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International Classes

# Assessment Policy

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Our evolving mission compels us to embrace a new vision of assessment that can tap the wellspring of confidence, motivation, and learning potential that resides within every student.

- Rick Stiggins (2007)

## **Philosophy**

At Manglerud skole, International Classes (Manglerud IC), we believe assessment is for learning, as well as, a key component of our mission to develop responsible and caring citizens. It is a continuous process and an integral part of daily instruction that requires collecting, synthesizing and interpreting information. Authentic, valid, and reliable assessments inform students of how they learn, what they have learned, and how to further learn. Assessments also inform teachers' planning, directing them to where and how learning needs to continue, where learning has been mastered, and how learning can be extended. Assessment for learning must be:

- Fair, balanced, and grounded in the art and science of teaching and learning;
- Reflective of curricular goals and representative of content that students have had an opportunity to learn;
- Used to inform and improve instruction;
- Reported in a timely fashion;
- Varied in approach and design;
- Flexible, allowing input and perspectives from students, peers, teachers, and parents;
- Conducted formatively and summatively;
- Intended to lead to reflection;
- Designed to accommodate nonnative speakers and special-needs students; and
- Differentiated to assess students' unique and diverse understandings, skills, and knowledge.

## **Purpose of Assessment**

The purpose of assessment is threefold; 1) it drives instruction, 2) informs curriculum development and implementation, and 3) keeps all stakeholders advised of learning outcomes.

In daily and long term instruction, assessment is a means to quantify or qualify student learning, thus making the learning process tangible. Resulting information informs teachers of students' previous knowledge and indicates direction and needs of future instruction for individuals and the group. This direction is determined by analyzing students' current understandings, skills, knowledge, and learning profiles. When collected, and reviewed across time, assessment can map students' learning, identify areas of excellence, and indicate need for intervention, challenge, and growth.

Assessment informs curriculum development and implementation in a variety of ways. Viewed holistically there is evidence and patterns that can be analyzed to determine program strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, it informs students' performances in relation to the program's stated learning goals and allows an analysis of group performance in relation to groups within the school or groups external to the school. When studied, and analyzed collectively, it can provide teachers and administrators a common understanding and perspective of 1) students' current learning, 2) needs of program development, and 3) ways to effectively lead and manage classrooms and the school.

In its most conventional role, assessment informs teachers of student learning, but at Manglerud IC assessment also informs students and parents of learning outcomes. For students, assessment does not just indicate success or failure, it encourages students to:

- grow
- reflect and self-evaluate
- recognize progress
- identify strategies for learning
- consider how they learn and how they can use the learning process, and to
- analyze their learning and understand where needs to improve

For parents, assessment is designed to:

- provide evidence of student learning
- develop an understanding of student learning, and
- provide means to celebrate and support learning.

### **Principles of Assessment**

Formative and summative assessments are two major forms of assessment. Formative assessment is ongoing, occurring throughout daily instruction. Fully connected, formative assessment and instruction work to purposefully and effectively inform students and teachers of what is known and what needs to be done to accomplish further learning. Summative assessment occurs at the end of the learning and teaching process. It is a means for students to demonstrate their new understandings, skills, knowledge, and ability to transfer the learning. Pre-assessment, skill assessment, and other targeted assessment strategies are components of formative and summative assessments.

For reliable and valid evaluation of both learning and teaching processes, formative and summative assessment processes and means must demonstrate a variety of essential characteristics. Some of the essential characteristics of assessments include:

- Criteria that are known and understood in advance
- Differentiated, when appropriate, for:
  - Student's interest, learning profile, and/or readiness and
  - content, process, and/or product
- Variety of means and processes
- Age appropriate content, processes, and products
- Formal and informal processes
- Consistent and ongoing practices
- Designs allowing different points of view or interpretations
- Analysis of what was learned and what needs to improve
- Content validity
- Results of information that can be reported and understood by students, parents, and teacher
- Timely feedback
- Reflections on learning

## **Assessment Practices**

Our assessment practices at Manglerud IC can be described and articulated with answers to five key questions 1) What are our assessment processes? 2) What are our assessment strategies? 3) How are our assessments evaluated? 4) How are our assessment outcomes reported? And, 5) What are characteristics of effective reporting?

