



Mehr.e.Taban
International School

Assessment Policy

Assessment Policy

Assessment means assessing one's capacities in a given situation. Bachman (1990) used the term measurement instead and argued that there were differences among evaluation, measurement, and test. Measurement was defined as "the process of quantifying the characteristics of persons according to explicit procedures and rules" (p. 18). Test, on the other hand, was a specific method of measurement. Evaluation describes the decisions made based on the two. In the International Baccalaureate terms, assessment is the same as measurement.

We at the Mehr-e-Taban International School, believe that, in addition to giving feedback about our own progress and effective assessments:

- improve and encourage student learning by providing effective feedback on the learning process and outcomes;
- inform planning and teaching;
- assess not only student's knowledge, but their deep understanding of concepts and the acquisition of skills;
- assessments are continuous, on-going process;
- are directly related to learning outcomes/curriculum standards
- are criterion based;
- use a wide range of multiple strategies and tools;
- have clear criteria that are known and understood in advance;
- involve frequent opportunities for students to be assessed in authentic contexts;
- engage the learner in the reflection of their learning
- assess personal growth and the development of the IB learner profile attributes.

In order to reach the above aims and objectives, assessment should be honest, accurate, fair and reliable. It should also be realistic and accommodated to suit different learning needs and styles, as well as being clear, concise and able to be understood by students.

Assessment should not be stress-inducing for students and should be compatible with their interests and abilities as well as being relevant and challenging. Assessment strategies must be able to cover a broad spectrum of understanding, knowledge and skills. Furthermore, feedback should be regularly and accurately reported to students and parents.

I. Assessment and Tasks

Dornyei (2009) justified the use of tasks in learning, stating that "by focusing on tasks, we are able to break down the complex, prolonged learning process into discrete segments with clear-cut boundaries, thereby creating distinct behavioral units that have a well-definable profile in terms of...input/output and...operations involved" (p. 279)

Richards and Schmidt (2010) described task dimensions as (bullets added):

- Goals – the kind of goals teachers and learners identify for a task (subject-group objectives)
- Procedures – the operations or procedures learners use to complete a task (teaching strategies and learning outcomes)
- Order – the location of a task within a sequence of other tasks
- Pacing – the amount of time that is spent on a task (differentiation)
- Product – the outcome or outcomes students produce, such as a set of questions, an essay, or a summary as the outcome of a reading task (differentiation)
- Learning strategy – the kind of strategy a student uses when completing a task (differentiation)
- Assessment – how success on the task will be determined (differentiation)
- Participation – whether the task is completed individually, with a partner, or with a group of other learners (differentiation)
- Resources – the materials and other resources used with a task (subject-group requirements)
- Language – the language learners use in completing a task (e.g. the mother tongue or English, or the particular vocabulary, structures or functions the task requires the learners to use).(p. 584)

The concept of task is central to many theories of classroom teaching and learning, and the school curriculum is sometimes described as a collection of tasks. From this viewpoint, school work is defined by a core of basic tasks that recur in the curriculum. The teacher's choice of tasks determines learning goals, how learning is to take place, and how the results of learning will be demonstrated.

II. Why We Need Assessment

The way assessment contributes to learning is essential since the main point in assessing students' knowledge is to create a *washback effect* on their knowledge. This effect can be defined as a movement from *declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge*. Wallach and Lebiere (as cited in Dornyei, 2009) attributed procedural knowledge to condition-action rules (production), and declarative knowledge to factual knowledge. Anderson (as cited in Dornyei, 2009), in his *Adaptive Control of Thought theory (ACT)*, elaborates on the aforementioned movement in terms of three stages:

1. A conscious *cognitive* or *declarative* stage, where a declarative description of the procedure is learnt; pertaining to *factual questions*
2. An *associative* or *procedural* stage, where the learner works on procedures for performing the process; pertaining to concept-making or conceptual questions

3. An *autonomous* or *automatic* stage, where execution of the skill becomes fully automatized; pertaining to skill-exploitation or *debatable questions*. (p. 150)

The term skill suggests that ACT is a skill-learning theory in which *skill* “refers to ‘an acquired ability that has improved as a consequence of practice’” (Carlson, as cited in Dornyei, 2009, p. 151). As a result, we need the types of assessment that focus on individual progress, are ongoing, and can show the final level of individual achievement.

