of indicators nor one assessment task

that needs to be accomplished before a teacher makes a decision that a student has achieved the outcome.

Collecting evidence of students work may consist of...

- student's rough notes and first drafts of writing
- student plans for an oral presentation of debate
- student reading logs
- research project progress reports and plans
- discussion of explanation strategies used in problem solving
- debate the pros and cons of an issue
- explanations, opinions and thinking skills
- ability to recall facts

Collecting evidence from the final piece of quality work

- diagrams, maths working, finished written work (including handwriting and I.T. skills)
- oral reports
- photographs of students' work, video/audio tape performances
- completed research projects

Collecting evidence from observation, listening and anecdotal notes

- observing students completing class activities, answers to questions, talking to other students
- comparing evidence of achievement with other students [norm-based]
- talking with parents and/or students
- conferences with students
- running records and miscue analysis

Formal assessment tasks

- a balance of formative and summative assessments at key points of teaching and learning
- practical tests, oral reports
- assignments, research reports
- comparing evidence of achievement against syllabus standards (outcomes approach) and/or predetermined
- set of criteria (criterion-reference approach)



Assessment and Reporting Style Guide

Font

The standard font for reports is set when you enter text into the reporting template. There is no need to change the style or size.

Hyphenation

Avoid the use of the hyphen, e.g. reread rather than *re-read*, *strand* rather than *sub-strand*, except where there is significance in the meaning. The hyphen is normally used where the prefix joined to the base will result in a double vowel, e.g. *anti-intellectual* and when the base word had a capital, e.g. *pre-Christian*.

Capitals

Capital letters should be used for proper nouns and titles, e.g. *The Premier of New South Wales*. Capitals should be used when describing the grade in which students are being taught, e.g. *Kindergarten, Year 3, Year 6*. When writing about the whole period of primary schooling, the correct description is K-6. Other descriptions should be *K-Y4* or *Kindergarten to Year 4*. Capitals are not needed in circumstances such as a *meeting of teachers and principals*, *seventeen head teachers were involved in the program*. As the name of the term is *Term 4*, the capital *T* is to be used. Similarly, *Semester 2* or *second semester*.

Although the DET states that only the English and other languages should be written with a capital and that lower case should be used for mathematics, science and geography, for the purpose of our reports, *all* KLA's are to be written with capitals, with strands and substrands to *not* have capital letters.

Use an upper case letter to refer only to the KLA/subject. In most cases a lower case letter will be needed. For example:

Her **mathematical** thinking...**scientific** skills...love of **music**

In **measurement**, Sam experiences difficulty with the concept of **area**. (Be careful of the use of 'area' in Maths – in the area of area!)

Amy applies appropriate rules and strategies to her **spelling**...understands the conventions of **grammar and punctuation**

Terminology

Care should be taken when using jargon or terminology common within the education system. This includes organisations' names that are frequently referred to. We should never assume that a reader will know what terms such as ESL, SSPs, and so on mean. When using these terms, write them in full in the first instance with their abbreviation appearing in brackets, for example, schools for specific purposes (SSPs).

Redundancies

It is easy to fall into the trap of becoming verbose. It is wise to reread material to ensure that redundancies have been avoided, e.g. final completion, a number of examples, classified into classes.

Agreement of subject and verb

Check carefully that subject and verb agree in number – a single subject needs a singular verb, a double subject needs a plural verb. For example:

David's **understanding** of place value and rounding off **has** improved.

Her easy temperament **and** diligent approach **are** an asset in the classroom.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations should not be overused, particularly e.g, i.e. and etc.

Brackets

The overuse of brackets should be avoided.

Lists

A colon is used to introduce a list. Although punctuation is not needed at the end of items in a list, the last item is followed by a full stop.

Dates

Give the full date using the form 10 January 2006, not 2nd February, 2005 or February 2, 2005 or 2/2/05. The name of the month is always to be written in the full form.

Slashes

The use of a slash is to be avoided. Use *and* or *or*, but not *and/or*.

Quotation Marks

Double quotation marks should be used when reporting direct speech. Single quotation marks should be used if using a quotation within a quotation.

Italics

Italics should be used to identify the name of an article, book, film or similar, or to highlight particular text within a sentence, e.g. the use of *and* or *or* in a sentence. Quotation marks are not to be used for this purpose.

Apostrophes

Apostrophes are not to be used to show the plural form, e.g. CD's, 5's. The apostrophe shows singular or group ownership, e.g. Boys' High School, Jan's pen

Commas

Punctuation should be used for *pause* and *effect* and is meant to make the statement clear. Where clauses are short and linked by the word *and*, the comma can usually be omitted, e.g. *The wind was strong and heavy*. Commas may also be used to separate figures if necessary, e.g. *By 1998, 850 000 students were*

attending... No commas or full stops are to be used in the correspondent's title, name, address and opening and closing salutations.

