

ASSESSMENT LEARNING

Assessment in the Service of Learning for Life

Prairie Spirit Assessment Learning Team Newsletter – September 2014

With the changes in assessment practices, students in Prairie Spirit are shifting from 'Earning to Learning'. As teachers we are 'Assessment Architects' preparing children for the real world. Assessment architecture requires specifications (standards and criteria for quality), blueprints (a plan to build the pathway to learning), solid structure (curriculum) and decorative features (the conduit through which to discover and appreciate the materials) - Cassandra Erkens, 2014

In the earlier stages of constructing their understanding children require mostly formative assessment and lots of scaffolding. In learning, as in the construction industry, scaffolding is essential while the building is being constructed. It is temporary and sometimes it doesn't look too pretty. (Damian Cooper, 2014)



In the Prairie Spirit classroom formative assessment practices mean that the student is the #1 instructional decision-maker.

Progress Report Update

We are happy to announce that the renewed progress report is now implemented in grades 1-7, with full implementation to grade 9 in the 2015/16 school year. As previously announced, there have been some changes made, based on feedback received from parents, teachers and students. The grading scale has been revised to include the term 'Mastery' (4) and the numbers 4 to 1, rather than letters, will appear on the document. In response to feedback from teachers, and following further discussions with curriculum and literacy teams, there has been a change in the way assessment evidence is organized and reported for English Language Arts. Resources will be provided to teachers to support this change.

In May 2013 the School Division contracted with Pearson Education to produce a progress report within PowerSchool that meets our needs in terms of user-friendliness, efficiency, formatting and flexibility. This new progress report will be integrated with the PowerTeacher grade book. Due to the complex nature of producing a report that is highly customized, there have been significant delays in getting it operational. We apologize for this delay. The expectation now is that the progress report will be fully functioning within PowerSchool by October 15 and an email will be sent to schools once it is available. The fields and categories for entering the grades that appear on the progress report are already in PowerSchool and the vast majority of teachers have already worked with Joan Atkings and Rhonda Berg to set up their gradebook and familiarize themselves with PowerTeacher.

We appreciate that term 1 progress reports will be going home in the next month or so and we do not want teachers in grades 1 to 9 to feel under undue pressure to use the PowerSchool progress report. For that reason we have developed an interim Adobe pdf template that will be sent out to schools in the week of October 6. The expectation is that this is used as a transition while teachers familiarize themselves with the PowerSchool progress report. It is also acceptable for teachers to use the PowerSchool progress report right away, once it is available, with the understanding that there may be some technical issues that will be resolved as quickly as possible.

PowerTeacher

Many teachers are now using PowerTeacher gradebook to organize their evidence of learning. Joan Atkings and Rhonda Berg have been working with individuals and groups of teachers to train them in the use of PowerTeacher. While PowerTeacher can be a great support in organizing evidence, the expectation at present is that PowerTeacher will be used to enter grades for the PowerSchool progress report, once it is operational.

There is a grade calculation function in PowerTeacher which must be examined very critically. We are reviewing the way this works in the program and will inform you if any changes are to be made. It is also important to emphasize that teacher professional judgment must be applied to all marks entered into, and generated by, PowerTeacher. To support this all fields in PowerTeacher can be manually over-ridden.

Support with PowerSchool and PowerTeacher is provided by Joan Atkings (683-2844) and Rhonda Berg (683-2832)

PowerSchool

Adult Learning Opportunities

The Assessment Residency

The Assessment Residency is a unique model for adult learning, developed in Prairie Spirit. This is the third year of the Residency and we are looking forward to working with up to 40 teachers from various schools. The model brings embedded, side-by-side learning to teachers over the course of an entire year. This year the focus in our residency school will be moving from reporting to informing—looking at innovative ways to communicate student progress and learning with parents.

ILOs

October 15 (p.m.) - Middle Years Progress Report Orientation

This orientation is provided for teachers who did not attend the progress report card launch days in June.

The following topics will be covered:

- the changes in assessment and reporting, and the reasons for those changes
- collecting and organizing evidence of student learning
- working with the progress report
- writing comments and providing feedback

October 29 and February 11 (p.m.) - What Does Meeting Mean? - Collaborative Analysis of Student Work

These ILO's will provide opportunities for teachers to come together to collaboratively analyze student work. Together we will explore systems for collecting assessment evidence from a variety of sources and then using this evidence to report to students and parents using the four point scale.

Nov 25 and Jan 13 (p.m.) - Knowing What Counts -

We will focus on practical ways for teachers to involve students in their own assessment and how this evidence can be used to support learning.

For more information, and to register, please go to PD Place - <https://pdplace.spiritsd.ca>

Progress report supports

ELA

Teacher will notice the changes to some of the essential understandings on the progress report for ELA. This has been done to better fit with the curriculum, particularly to better reflect the big ideas at the front of the curriculum document and to support a more holistic approach. It also aligns well with the rubrics in the curriculum and those developed by SPDU.

The Assessment and Curriculum teams are working together to create initial framework documents to bridge to current practices. These will be available shortly and will be followed by ongoing work with teachers to develop other supporting documents for planning and assessment.

The Assessment team are also available to support schools and individual teachers to learn side-by-side. Please contact the assessment team.

Further Reading

Grading Smarter, Not Harder—Myron Dueck (2014)—Assessment Strategies the Motivate Kids and Help them to Learn

Conferring—Patrick Allen (2009) - The keystone of Reader's Workshop

Damian Cooper—Questions and Answers in Assessment

<http://www.damiancooperassessment.com/qanda.html>



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