III. Assessment in the Primary Years Programme

Philosophy of Assessment

PYP Definition of Assessment: “Assessment is the gathering and analysis of information about student performance. It identifies what students know (knowledge), understand (concepts), can do (skills) and feel (IB learner profile/action) at various stages in the learning process. It is the means by which we analyze student learning and the effectiveness of our teaching and acts as a foundation on which to base our future planning and practice. It is central to our goal of guiding the child, from novice to expert, through the learning process.” (IB, 2000)

Assessment in MIS

Assessment provides evidence to inform learning and teaching. In MIS we have several Formative assessments during each unit and a summative assessment at the end of the units of inquiries.

PYP assessment has four dimensions: monitoring, documenting, measuring and reporting on learning. Each of these aspects has its own function in our school, but all aim to provide evidence to inform learning and teaching. Although the four dimensions of assessment are not weighted the same; each dimension has its own importance and value.

Monitoring learning

In monitoring learning we aim to check the progress of learning against personal learning goals and success criteria. It occurs daily through a variety of strategies, namely; observation, questioning, reflection, discussing learning with peers and teachers, and constructive feedback to feed forward for next steps in learning.

Tools used for monitoring include open-ended tasks, written or oral assessment, and learning portfolios.

The Documentation of learning

The documentation of learning is the process providing evidence of learning. Documentation is both physical (school boards, hardcover portfolios), and digital (Managebac Portfolio) , and can display and record in a variety of media forms; sheets, messages, files, videos, audio etc. Documentation of learning is shared with the parents, grade teachers and PYP leadership members to make learning visible and apparent. It reveals insights into learning and provides opportunities to reconnect with learning goals and success criteria.

Documentation tools in portfolios include; exemplars, checklists, rubrics, anecdotal records, Unit reports and alike.

Measuring learning

It is important to measure the learning aims and capture what the student has learned during and at the end of each unit. Not all learning can be, or needs to be, measured.

Analyzing learning

Teachers use PYP selected elements of each unit to evaluate student progress. The aim is to organize, aggregate and disaggregate data to derive information to support evidence-based decision-making.

The PYP in MIS supports collaborative analysis of data undertaken for individual learners, student cohorts and across the school to identify patterns and trends in student learning. The outcome of this analysis is recorded in Unit Report forms and students ManageBac accounts as well as portfolios at the end of each Unit which informs and guides decisions about learning and teaching.

Reporting learning

Reporting on learning informs the learning community and reflects the question “How well are we doing?”

Assessment In MIS describes the progress and achievement of the students’ learning, identifies areas for growth and contributes to the efficacy of the programme.

The following methods have been used in MIS PYP programme:

- PYP IB report cards (twice a year)
- PYP Ministry report cards (twice a year)
- Three – Way conferences (2-3 times a year)
- Exhibition (in the 5th grade ending Unit)
- PYP certificates (every other Unit)

Giving and receiving feedback

Feedback has been identified as one of the most effective teaching practices and should, therefore, form the core of assessment. Effective teacher feedback offers opportunities for reflection and action. It encourages learning adjustment, promotes continuous improvement and celebrates success in our school. It is provided with the heads, curriculum directors through observing sessions and three- way conferences and by teachers daily which helps students develop strategies to self-adjust and have a powerful influence on engagement and self-efficacy towards learning.

Peer feedback

Peer feedback is a key activity in MIS through which students use the structure and language of success criteria to appraise and provide feedback on the learning of others. It emphasizes the importance of learning in the context of relationships by providing opportunities to communicate and be listened to.

Assessment Strategies and Tools

The following assessment strategies and tools are not used in isolation but are seen as a range of approaches and therefore provide a balanced view of the whole student:

- Observations
- Open-ended tasks
- Performance task assessments
- Portfolios
- Process focused assessments
- Selected responses

Assessment Tools

- Anecdotal records
- Benchmarks/exemplars
- Checklists
- Continuums
- Rubrics
- Graphic organizers, oral reports, presentations, peer and self-reflections and evaluations, reflective journal writing, written tests

IV. Assessment in the Middle Years Programme

Assessment in the MYP is integral to all teaching and learning. The IB advocates individual education in the same vein as all-inclusive education. Criterion-referenced assessment is designed to enable the user to interpret an assessment outcome with reference to a criterion level of ability or domain of content (Bachman, 1990, p. 74). In the MYP programme a “criterion-related” approach is advocated which represents a philosophy of

assessment that is neither “norm-referenced”(where students must be compared to each other and to an expected distribution of achievement) nor “criterion-referenced” (where students must master all strands of specific criteria at lower achievement levels before they can be considered to have achieved the next level). (IB, 2014)

MYP assessment requires teachers to assess the prescribed subject-group objectives using the assessment criteria for each subject group in each year of the programme. Table 1. provides an overview of the objectives for each subject group.