### **1) What Are Our Assessment Processes?**

As described under our “Principles of Assessment,” formative and summative assessment are the framework of our assessment process. These two components of our assessment framework can be further articulated by exploring who fulfills the responsibility of the assessments and by identifying three major models of assessments.

First, who fulfills the responsibility of the assessment at the formative and/or summative stage? Four groups of individuals can take the lead in assessment; students, peers, teachers, and/or parents. At Manglerud IC students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning by receiving opportunities to self-evaluate their progress. When appropriate, peers are given an opportunity to provide feedback on one another’s work. Parents are also invited to share their perspectives and insights into how and what their children are learning. Teachers are consistently assessing student performance.

Second, what are the three major models of formative and summative assessment used at Manglerud IC? They are 1) performance/project-based assessment, 2) testing/exam-based assessment, and 3) reflection. Performance/project-based assessment are authentic products based on goal-directed tasks with a predetermined set of criteria.

Testing/exam-based assessment is a one-dimensional snap-shot of students learning. It is a single occasion where students answer questions in an exercise that is designed or perceived to be objective in nature.

Reflection, or being reflective, is an IB’s learning profile. As such, self-reflection regarding one’s learning or process of learning is an important model in our assessment process. By carefully considering one’s own learning and experience, an individual can assess and understand individual strengths and weaknesses, thus supporting future learning and development. In this process, students consider their learning of knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, action, and the IB learner profile.

### **2) What Are Our Assessment Strategies?**

Consistent with our principles of effective assessment, the assessment strategies used at Manglerud IC are varied, ongoing, and can be formal or informal. A representative sample of strategies teachers use follow:

- Selected Responses are typically test-based assessments, with formats such as; multiple choice, true/false, multiple-answer, or short-answer. . They occur in a single occasion and give a snap shot of student learning.

- Teacher observation is ongoing, occurring formally and informally by teachers and other educational experts. Anecdotal evidence collected in observations help shape instruction and determine if intervention is required.
- Open ended assignments give students an opportunity to communicate an original response or artifact, illustrating their understanding of concepts and ability to transfer skills and knowledge to new settings. These are performance/project-based assessments. The PYP exhibition is the largest and most complex, open ended assignment that students perform as a summative assessment in PYP6.
- Conferences are held formally and informal with students and/or parents. These are opportunities for multiple parties to contribute to the assessment process, a time for alternative perspectives to be explored, and occasions to explore current understandings, misunderstandings, and ways to scaffold learning.
- Standardized diagnostic tests (*Kartleggingsprøve*) are given in PYP1, 2, and 3. These tests are administered by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. Norwegian and math are tested in PYP1, 2, and 3. It should be noted that the math test is administered in Norwegian, but math is taught in English. This questions the validity and reliability of the math test. English is tested in PYP3. Test results are analyzed and used in-house to inform instructional decisions. As additional classes are added to Manglerud IC, standardized test administration will most likely expand. Manglerud IC's official reading assessment policy is currently under development.

### 3) How Are Our Assessments Evaluated?

At Manglerud IC, the four-common means of evaluating assessments are rubrics, exemplars, checklists, and evaluation keys.

- Rubrics are a set of predetermined criteria that both the student and teacher are aware of before the assessment begins. When appropriate, students might have shared in the creation of the rubric. They contain characteristics of what a student and teacher are to look for when evaluating the work. Usually, these characteristics are clustered into groups that indicate varied levels of performance and success.
- Exemplars are examples of student work that set a standard that is used to judge a student's performance on a given assessment.
- Checklists are lists of attributes, traits, or qualities that are expected in an assignment. Work is assessed to determine if the requirements are present.
- Evaluation Keys are used for test/exam-based assessments. They are objective answers that are determined by the teacher and expected on the test. The formats are typically multiple choice, true/false, multiple-answer, or short-answer.