Numbers

Numbers up to nine should be written as *one, five, eight*, etc. Those 10 and above should be shown as numerals: *10, 15, 25* etc. However, do not use numerals to begin a sentence, e.g. *47 students from North Harbour*. Use *Forty-seven students...* Numbers ending a sentence should also be expressed in words. Use *\$1 billion* as opposed to *\$1 000 million*.

Mathematical expressions

Place a space between numbers and operations in number sentences, e.g. $2 + 4 = 6$ or $34 \times 254 = 8\,636$. The international System of Units recommends the use of spaces between each group of three numbers. A comma is not to be used because in Europe it indicates the decimal point.

However

The word 'however' is an adverb. It is not a synonym for 'but'. In fact, if you can substitute the word 'but', then the sentence is not correct.

For example, it is **not** correct to write:

Anna writes imaginatively however she needs to edit more thoroughly.

Correct possibilities:

Although Anna writes imaginatively, she needs to edit more thoroughly.

Anna writes imaginatively but needs to edit more thoroughly.

Anna writes imaginatively. She needs, however, to edit more thoroughly.

Anna writes imaginatively. She needs to edit more thoroughly, however.

Anna writes imaginatively. However, she needs to edit more thoroughly.

Practise/Practice

Practise is the verb

Sam needs to practise his spelling each night.

Practising reading skills every night should enhance progress.

Practice is the noun or adjective.

Ellen needs to complete some handwriting practice each night.

The practice for Stage 2 Assembly will take place in the Assembly Hall.

Affect/Effect

In the context of reports, *affect* will always be a verb.

Simon's hearing has been affected by a middle ear infection.

Lack of confidence is affecting Robert's ability to solve problems.

When it means the consequence of an action, *effect* is a noun.

Careless editing has an adverse effect on the quality of Jeremy's writing.

David's generous nature has a positive effect on his peers.

Key Phrases

There are many phrases that appear regularly in report writing. Some sound very awkward if not used in the correct context or followed by the appropriate preposition.

Such phrases include:

- **benefit** from
- in **respect** of
- with **regard** to
- **enjoyment** of
- **contribute** to
- **participate** in
- **similar** to
- **different** from

Spelling Consistency

With regard to reports, it is important to be consistent with spelling.

- *a lot*, no such word as *alot*
- *although*, not *though*
- *focused/focusing*
- *benefited/benefiting*, doubling the 't' is the American spelling
- *recognise, realise, analyse, organise* etc, don't use *z*
- *program*, rather than *programme*
- *co-operate*, just because it matches the pronunciation better

Use *s* rather than *z* in words such as *organise, realise*. Be aware of *trial, trialling* and *trialled* and *target, targeted* and *targeting*.

Writing Quality Report Comments

Reports;

- need to be written in everyday language
- need to summarise where a student is up to in his/her learning – the skills/strategies and understandings that are demonstrated now.
- should show progress.
- should show what is expected of students
- should be constructive
- reflect that you know your student
- should not duplicate information mentioned in other aspects of the report

English and Maths Comment Structure

State the strengths or achievement highlights of the student in the learning area.

Identify main area/s for further development.

Suggest strategies which you will use or that parents could employ at home to support the student's progress.

Optional – May reflect on how the student uses one of the **Learner Qualities** in the subject area

Sample English Comment

John's reading fluency has improved significantly as he is less reliant on sounding out words when reading. This allows him to focus on word meaning and consequently his comprehension has improved. John should be commended for the **determination** he has exhibited in trying to improve his reading fluency. John finds it challenging to write using appropriate sentence structures. A future focus for him is to read back what he has read to check for meaning and make necessary edits with the help of an adult.

Sample Maths Comment

Jill is quick with mental calculations and can explain how she applies strategies to problem solving using mathematical terminology. She always ask relevant **questions** to help improve her understanding of mathematical concepts. A future focus for Jill is to develop her ability to tell the time using an analogue clock. Daily revision of telling the time on the hour and half hour at home and school using her split pin clock will support her progress.

General Comment Structure

General Introduction making reference to positive character traits and/ or positive attitudes/work habits.

Social development and or Learner Quality reference (phrased positively and constructively).

You may state a strength or achievement highlight of the student in other KLA (besides English and Maths).

Identify main area/s for further development.

Conclude with a general positive reflection and/or positive future projection for the student.

Sample General Comment

Sandra is a creative and confident class member who enjoys all aspects of learning. She is well respected by her peers and **collaborates** well in small group tasks by taking turns, sharing fairly and seeking teacher direction when needed.

In Science and Technology, Sandra's understanding of the concept of forces has developed and she was able to make a pulley system and explain how this worked using scientific terminology.

However, during whole class discussions she is often reluctant to participate independently.

Sandra's caring and respectful manner has made her a positive role model for her peers this year and I wish her all the best for next year.