Subject-Group	Objective A	Objective B	Objective C	Objective D
Arts	Knowing and understanding	Developing skills	Thinking creatively	Responding
Design	Inquiring and understanding	Developing ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating
Individuals and Societies	Knowing and understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking critically
Language and Literature	Analyzing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
Language Acquisition	Comprehending spoken and visual text	Comprehending written and visual text	Communicating in response to spoken, written, and visual text	Using language in spoken and written form
Mathematics	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics in real-life contexts
Physical and Health Education	Knowing and understanding	Planning for performance	Applying and performing	Reflecting and improving performance
Sciences	Knowing and understanding	Inquiring and designing	Processing and evaluating	Reflecting

Table 1: Overview of MYP Objectives

At Mehr-e-Taban International School (MIS), all students and teachers are provided with access to Managebac. Managebac is a Curriculum-First Learning platform designed for the IB World schools for planning, assessment, and reporting. As a result, planning the curriculum, and assessing and reviewing students’ performance has been streamlined for teachers. In addition, students and parents will have the opportunity to be informed about students’ overall performance and achievements throughout the academic year.

In the MYP, teachers make decisions about student achievement using their professional judgment, guided by mandated criteria (based on the above objectives) that are public, known in advance and precise, ensuring that assessment is transparent. The criteria are subsequently divided into several strands (which for the sake of brevity are not mentioned here) presented in each subject-specific booklet. Across a variety of assessment tasks (authentic performances of understanding), teachers use descriptors to identify students’

achievement levels against the established assessment criteria. Achievement levels in each criterion are divided into stages from 1 through 8 as a five-stage Likert scale in which demands on the strands are subsequently increased: 0, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8. It similarly has a final grade boundary from 1 through 7, which is based on the total sum of the gained scores in the four criteria. Table 2 illustrates these levels.

Grade	Grade Boundary	Descriptors
1	1-5	Produces work of a very limited quality. Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.
2	6-9	Produces work of a limited quality. Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical and creative thinking. Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills.
3	10-14	Produces work of an acceptable quality. Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts with occasional significant misunderstandings or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some creative and critical thinking. Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.
4	15-18	Produces good quality work. Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking. Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations.
5	19-23	Produces generally high quality work. Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real world situations and, with support, some unfamiliar real world situations.
6	24-27	Produces high quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication. Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real world situations, often with independence.
7	28-32	Produces high quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking. Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real world situations.

Table 2: MYP Grade Boundaries and Descriptors

In order to provide students with opportunities to achieve the highest level, MYP teachers develop rigorous tasks that embrace a variety of assessment strategies. These strategies are in particular significant to MYP year 5, in which students are internally and externally assessed for their final products in Personal Project, as well as their e-Assessment on-screen examinations and e-portfolios.

All summative assessments in MIS have level descriptors and command terms that make certain the students

V. Assessment Types

As mentioned before, ACT argues that there is a movement from declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge. Dornyei (2009) argues that this movement leads to automatization. The process starts from the declarative input stage, moves to a controlled practice stage, and ends in an open-ended practice stage. The declarative input stage includes the provision of students with necessary factual knowledge. Controlled practice stage implies the use of that knowledge under supervision. Finally, the open-ended practice stage demands the free use of that knowledge in unfamiliar situations.

Consequently, we need two types of assessment: one in the role of supervision and the other in the role of achievement gauging. Nitko (as cited in Bachman, 1990) defined the role of former as feedback-provision and the latter as a representation of students' progress. Nitko (ibid) called them formative and summative assessments respectively. The IB, similarly, includes both types of assessment. Figure 1 illustrates the teaching-assessment interface.

