

Richards Middle School

Assessment Policy

Philosophy of Assessment that Supports Student Learning

Assessment is an integral part of instruction. It provides data for educators to analyze and determine whether or not the goals of education are being met. Assessment promotes the achievement for all students by identifying what the student knows, understands, and can do. It gives teachers insight of the student's ability to apply and reflect on their newly acquired knowledge. This will ensure that students will be able to function and be successful in a multicultural world. To ascertain a true depiction of the student's learning and knowledge, teachers need to provide a variety of forms of formative assessments. These assessments provide opportunities to demonstrate mastery of skills and content. Summative assessments measures how much our students have learned up to a particular point in time. "Teachers who develop useful assessments, provide corrective instruction, and give students second chances to demonstrate success can improve their instruction and help students learn." (Gusky, 2003)

Common Practices in Using Assessment Criteria and Determining Achievement Levels

Teacher Responsibilities

- Teachers will design rigorous assessments that promote high-levels of student achievement in collaborative teams.
- Teachers will enhance student learning by starting with the end in mind when developing a unit of study.
- Teachers will demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of learning styles by using a variety of assessments and instructional strategies.
- Teachers will monitor the individual progress of student achievement.
- Teachers will analyze formative assessment data to determine the effectiveness of teaching and will make modifications as needed.
- Teachers will collaborate to guide curriculum development and review assessments.
- Teachers will provide students opportunities to self and peer assess.
- Teachers will be cognizant of assessment timelines and the demands of other school work they place on students, including workloads and personal well-being.
- Teachers will adhere to all guidelines in administering standardized testing.

Student Responsibilities

- Students will learn to exercise the increasing responsibility of ownership of their personal learning. This includes assessing their own progress and meeting deadlines.
- Students will learn to self-advocate in communicating about their learning and academic standing.
- Students will learn to reflect on their progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and seek opportunities for improvement.
- Students will strive to maintain an intellectual, physical, and emotional balance in their lives.

Family Responsibilities

- Families are encouraged to work together with the teachers to be advocates of student learning.
- Families are encouraged to use available resources to monitor student achievement.
- Families are encouraged to reach out to teachers to communicate about student achievement.
- Families are encouraged to engage in the learning process with students and maintain communication about problem solving and making wise choices.

Administrator Responsibilities

- Administrators will create a culture of collaboration, dialogue, and reflection about student assessment. This will allow assessments to be differentiated by design to appeal to a variety of learning styles.
- Administrators will encourage the tasks designed are rigorous, involving critical and creative thinking skills.
- Administrators will ensure teachers have proper training to encourage transfer of skills, interdisciplinary learning, and real-world contexts. This will include clear and consistent use of command terms.
- Administrators will provide information and support regarding how to use information to guide instruction.
- Administrators will make sure teachers identify students with learning needs and that they will receive accommodations based on their learning plans.

Process for Standardization of Assessment Scoring

Grade-level and subject-area teams gather samples of student work on a variety of assessments and compare scores in order to standardize scoring on such assessments. Additionally, teachers collaborate to design summative assessments and assessment options that are utilized in the school across the programme. This process of standardization of assessment tools and scoring is ongoing among MYP teachers. The process of standardization is revisited by the MYP Coordinator at least once per year.

Common Practices in Recording and Reporting Student Achievement

“The criteria for each subject group represent the use of knowledge, understanding and skills that must be taught. They encompass the factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive dimensions of knowledge.” (Principals into Practice, 2014)

MYP Assessment is internal and teachers grade the work using internationally benchmarked IB objectives and correspondingly aligned assessment criteria for each subject (see table 1). Teachers at RMS develop tasks and strategies in alignment with these criteria to help their students reach the subject’s learning objectives.

An MYP criterion-related assessment model means that each student’s success in reaching the objectives of each subject group is measured by relating his/her work to predetermined criteria. MYP assessment aims to support student learning by providing feedback on the learning process.

Relationship of IB Assessment to Required Systems for Grading and Reporting

Students in IB courses are assessed in terms of formal IB required assessments. These assessments, when compiled as final IB grades, are reported on a scale of 1 (very poor performance) to 7 (excellent). The student's 1-7 grade is a direct measure of the competency a student has shown in terms of skills and knowledge.

Students in grades six through eight are assessed on teacher designed units according to the criterion for each content area as provided through the Middle Years Program. Students are graded on four criteria (see table 2). Students in all IB courses receive grades on course work completed in their courses as well as IB assessments and assessments graded with the IB criteria. Students in the Middle Years Program receive reports to inform students and parents of a student's level of acquisition of specific IB criteria.

The total score for a student's report card grade is calculated as follows: Each criterion is divided into bands, and each band contains general statements called descriptors. The levels 1 and 2 appear as the first band, level 3 and 4 as the second band, and so on (see table 3). All criteria have four bands with two levels of achievement and a maximum of eight achievement levels. MYP criteria are equally weighted. To determine the student's achievement level in a particular subject, teachers gather evidence from a range of learning experiences and assessments. At a grading period like an end of semester, the teacher looks across all assignment grades for each criteria. They assign a score 1-8 that represents the band the student has attained and sustained for that criterion. Teachers add together the student's final achievement band scores in all criteria for the subject group to obtain a score of 0-32. Using the MYP 0-32 scale a teacher then uses the grade boundary guidelines (see table 1) to determine final grades in each year of the MYP. The table provides a means of converting the criterion band totals into a grade from 1-7.

