



Learning Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting Policy

POLICY DATES: JOHN CALVIN SCHOOL LEARNING ASSESSMENT			
Formulated	March 2017		
Implemented	March 2017	Reviewed	
Next Review Due	MARCH 2020		
POLICY AUTHORISATION			
Principal	Daniel Coote	Signature	
Chairman	Philip deRuiter	Signature	

1. Introduction

This policy provides an overview of the John Calvin School's approach to

- measurement and assessment of student learning and performance, and reporting on students' progress.
- evaluation of student learning and the effectiveness of teaching based on gathered assessment data.

2. Definitions

a. Measurement

Involves using rules to assign (a) number(s), such as a score, rating or a ranking, to an individual or a group for a specified behaviour or performance.

b. Assessment

Relates to collecting, synthesizing and interpreting data about the knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes of a person or a group in order to facilitate decision-making.

Assessment is either diagnostic, formative or summative in nature.

- Diagnostic assessment is designed to ascertain the starting point for teaching.
- Formative assessment is used during teaching. It is concerned with giving feedback to the student and the teacher about the progress of learning.
- Summative assessment is concerned with assessment of student learning at the end of a learning experience or series of learning experiences.

c. Evaluation

Evaluation refers to the judgements made by the teacher about student learning and the effectiveness of teaching based on gathered assessment data. The teacher uses the assessment data to make decisions regarding subsequent teaching, either in the course of a lesson, series of lessons or unit of work.

3. Rationale

a. Assessment serves to facilitate student learning as an integral part of this learning.

Careful measurement of student performance enables teachers to encourage and correct students in their learning. Effective student assessment allows optimal development of the talents the students have received from God.

The students' learning will be enhanced if they, the students, are aware of the quality of their performance. By means of regular feedback, assessment serves to highlight areas of weakness and strength providing students with some focus in their learning. Students will know precisely which areas they need to work on.

Teachers also use assessment data to communicate with other teachers with a view to enhance the quality of teaching and student learning.

b. Accountability to stakeholders

i. Parents

Parents need to be informed of their children's progress. This is achieved through accurate reporting. All methods of assessment must be used to give a true picture so that parents can assist their children with their learning if necessary. Parents need to know how their children are progressing as well as what level they finally achieve.

ii. Board

The principal, on behalf of the teaching staff, reports regularly on the maintenance and promotion of appropriate standards of student learning in the school.

iii. Government (State and Federal)

It is a requirement that students are assessed according to external assessment instruments designed to ensure that students meet nationally accepted standards of learning.

c. Evaluation

i. with a view to review and improve learning

Based on assessments carried out, teachers evaluate their own teaching and student learning in order to improve and optimise subsequent teaching and learning.

ii. in view of further education and future employment.

Ultimately the information gathered through assessment may be used as a checkpoint for making decisions about the future direction of the student. Depending on the level of competence achieved, students and parents, particularly in the High School, will be able to choose appropriate courses in further education or seek suitable employment.

The results obtained will be useful in allowing informed decisions to be made.

4. General aim

Briefly, the aim of assessment, evaluation and reporting is to maximise learning, thereby giving students guidance in developing their God-given talents to His glory.

In order to achieve the above aim, teachers should

- i. measure and record student performance;
- ii. determine areas of student weakness with a view to remediation;
- iii. highlight strengths, thus motivating students to greater efforts;
- iv. encourage students to reflect on their own learning;
- v. keep students up-to-date with their performance and reinforce learning;
- vi. keep parents informed of student progress;
- vii. group students according to ability when appropriate;
- viii. monitor the effectiveness of their own teaching and teaching programmes;
- ix. set objectives for future programmes;
- x. guide students and parents in their decision making regarding future schooling and/or employment.
- xi. collectively conduct a school self-review of its learning programmes.

5. Principles of assessment

- i. The primary purpose of assessment is to enhance learning.
- ii. Another purpose is to enable the reporting of student achievement.
- iii. Assessment has a powerful impact on teaching and learning. It should therefore be valid, fair, educative, explicit and comprehensive:
 - o it should provide valid information on the actual ideas, processes, products, skills, competencies and values expected of children;
 - o it should make a positive contribution to student learning;
 - o it should be explicit so that the basis for judgments is clear and public;
 - o it should be demonstrably fair to all students and not discriminate on grounds that are irrelevant to the achievement of the outcome;
 - o judgments on student progress should be based on multiple kinds of sources of evidence.

6. Methods of assessment

Any method of assessment of student learning should be based on the fundamental questions:

- o What do I want the students to learn? (learning intention)
- o How are they going to demonstrate what they have learned? (success criteria)

Specific methods of assessment of student performance and attitudes include:

i. Teacher developed instruments

- o *identify learning outcomes/criteria*
The teacher identifies the learning outcomes/achievement standards to be assessed. These should be part of the overall list of course/unit learning outcomes determined in the planning stage of the course/unit.
- o *course content*
In line with the above, the teacher identifies the course content which is to be covered by the instrument.
- o *conduct an analysis*
The teacher ensures that the degree of difficulty of each item in the instrument is appropriate.
- o *range of abilities within group*
The teacher, when designing instruments for a group of students with a wide range of abilities, should consider differentiating their assessment instruments or methods.

ii. **External tests and measures**

The John Calvin School makes use of the following tests:

- Maths Competition, produced by National University of Canberra;
- Australian Schools English Competition produced by Educational Testing Centre, University of NSW;
- Australian Schools Science Competition produced by Educational Testing Centre, University of NSW;
- Primary Maths Competition produced by Educational Testing Centre, University of NSW.
- AsiaWise competition
- Australasian Geography Competition

The above tests are used with caution because the standard of testing tends to be high. All John Calvin School students participate in these tests, whereas in other, larger schools only the more able tend to take part.