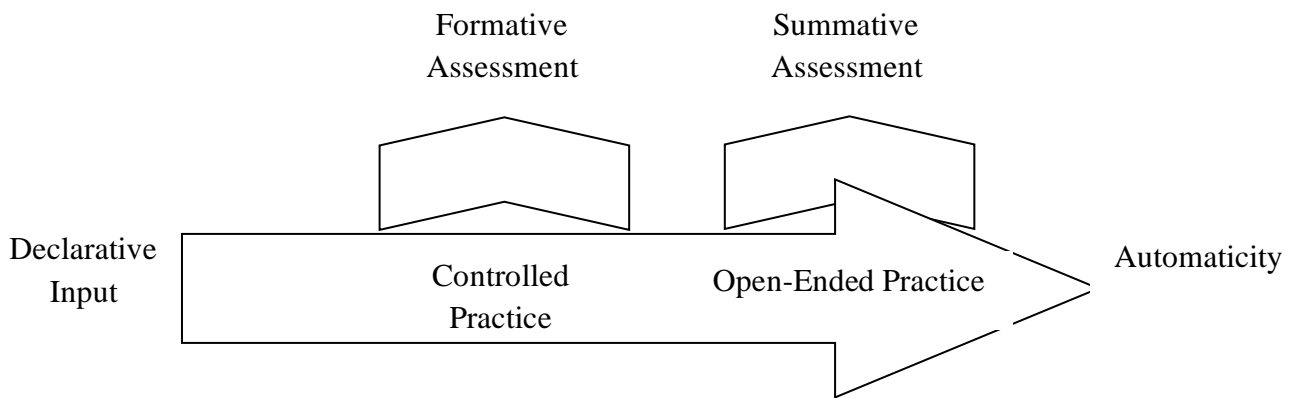


Figure 1. Teaching-assessment Interface

Furthermore, peer and self-assessment are an integral part of the assessment procedure in the MYP programme. This in turn improves students' understanding of the content presented in class and fosters critical thinking skills and self-reflectivity, which lead to lifelong learning.

Assessment task types advocated by the International Baccalaureate (IB; 2014) in the MYP include:

- Compositions-musical, physical, artistic
- Creation of solutions or procedures in response to problems
- Essays
- Examinations
- Questionnaires
- Investigations
- Research
- Performances

- Presentations-verbal (oral or written), graphic (through various media)
- GRASPS (Goal, Role, Audience, Situation, Product, Standards)

Furthermore, tasks, based on the IB (2014) should be

- Rigorous: providing access to all the achievement levels (0-8);
- Appropriate: each unit covering at least one strand of the objectives
- Clarified: what is expected from students should be made clear based on level descriptors in the assessment criteria

Grading using the “best-fit” approach

MYP assessment uses a “best-fit” approach in which teachers work together to establish common standards against which they evaluate each student’s achievement holistically. Teachers must use their professional judgment to award the level that best describes the student’s work.

The descriptors for each criterion are hierarchical. When assessing a student’s work, teachers should read the descriptors (starting with level 0) until they reach a descriptor that describes an achievement level that the work being assessed has not attained. The work is therefore best described by the preceding descriptor.

Where it is not clearly evident which level descriptor should apply, teachers must use their judgment to select the descriptor that best matches the student’s work overall. The “best-fit” approach allows teachers to select the achievement level that best describes the piece of work being assessed.

If the work is a strong example of achievement in a band, the teacher should give it the higher achievement level in the band. If the work is a weak example of achievement in that band, the teacher should give it the lower achievement level in the band.

MYP assessment requires a “best-fit” approach, not an exact match to the descriptor or mastery of each descriptor.

Individualization in Assessment and Learning

After all, in the IB, learning and assessment is something individual; consequently, differentiation (in the IB terms) is an indispensable part of both teaching and assessment. Simply put, students' characteristics and needs are at stake here. Ellis (2014) provided a framework for catering for individual needs (Appendix 1). As such, both teaching and assessment should be geared to individual characteristics and needs.

Standardization of assessment (Inter-coder reliability)

In order to ensure consistency of student scores, each summative assessment is scored by two or more teachers (if more than one educator teaches the same subject-group in the MYP programme, alternatively, an educator teaching the same subject in the DP programme would assist with the standardization process). Teachers are required to standardize their understanding of the criteria prior to deciding on final achievement levels.

The process of standardizing summative assessments

At the end of each semester, the form presented in Table 3. is shared with all MYP subject-groups. Teachers are asked to complete the form based on the final mark given to each student for their summative assessment. For each subject, a second teacher (if available, if not, the head of the subject) would check the assessment and all the student's work and specify a final mark for each student.

