Assessment is integral to all teaching and learning. It is central to the PYP’s goal of thoughtfully and effectively guiding children through the five essential elements of learning: the understanding of concepts, the acquisition of knowledge, the mastering of skills, the development of attitudes and the decision to take responsible action.

Assessment is a process concerned with gathering information about student competencies. Its focus is not only on what has been achieved by students, but also on how they have gone about their learning.

Assessment is also used to explain realistically and constructively to students and parents how the student has progressed in relation to his/her previous performance, not against the rest of the class. Furthermore, information from assessment is used to improve classroom teaching and learning.

THE PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

The purposes of assessment are to promote student learning, to provide information about student learning and to contribute to the efficacy of the programme.

1. **Student learning is promoted through:**
   - Assessing the children’s prior knowledge and experience brought to the topic or task
   - Inform and differentiate teaching and learning
   - Monitor student progress in terms of the IB learner profile
   - Building a profile of children’s understanding
   - Engaging children in reflection on their learning and in the assessment of their work and the work of others

2. **Information about student learning is provided by:**
   - Examples of children’s work or performance
   - Statistics based on explicit benchmarks and/or rubrics
   - Test results

THE PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

Effective assessments allow the child to:

- Have criteria that are known and understood in advance
- Analyse their learning and understand what needs to be improved
- Demonstrate the range of their conceptual understandings, their knowledge and their skills
- Synthesise and apply their learning, not merely recall facts
- Base their learning on real-life experiences that can lead to other questions to ask or problems to solve
- Focus on producing a quality product or performance
- Highlight their strengths and demonstrate mastery and expertise
- Express different points of view and interpretations
- Promote reflection, self- and peer-evaluation
WHY AND HOW WE ASSESS

Within the PYP, continuous assessment is an integral part of teaching. The use of assessment to judge the effectiveness of both teaching and learning processes is essential to allow teachers and children to identify their strengths and weaknesses and the effectiveness of the programme. The purpose and means of assessment should be clearly explained to the children. There are two forms of assessment that we use and value at AIA.

Formative assessment
Formative assessment is interwoven with the daily learning and helps teachers and children find out what the children already know in order to plan the next stage of learning. Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked; neither can function effectively or purposefully without the other.

Summative assessment
Summative assessment takes place at the end of the teaching and learning processes and gives the children opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned. Summative assessments may include any of, and any combination of, the following: acquisition of data, synthesis of information, application of knowledge and processes.

FEEDBACK

At AIA we support a whole school policy of recognizing students’ achievement, effort and improvement at all levels of ability. We believe that it is important to emphasise student’s achievements, to celebrate their success and to involve parents whenever possible. Teachers:

- Display students’ work wherever possible from the whole range of abilities
- Award merit certificates for work which demonstrates achievement, effort, commitment, creativity and/or improvement.
- Use positive reinforcement and encouragement
- Use Form, Year Level and General Assemblies to acknowledge student’s achievements, effort and contributions whenever possible.
- Publish student achievement (i.e. school newsletter, school website, magazine).
- Report regularly to parents

REGULAR REVIEWS

To maintain regular monitoring of each student’s academic performance and progress in each subject, teachers provide regular feedback to form teacher, Coordinator and Head or Assistant Head about student’s academic performance, attitude and behaviour, organisational skills and effort in a subject. The purpose of the regular monitoring is to:

- Identify students who may be ‘at risk’.
- Provide advice and counselling to students.
- Implement strategies to assist students in reaching their full academic potential.
- Maintain regular communication with parents and students.
REPORTING
AIA has an ongoing process of reporting student achievement to parents. This process has many forms.

Teacher - student conferences
These are usually informal and designed to give children feedback so they can reflect on their work and further refine and develop their skills. Teachers take the time to organise these individual conferences in order to support and encourage children’s learning.

Teacher-parent(s) conferences
These are usually formal and designed to give the parent(s) information about the child’s progress and needs, and about the school’s programme. Parent teacher conferences occur in the last week of term 1 and term 3.

Student-led conferences
These conferences are formal ones where children are involved in discussing their work and their progress with their parents. The children will, with the support and guidance of the teacher, select the work (based on predetermined criteria) to be discussed. The format of these conferences will depend on the age of the child, and all of the participants must understand the format and their roles prior to the conference. The value of student-led conferences is that the children reflect on and consolidate their progress and share the responsibility of informing their parents. Student Led Conferences take place in the last week of term 3.

Portfolios
These collections of children’s work are designed to demonstrate successes, growth, higher order thinking, creativity and reflection. A portfolio should be thought of as an exhibition of an active mind at work. The student and teachers collaborate on selections for the portfolio, which may contain; assessment by the teacher, self-assessment by the student, examples of the student’s work, information about any extracurricular achievements or other activities undertaken by the student.

It is intended that the contents of the Portfolio will assist parents and their children to reflect on efforts, experiences, progress and achievements in a meaningful and purposeful manner. It is anticipated that parents will use the information to encourage their children to set positive goals and work towards them throughout the year. The portfolio is sent home at the end of the year and also acts as an important part of the student led conferences which take place in term 3.

The PYP Year 5 exhibition
The PYP exhibition provides the culminating experience of the learner’s engagement with the PYP. It unites the teachers, learners and parents of the class in an activity that captures the essence of the PYP: transdisciplinary inquiry conducted in a spirit of personal and shared responsibility. It marks a rite of passage, both symbolic and actual, from the PYP to the Middle Years Programme (MYP). Most importantly, it is a celebration, an event which synthesises all that is best in the PYP, and shares it with the whole community.

Written reports
Written reports are available to parents at the end of both the first and second semester. Homeroom teachers write a general pastoral comment for all students in which they reflect on the student as a learner and make statements against the learner profile of the PYP. In each subject taught, teachers assess the students against key performance indicators for the year level. These reports must be collected from the school personally by a parent or guardian of the student on the Report Distribution Day. (See Key Dates).