The main reasons for using these tests are:

- to help identify strengths and weaknesses in the school's programme;
- to generate a continuous interest and stimulus in the subject;
- to provide feedback to the school's stakeholders about standard and progress, compared to test averages.

iii. **Standardised tests**

Standardised tests are conducted in the second week of term 4.

Instruments used are:

- Burt reading
- Single Word Spelling Test
- PAT spelling, punctuation and grammar: written spelling
- PAT reading: spelling
- PAT reading: vocabulary
- PAT reading: comprehension
- PAT Maths

Results are gathered, tabulated, discussed by the class teacher and the principal, and inserted in the students' assessment file (see also attachment).

iv. **Diagnostic tests**

These are administered to determine weaknesses in a student's development in the subject, so that remedial action can be taken immediately.

V. **Benchmark tests**

- NAPLAN
Each year the school participates in the compulsory national benchmarking testing for grades 3, 5 and 7 in literacy and numeracy. These tests are designed to assess students' knowledge and skills against nationally determined standards in the learning areas indicated. The tests are administered by ACER (Australian Council of Educational Research).
- Other state or nationally administered tests include literacy, numeracy, ICT, science, civics/citizenship which facilitate the school meeting its accountability obligations and provides additional evidence of student performance to teachers and parents.

vi. **Observation**

- **Formal observation**
With specific learning outcomes as a focus, the teacher formally observes student behaviour.
- **Informal observation**
The teacher observes and records student behavior incidentally. These are unplanned and can take the form of qualitative comments.

vii. **Classroom discussion**

By means of careful questioning the teacher elicits responses from students and guides class discussions. It is important to vary the level of questioning from asking low-level questions (testing basic recall) to high level thinking questions (testing analysis/synthesis).

viii. **Assignments and work samples**

Samples of work collected regularly are evidence of a student's performance. Activity sheets, laboratory reports, projects and other types of assignments provide useful information concerning the quality of the learning which has taken place.

It is important for students to be informed, either verbally or in writing prior to the commencement of the learning task, what it is they are going to be assessed on.

Further, careful analysis of the nature of errors provides invaluable diagnostic information on any learning difficulties. Assignments and work samples are very useful and efficient forms of formative assessment that teachers may use. They allow teachers to monitor student progress and identify any difficulties in learning.

The level of difficulty of the assignment must be appropriate to the student group for which it has been designed.

The students in the upper Primary/Lower secondary must also assume increased responsibility for completing and handing in assignments on time. This aspect forms a part of the assessment.

ix. **Self/peer assessment**

- o Self-assessment

By means of self-assessment students assess their own work before they are assessed by the teacher.

Students are expected/taught to think about their learning and learning strategies, so that increasingly they might take responsibility for their own learning.

- o Peer assessment

Peer assessment involves students checking and commenting on each other's work. This strategy enables students to learn from the work of others by clarifying what the learning task entails and by identifying any errors made.

With both self assessment and peer assessment, the students' understanding of the purpose of their work is enhanced and consequently their ability to concentrate.

7. Evaluation

a. Student learning – individual teacher

Based on assessments carried out, teachers evaluate their own teaching and student learning in order to improve and optimise subsequent teaching and learning.

b. School review – results of internal & external tests and measures.

Teachers meet to compare, discuss and analyse results of internal & external tests and measures with a view to evaluating the effectiveness of current teaching programmes.

8. Accountability

a. Communicating with parents

The John Calvin School employs various means of communicating to parents regarding the progress made by their children.

i. Home Visits.

Where necessary, visits or appointments with the parents will be made by the class teacher and/or principal.

ii. Personal communication

The school may also contact individual parents by email, letter, telephone or other means such as memo books and diaries.

iii. Formal reports

The school issues 4 reports per year for Kinder through to Gr 10, at the following times: the end of Term 1 (a High School 'interim report' or Primary school 'student profile'); the end of Term 2 (full report 1); the end of Term 3 (interim report for Primary and High School); the end of the school year (full report 2). Reports are to be written with easily-understandable language and have reference to A-E ratings for Prep-Year10.

iv. Parent-Teacher Evenings.

At the beginning of the school year, a primary and secondary parent information session is conducted to ensure understanding of key practices and expectations.

After the issue of at least the first two reports, the school conducts parent-teacher evenings, providing parents with the opportunity to discuss their children's report results with the various class/subject teachers. If time set aside for each parent-teacher interview is not sufficient, individual parents and teachers can arrange for extended time or a home visit.

v. Primary School Graduation Certificate.

At the end of their primary schooling students are given the school's Primary School Graduation Certificate.

vi. The John Calvin School Graduation Certificate.

Grade 10 is the final year level offered at the John Calvin School. At the end of the year Grade 10 school leavers receive not only their final report but also a certificate entitled the *John Calvin School Diploma*. This diploma, once issued, indicates that the school is satisfied that the recipient has fulfilled the Grade 10 requirements.

b. Communicating with the board

The principal, on behalf of the teaching staff, reports regularly on the maintenance and promotion of appropriate standards of student learning in the school.

c. Communicating with government

It is a requirement that students are assessed according to external assessment instruments designed to ensure that students meet nationally accepted standards of learning. Reporting must also comply with clause 59 of the *Education Regulations 2013 (Australia)*.

9. References:

- Barry, K & King, L (1999) *Beginning teaching and beyond*, 3rd ed., Social Science Press, Katoomba, NSW
- Cole, Peter & Chan, Lorna (1987) *Teaching Principles and Practice*, Prentice Hall, Sydney