

Philosophy of Assessment

The goals of assessment are to evaluate student learning and drive instruction. At W.E. Mitchell Middle School (MtMS) and Cordova High School (CHS), we recognize that each student is unique and that various assessment tools must be employed, both formative and summative, in order to properly achieve our goals. As a faculty, we are responsible for creating and implementing assessment tools within our classrooms that assist us in our efforts to best evaluate and educate our students.

Assessment, learning, and teaching are intertwined and interdependent and should be focused on the habits of mind, critical thinking skills, 21st century skills, knowledge and attitudes that will provide for success within the Middle Years Programme, Diploma Programme, in college, and beyond. Assessment at MtMS and CHS is as critical a tool for teachers as it is for students, and is meant to engage teachers in self-reflection of their own practice. We recognize that assessment is an evolving tool and one that is constantly changing and improving. When done correctly all forms of assessment have educational and pedagogical value; we assess what we value and we value what we assess.

Assessment at MtMS and CHS is built on the IB belief that assessment aims to:

- Support and encourage student learning by providing feedback on the learning process
- Inform, enhance and improve the teaching process
- Promote positive student attitudes toward learning
- Promote a deep understanding of subject content by supporting students in their inquiries set in the real world contexts using the area of interaction and global contexts
- Promote the development of higher-order cognitive skills by providing rigorous objectives that value these skills
- Reflect the international-mindedness of the MYP by allowing for assessment to be set in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts
- Support the holistic nature of the MYP by including in its model principles that take account of the development of the whole student (ibo).

Methods of Assessment

Teachers at W.E Mitchell Middle School and Cordova High School use a variety of assessment strategies to evaluate student progress, modifying instructional strategies as needed. Modifications to the school environment have been and will continue to be implemented based on student feedback and academic achievement rates.

Formative assessment is used in all subject areas to evaluate learning and drive teacher instruction. Multiple methods of formative assessment are employed, including, but not limited to, portfolio development, word walls, exit tickets, Active Expressions instant response tools, Socratic seminars, self and peer reviews. Formative assessment at MtMS and CHS is exclusively used as an evaluative tool to assess and inform student learning and not to assign marks.

Internal (school-based) summative assessment is used in all subject areas to evaluate student learning outcomes; this usually happens at the end of a learning period such as at the end of an MYP unit. Summative assessment is measurable and designed to fairly and accurately represent a students' level of achievement. Examples of summative assessment employed at W.E Mitchell Middle School and Cordova High include unit exams, research papers, in class writing, experimental science labs, and completed unit projects.

W.E Mitchell Middle School and Cordova High School use a variety of methods, techniques and systems to publish student data, making it accessible to the community, parents, students, and other stakeholders. Some of these methods are delivered via computer access, community events, and in newsletter publications.

Student performance is reported to the staff through PowerSchool, Illuminate, API reports, faculty bulletins, and end of term grade reports. Parents receive student report cards at the completion of every quarter and are able to view on-going progress through the PowerSchool parent portal. Community stakeholders and parents receive additional information about school performance and expectations through school newsletters and activities including Back to School Night, Awards & Scholarship Night, and at Graduation.

Internal standardization

“Where more than one teacher is teaching the same subject group, the process of internal standardization takes place before final achievement levels are awarded. Internal standardization of assessment is also required for the personal project. The standardization process involves teachers meeting to come to a common understanding on the criteria and achievement levels and how they are applied. In so doing, teachers increase the reliability of their judgments. Standardization throughout the school year promotes consistency and builds common understandings about student achievement with respect to MYP objectives” (MYP – From Principles into Practice, ibo.org).

Criterion-related

Assessment within the Middle Years Programme is criterion-related, as it is based upon pre-determined criteria. The MYP identifies a series of objectives for each subject group, which are directly related to the subject area criteria. The level of student success in relation to reaching the pre-determined objectives is measured in terms of levels of achievement described in each assessment criterion. Students' grades are determined by evidence of the degree of standards mastery under an MYP criterion descriptor within an MYP rubric.

Teachers within the Middle Years Programme recognize that students have demands placed upon them in each course. Teachers will collaborate frequently to set a timetable for assessments in their courses. The goal of this timetable is to ensure that assessments in various courses do not overlap one another as much as is possible.

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Grades

W.E. Mitchell Middle School and Cordova High School are working toward using MYP achievement levels based on criterion-related rubrics. Final grades are determined solely on criterion-based summative assessments. At the end of each semester, teachers will determine a final best judgment for each criterion (A, B, C, D). Using the grade boundaries below, a final grade will be determined. A student may earn a grade lower than a D- only if a student has not successfully undertaken the summative tasks necessary for determining achievement against the MYP objectives.

Subject Area and Assessment Criteria

Subject Area	Criterion A	Criterion B	Criterion C	Criterion D
Language and Literature	Analysing	Organising	Producing text	Using language
Language Acquisition	Comprehending spoken and visual text	Comprehending written and visual text	Communicating	Using language
Individuals and Societies	Knowing and understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking critically
Sciences	Knowing and understanding	Inquiring and designing	Processing and evaluating	Reflecting on the impacts of science
Mathematics	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics in real-world contexts
Arts	Knowing and understanding	Developing skills	Thinking creatively	Responding
Physical and Health Education	Knowing and understanding	Planning for performance	Applying and performing	Reflecting and improving performance
Design	Inquiring and analysing	Developing ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating

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Determining the Final Grade Boundaries

FALL SEMESTER

Grade	Boundaries	FCUSD Letter Grade
1	1-5	D/D-/NM
2	6-9	D+/C-
3	10-14	C+/C
4	15-18	B/B-
5	19-23	B+/B
6	24-27	A/A-
7	28-32	A+/A

SPRING SEMESTER

Grade	Boundaries	FCUSD Letter Grade
1	1-5	D/D-/F
2	6-9	D+/C-
3	10-14	C+/C
4	15-18	B/B-
5	19-23	B+/B
6	24-27	A/A-
7	28-32	A+/A

Methods of Policy Evaluation

As assessment is a constantly evolving practice, so too must this policy document constantly evolve. To achieve this end, a cohort of teachers and administrators will hold an annual collaboration beginning in the 2015-2016 school year to review and update our assessment policy.