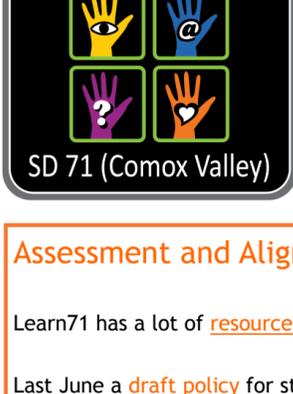


INNOVATIVE INKLINGS

Comox Valley School District Newsletter for Innovation

June 24, 2016



Assessment and Alignment

- Links
- Testing
- Quote
- Data
- Assessment
- Changing Reality
- Alignment
- Really?

Assessment and Alignment Links

Learn71 has a lot of [resources for assessment](#).

Last June a [draft policy](#) for student assessment was created.

Here are [5 Formative Assessment tools](#) that could be useful and that are being used in our district.

John Hattie's research provides insight into the effectiveness of 195 influences on learning. See them by [clicking here](#).

[Sandra Herbst](#) has good resources and information about formative assessment.

For a detailed explanation of alignment in education [click here](#).



“Aligning our assessments to our curriculum is the only way to ensure that assessments yield accurate information about our students’ levels of proficiency. Knowing what we’re assessing should always drive our assessment methods. Balanced assessment isn’t about favouring one type of assessment; it’s about favouring the assessment method that is the most accurate fit for the curricular content or competency being assessed. This is especially true at the classroom level where we know assessment (and the subsequent descriptive feedback) can move learning forward, lead to greater student engagement, and allow teachers to make pinpoint decisions about what comes next.”

[Tom Shimmer](#)



Around the District

Innovative events and efforts from around our district

Principles of Quality Assessment

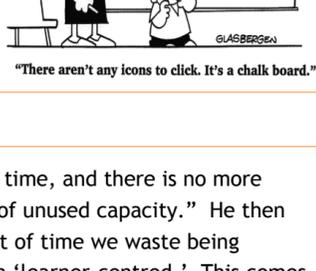
The following principles provide a foundation for the development of classroom assessment, evaluation and communication of student learning. These principles are intended to provide teachers with guidance for classroom assessment that aligns with the redesigned curricula.

Quality Assessment

- is fair, transparent, meaningful and responsive to all learners
- focuses on all three components of the curriculum model - knowing, doing, understanding
- provides ongoing descriptive feedback to students
- is ongoing, timely, specific, and embedded in day to day instruction
- provides varied and multiple opportunities for learners to demonstrate their learning
- involves student in their learning
- promotes development of student self-assessment and goal setting for next steps in learning
- allows for a collection of student work to be gathered over time to provide a full profile of the learner and learning
- communicates clearly to the learner and parents where the student is, what they are working towards and the ways that learning can be supported

Throughout the learning process, teachers and students intentionally gather evidence to inform teaching and learning. The teacher creates rich tasks, engages with the students in setting criteria, establishes exemplars, and leverages the power of questioning to allow for ongoing, timely, descriptive feedback to the student. This process assists students in moving forward toward their learning targets and goals. Students are encouraged to reflect and self-assess to build important meta-cognitive skills. Personalization lends itself to assessment as learning, where students participate in the setting of criteria and the design of inquiries, and self- and peer-assessment.

Teachers document student learning over time using collections of student work and demonstrations to create a profile of his or her strengths, areas of growth, and areas for further development. Students, teachers, and parents, use criteria and rubrics to determine the standards met and the level of performance attained. Through multiple means and varied strategies, the students learning is made visible, and their successes celebrated. In this process, new learning goals and targets are established and ways to support the students learning described.



Alignment

[Cale Birk](#) says, “We have no more time, and there is no more money coming, but we have tons of unused capacity.” He then proceeds to talk about the amount of time we waste being ‘organization-centred’ rather than ‘learner-centred.’ This comes from an affliction he calls ‘solution-itis’, “the affliction that we educators contract when we move rapidly from problem to solution without involving the people in our school community in the process.” I believe that this also occurs when we, as a system, keep trying to solve all problems by doing more, most often without reflection. We keep adding and replicating without assessing and reviewing. We do this at our own peril.

Let’s take a step back.

We are in the process of transitioning our system to better meet the changing needs of our students. There are many moving parts in this, but they do all work together and are complimentary. By [removing the majority of government exams](#), the Ministry has validated the freedom for teachers to use the redesigned curriculum the way it was designed by teachers to be used. By emphasizing continuous, formative assessment, the Ministry has sent a clear message supporting best practices for improving learning. And the increased opportunity for personalization within the curriculum, including the [Graduation Program](#), supports the impetus for these changes. However, to many this could all be very daunting. How can we possibly deal with all of this new stuff?

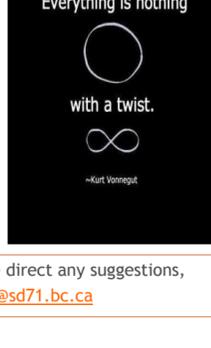
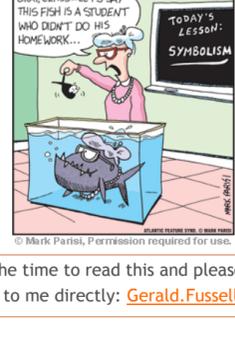
Let’s take another step back.

Let’s start with assessment. 70% of our elementary teachers have been [using portfolios](#) for communicating student learning with [guiding parameters](#) developed locally. Many of our schools already have assessment policies that reflect the Ministry’s description of [quality assessment](#). For years in our district we have been using [assessment for learning](#) with excellent results.

With respect to the curriculum, we have been focused and successful in teaching students to be literate and numerate and many of the features of the redesigned curriculum already exist in our district. We have [diverse learning environments](#) and [pathways](#); we honour and integrate learning about [Aboriginal cultures](#), [connect globally](#), and develop [environmental awareness](#); we also have strong connections to our [local communities](#). Our students develop their Core Competency skills in a number of different ways whether it is through [leadership](#), [creativity](#), [citizenship](#), [teamwork](#), or [personal development](#).

We also have a lot of expertise and experience in pedagogy that supports and is complimented by the redesign. One of the goals is to provide students with opportunities to [apply their learning](#) in meaningful ways. With locally developed guides such as the [Successful Learner Traits](#), we help students to take [ownership of their learning](#) to become [future ready](#). We have a long history of using [Inquiry](#) to guide learning and of being open to [Innovation](#). Our [technology](#) is excellent, well supported, and enriches learning. We also have a lot of examples of [place-based](#) and [experiential learning](#).

So, Cale Birk is correct, we have a lot of unused capacity. But for us it is because we do not take enough advantage of the capacity we have already developed in our district. Throughout the year I have heard that one of our strengths as a district is our collaboration. Over the years we have had many manifestations of [Professional Learning Communities](#) and three years ago our District invested in creating time across the district to develop our collaborative capacity. Starting next year we will have time every Friday to collaborate about how to work with the redesigned curriculum to maximize quality learning for our students. We will also have many opportunities throughout the year to learn from each other in a variety of contexts. Luckily, we are in a district rich with those we can learn from and work with as we are learner-centred.



Thank you for taking the time to read this and please direct any suggestions, questions, or inquiries to me directly: Gerald.Fussell@sd71.bc.ca