### 4) How Are Our Assessment Outcomes Reported?

Manglerud IC uses four means for reporting assessment outcomes; 1) conferences, 2) progress reports, 3) portfolios, and 4) PYP Exhibition.

*Conferences:*

There are four basic types of conferences held at Manglerud IC. These are formal or informal times where specific feedback is given and/or concerns or questions are addressed. The first is a teacher/student conference. The teacher meets individually with a student to reflect, share or explore concerns, and/or search for solutions for problems interfering with a student's daily performance. These are usually informal in nature, occurring as needs arise, but can also be structured into lessons targeting specific academic outcomes, such as editing of writing.

The second type of conference is a teacher/parent conference. It can be both formal or informal. Formal conferences are times scheduled either by the teacher or parent to discuss and review specific items of concern or questions. Other school personnel, with responsibilities relevant to the topic at hand might be scheduled to participate in the conference. Informal parent/teacher conferences are times when the parent and teacher meet spontaneously or naturally during the school-year and briefly discuss points of interest for the student. In both instances, formal and informal, the child is not an active participant in the conference, but is informed of the conversation and any relevant action that occurs as a result of the meeting.

The third type of conference is teacher/parent/student conferences. Each fall, this type conference is organized by the school to occur over a period of one day or two-three weeks. Teachers schedule times for the parent and his or her child to visit and review the student's current progress. The conferences can occur in two ways. First, a complete day can be set aside for teachers to meet with parents of his or her students. Or, the conferences can occur over a two-three-week period taking place in the normal workday, during the teachers' planning blocks or before or after school. In both meeting structures, the student is present. If desired or needed, a conference can be requested by the teacher, parent, or student at other times of the year.

The fourth type of conference is a parent/student conference. This conference is scheduled each spring and is a time where students lead their parents through a variety of strategies that demonstrate the child's learning throughout the academic year. It is a time for parent and child reflection. If desired, after the student led conference, a parent can request a meeting with the teacher to further explore the child's performance.

#### *Progress Reports:*

Written progress reports are the second major means Manglerud IC uses to report assessment outcomes. Each winter and at the end of the academic year, teachers prepare a written narrative and rate student growth on a scale of stated learning goals. The scale classifies student learning as emerging, developing, proficient, and independent. The report includes sections on the IB student learning profile, units of inquiry, math, literacy, music, art, Norwegian, and PSPE. Where appropriate, these sections are detailed with more defined learning outcomes such as conceptual understanding, transdisciplinary skills, subject-specific skills, and student attitudes. The student's development of the attributes of the IB learner profile is addressed through teachers' narratives describing student growth in these areas. Similarly, student action is addressed through teacher narratives.

### *Portfolios:*

Student portfolios are a running record of assessment outcomes on our students. In PYP1 or in his or her first year at Manglerud IC, each student is provided a portfolio to record and map his or her educational journey at the school. The portfolio contains artifacts chosen by the student and/or teacher that documents the child's learning experiences in all subject areas. By reviewing and reflecting on the compiled work samples; students, teachers, and parents can see the progress of the child's learning throughout the years at Manglerud IC. Review of the portfolio is an anchor activity at each year's student-led conferences. Currently, the portfolio is kept as a hard copy. By 2020, Manglerud aims to digitalize the portfolio.

### *PYP Exhibition:*

The PYP Exhibition is a summative assessment that will be administered in PYP6. It will be a culminating project that requires students to demonstrate performance in the five essential elements of PYP; knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, and action. Currently, Manglerud IC consists of PYP1-4. In 2017-2018, PYP5 will be added to the school. PYP6 will be added in 2018-2019. The exhibition will commence with PYP6 in 2019-2020.

