

SECTION 1.a



Overview of Key Concepts Related to Instruction, Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

Assessment, evaluation, and reporting policies and procedures in the Louis Riel School Division are based on key concepts currently found in professional literature and Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth documents. Many assessment strategies can be considered to have an instructional component. Thus instructional planning, teaching and assessment can be seen as closely linked activities. Teachers who tie the curricular areas to be focused on in a lesson or unit to instructional activities, and to a variety of formative and summative assessments, make efficient use of valuable time. This type of planning also promotes professional reflection on the teaching process.

Clearly a vast number of topics and concepts can be addressed when educational planning is considered and range from fine-grain considerations to areas that are fundamental to good teaching practices. The intent of the AER initiative is not to focus on a multitude of considerations that impact on each grade and subject discipline, but rather to focus professional conversation and attention on key ideas.

The concepts outlined below are intended to promote and guide continued professional discussions and practices related to instruction, assessment, evaluation and reporting in the Division. Some of the concepts have been discussed in depth by educators over the first two years of the AER initiative. Others will continue to be a focus of discussion over the next two years. The intent is that conversations that occur at the divisional and school level extend and deepen our understandings about teaching, learning and assessment.

The Instructional Planning Phase

The instructional planning phase involves teachers considering:

- the important role professional judgment plays when outcomes contained in curriculum documents are selected and woven into lesson and unit plans,
- that the outcomes that were the major focus of instruction in a unit or course should be weighted appropriately in calculating grades,
- that instruction and assessment are “hand and glove” and should be considered together during the planning process,
- that a variety of formative and summative assessments promote student learning and provide opportunities for students to show their learning in different ways,
- that the increased use of formative assessment often requires more class time and this impacts on planning,
- how differentiated instruction strategies can support the learning of all students, and
- that students falling into the Regular Adapted (RA) descriptor on the student progress report need particular attention and student services teachers, administrators and parents are involved in the planning process.



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The Instructional Phase

During the instructional phase teachers consider that:

- the learning targets (goals) should be well understood by students,
- students benefit from opportunities to show their learning through written and spoken language as well as demonstrations and performances,
- summative assessment activities follow learning opportunities that have provided students reasonable opportunities to self-assess and access various types of support (e.g. peer feedback, additional practice, “coaching” by teachers, etc.),
- students who feel they can show “breakthroughs” in their learning (e.g. near the end of the reporting cycle) should be given opportunities to do so (within reason), and
- students should be provided opportunities to increase their level of assessment literacy through classroom activities such as setting learning goals, contributing to rubric design, self-assessing and providing feedback to peers.

The Assessment and Evaluation Phase

The following concepts need to be considered during the evaluation phase:

- professional judgment is central to providing a fair and realistic reflection of student performance,
- student grades should only reflect learning and should not be reduced for behavioural reasons,
- evidence of learning should not all be of the same type, but should reflect products, observations, and conversations as well as quizzes and tests, and
- during the evaluation process teachers should discard questionable scores or outdated evidence and include only what they feel is valid, reliable evidence when assigning grades.

Notes

Maxims of Change



Adapt don't Adopt
Start Small
Work Together

(Ken O'Connor, 2006)