Table 1. MYP Grade Boundaries

Grade	Boundary Guidelines	Descriptor
1	1-5	Produces work of very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.
2	6-9	Produces work of limited quality. Expresses misunderstanding or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills.
3	10-14	Produces work of an acceptable quality. Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally significant misunderstandings or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking. Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.
4	15-18	Produces good-quality work. Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations.
5	19-23	Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations, and, with support, some unfamiliar real-world situations.
6	24-27	Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence.
7	28-32	Produces high-quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations.

Table 2. MYP Assessment Criteria

Subject groups must address all strands of all four assessment criteria a minimum of at least twice in each year of the MYP. In reality, several formative assignments will utilize the criteria to ensure that summative assessments graded using the criteria are well prepared for.

		Criteria			
MYP Subjects	Subject Group	A	B	C	D
	Language and Literature	Analyzing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
	Language Acquisition	Comprehending spoken and visual text	Comprehending written and visual text	Communicating	Using language
	Individuals and Societies	Knowing understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking critically
	Sciences	Knowing understanding	Inquiring and designing	Processing and evaluating	Reflecting on the impact of science
	Mathematics	Knowing understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics to real-world contexts
	Arts	Knowing understanding	Developing skills	Thinking creatively	Responding
	Physical and Health Education	Knowing understanding	Planning for performance	Applying and performing	Reflecting and improving performance
	Design	Inquiring and analyzing	Developing Ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating
	MYP Projects	Investigating	Planning	Taking Action	Reflecting
	Interdisciplinary	Disciplinary grounding	Synthesizing and applying	Communicating	Reflecting

Table 3. Example of a Criterion Referenced Assessment for Arts assessment criteria: Year 1 (Grade 6)

Criterion A: Knowing and understanding

Maximum: 8

At the end of year 1, students should be able to:

- i. Demonstrate awareness of the art form studied, including the use of appropriate language**
- ii. Demonstrate awareness of the relationship between the art form and its context**
- iii. Demonstrate awareness of the links between the knowledge acquired and artwork created.**

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1-2	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Demonstrates limited awareness of the art form studied, including limited use of appropriate language ii. Demonstrates limited awareness of the relationship between the art form and its context iii. Demonstrates limited awareness of the links between the knowledge acquired and artwork created.
3-4	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Demonstrates adequate awareness of the art form studied, including adequate use of appropriate language ii. Demonstrates adequate awareness of the relation between the art form and its context iii. Demonstrates adequate awareness of the links between the knowledge acquired and artwork created.
5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Demonstrates substantial awareness of the art form studied, including substantial use of appropriate language ii. Demonstrates substantial awareness of the relation between the art form and its context iii. Demonstrates substantial awareness of the links between the knowledge acquired and artwork created.
7-8	The student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Demonstrates excellent awareness of the art form studied, including excellent use of appropriate language v. Demonstrates excellent awareness of the relationship between the art form and its context vi. Demonstrates excellent awareness of the links between the knowledge acquired and artwork created.

Implementation of Formative and Summative Assessments

Summative Assessment Practices

- The high stakes of summative assessments occur at the end of any instructional unit. These typically are compared to some standard or benchmark and are used to evaluate the student's acquisition of the learning objectives of the given unit.
- Teachers will employ a variety of types of summative assessments, including but not limited to midterm exam, final project, an essay, presentations, final examinations, projects, portfolios, performance-based tasks, and text dependent questions.
- Rubrics are given to students prior to the assessment.
- Scores on IB rubrics should be translated to a grade on the hundred point grade scale and entered into a teacher's grade book.
- The teachers can reflect on the student's achievement on the summative assessments to guide their teaching efforts and activities in the future.

Formative Assessment Practices

- Formative assessments support learning during the learning process and provide meaningful feedback to students before the summative assessment.
- Through formative assessments, faculty can recognize where students are struggling and address problems immediately.
- Students can glean their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work, which leads to deeper understanding of the content.
- Students should be given the opportunity to engage in self-assessment through reflection and peer assessment.
- Feedback of student's progress gained from formative assessment, allows the teacher to deconstruct criteria and to scaffold the material leading to student's mastery of skills required for better understanding.
- Examples of formative assessments, include but are not limited to exit tickets, quizzes, submit one or two sentences identifying the main point of a lecture, draw a concept map, quick writes, turn in a research proposal for early feedback, constructed responses, and performances.
- Students are assessed through a variety of formative and summative assessments.
- Assessment strategies include the availability of local classroom assessments as well as county, state, and national assessments.

References

- Richards Middle School maintains an Academic Honesty Policy. This policy will be distributed to students and posted on school websites.
- All assessment accommodations will be allowed as outlined in Richards Middle School Special Educational Needs/Inclusive Education Policy and provided through specific student documents.
- *How Classroom Assessments Improve Learning*, (Gusky, 2003)
- *MYP From Principals Into Practice*, (2014)

Process for Review of Assessment Policy

Richards Middle School staff will review the Assessment Policy annually. During this annual evaluation, the policy will be reviewed for needed updates and revisions, as well as to assess the effectiveness of the implementation and to ensure the policy is communicated to all the stakeholders.

- This document was created by the Assessment Committee at Richards Middle School, Spring of 2016.
- This document was reviewed by the Assessment Committee, October 2018.
- This document was approved by the IB teachers, November 2018.
- This document was reviewed by the IB teachers, October 2021.