### 5) What Are Characteristics of Effective Reporting?

Feedback on assessment is critical and essential. Without it, assessment becomes only a judgement statement, possibly denying the potential of academic growth. To ensure effective feedback reporting mechanisms must

- Reflects school values
- Involve students, teachers, and parents
- Be comprehensive
- Be Honest, fair, and credible
- Be Clear and understandable
- Inform future teaching.

An assessment report that reflects school values, provides information that aligns with the program standards and expectations. Reporting that involve students, teachers, and parents includes opportunities for students to learn how to self-evaluate and report, plus opportunities for parents to be regularly and consistently informed on their child's progress, including open communication with the schools. Parents are also given a chance to share their opinions and perspectives of their child's progress. Comprehensive reports provide a well-rounded and complete view of the child's progress in all aspects of the curriculum and program. Honest, fair, and credible reporting uses a variety of assessments to determine outcomes. The outcomes of the assessment are analyzed through prescribed norms of student development, including factors or characteristics of the individual child. Clear and understandable reports avoid professional jargon and nuances known only to those practicing in the field. Most importantly, the language is such that it informs and educates both the parent and student on areas of strengths, weaknesses, and ways for improvement. Finally, for assessment reports to be effective they must be designed and implemented in a manner that informs future teaching. By knowing and understanding what students have learned, their processes for learning, and the products of learning; teachers and administrators can monitor and modify future instruction and assessment to strengthen learning outcomes.

### **Assessment Policy Review Cycle**

The above philosophy statement and descriptions of the purposes, principles and practices of assessment at Manglerud IC is current practice initiated in our inaugural year of operation, 2016-2017. The policy was drafted by the curriculum coordinator, with input from the faculty and senior administration. The policy was accepted by the faculty on March 21, 2017, by the parent council on May 9, 2017, and will be presented to the governing body on January 1, 2018.

The beliefs and philosophy which ground our assessment policy are framed by the IB Primary Years Program and will remain relatively stable throughout the development of our school. However, we do recognize that there will be need for changes as the school grows, as new ideas are developed, and as research indicates the direction of best assessment practices. Thus, the assessment policy is a working document that will not only guide Manglerud IC's assessment practices, but one that will be regularly reviewed for accuracy and relevancy. A formal review process will occur every four years with the assembly of a review committee, tasked with examining the assessment policy, and as necessary, propose revisions that will strengthen our assessment program and provide greater alignment to PYP Standards and Practices. Proposed changes will require approval from the administration, faculty, and parent council.

## Glossary

Content	Skills, knowledge, concepts, and attitudes identified in the written and taught curriculum.
Developing	Classification category on the progress report indicating the student is developing his/her knowledge and skills with support from the teacher.
Emerging	Classification category on the progress report indicating the student needs continued support from the teacher as he/she develops new knowledge and skills.
Formative Assessment	Formal or informal evaluation strategies teachers use throughout instruction to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student achievement.
Independent	Classification category on the progress report indicating the student works independently; is able to apply his/her knowledge and skills to other areas of learning.
Learning Profile	Approaches people use to process and learn new ideas and content; kinetically, verbally, orally, or visually. It also refers to ways of knowing defined by scholars as multiple intelligences. A person's cultural background can influence learning profile.
Performance/Project-Based Assessment	Authentic learning products based on goal-directed tasks with a predetermined set of criteria.
Process	Teaching and learning strategies used in the taught curriculum to help students make sense of new content.
Product	A long term endeavor leading to a learning artifact that illustrates how students can rethink, use, and/or extend content.
Proficient	Classification category on the progress report indicating the student understands and applies the knowledge and skills within his/her learning.
Readiness Level	Where a student is currently with understanding concepts, using skills, and applying knowledge and attitudes.
Reflection	A thoughtful consideration or self-evaluation of one's learning and experience to determine strengths and identify strategies for improvement.
Student Interest	Topics students are exploring and enjoying independently.
Summative Assessment	Formal evaluation strategies used at the end of the learning and teaching process to determine student achievement.
Testing/Exam-Based Assessment	A one dimensional snap-shot of student learning in an exercise designed or perceived to be objective.