Subsequently, the specified marks would be discussed amongst both teachers. If the given marks are different, the teachers are required to organize a meeting to discuss the difference in their marks and justify how the assessment objectives were marked. If the teachers do not come to an agreement, the head of the subject (if unavailable, another teacher expert in the subject or the MYP curriculum director) would check the assessment and all the student's work to assign an overall score. Then, this score will be discussed amongst all three teachers to reach a consensus and a concluding mark.

Lastly, the head teacher provides the standardization form and report card to the curriculum director for their validation and approval. Once approved, the final mark is issued in the student's report card.

MYP			
Standardization of Assessment			
Student Name:			
Subject:		Grade:	MYP year:
CRITERION	A	Assessor(s)	Justification
Level of achievement (individual)			
Level of achievement (group 1)			
Level of achievement (group 2)			
CRITERION	B	Assessor(s)	Justification
Level of achievement (individual)			
Level of achievement (group1)			
Level of achievement (group 2)			
CRITERION	C	Assessor(s)	Justification
Level of achievement (individual)			
Level of achievement (group)			
Level of achievement (supervisor)			
CRITERION	D	Assessor(s)	Justification
Level of achievement (individual)			
Level of achievement (group1)			
Level of achievement (group 2)			

Table 3: Overview of MIS MYP Standardization form

Putting Things Together: Recording Process and Reporting Format

The IB (2014) encourages reports that are clear, formal, and regular. Such reports demand a clear and systematic recording process of scores. A good recording process furthermore is the one that lends itself to comparisons on behalf of clarifying educational progress and telling visualizations, so that assessment data is used to inform further planning, teaching

and learning. Statistical Package for Social Studies (SPSS) software provides the necessary facilities in so doing. Accordingly, descriptive statistics and graphs will be used to take account of students' scores, progress, and necessary visualizations. The following steps are in effect:

1. Assessment tasks are designed attesting to the features of tasks, taking into account individual needs and abilities, and accommodating to the IB assessment criteria.
2. Each teacher has a class records book and results of summative and formative assessments are recorded based on the objectives.
3. The scores for summative assessments during a semester are recorded on a Scorecard, which resembles the following:
4. A codebook for further statistical analysis and comparison (by SPSS) is devised.
5. Additionally, related charts (bar graphs and line graphs) can be drawn, which are quite informative as to the student's progress and different kinds of comparisons can be made in relation to the objectives of each subject.
6. Students, parents, teachers, and stakeholders are informed of the students' progress on Managebac and regarding their formal report cards in formal meetings twice a year. Teachers have one-one conferences to discuss report cards with parents and to plan further improvements.
7. Necessary measures are taken in case. Teachers use data from assessment to inform teaching practices. The charts from SPSS are an important tool in this process.

Assessment Tasks	Criteria A	Criteria B	Criteria C	Criteria D
Total				
	Total (out of 32):		Final Grade (out of 7):	

Table 4: Overview of MIS MYP Scorecard

In conclusion, the MIS assessment procedures ensure students are being evaluated so that their learning experience is enhanced. These procedures ensure MIS students become lifelong learners, are not compared with other students, and utilizes students' differences to promote positive feedback and critical thinking skills. MIS's aim is to encourage and support learners to become inquirers and thinkers. Accordingly, all assessments are based on unit

planners, ATL skills, Global Context, and IB learner profiles. The objective behind these assessments is to adapt students' knowledge and skills to new context within and beyond the scope of their classroom.

VI. Assessment in the IB Diploma Programme

MIS ensures all three programs assess in a way that is in line with our philosophy of assessment outlined above. In the IB Diploma programme, students' assessed work may vary in its purpose and teachers are expected to use the full range of assessment activities. Teachers will inform students which criteria will be used to evaluate their work, both for internal assessment (IA) and external examination (EA). The weight of each assessment criteria and the assessment components of each subject is reported in the MIS DP assessment booklet. It is expected that students will be completely aware of what is required in order to fulfill the criteria for any particular piece of assessed work. Internal and external assessment will be used in the IB Diploma Programme. Internal assessment is undertaken by school teachers and moderated by the IB examiners while external assessment involves teachers and/or coordinators sending candidate work to IB examiners for final assessment.

DP Mock exams are held twice a year and the IB question bank is provided for summative assessment design.

DP Teachers and students standardize their assessment marks by reviewing sample IB mark schemes for each subject. The teacher support material on PRC is used to review samples of student assessed work.

Grades awarded for criteria-referenced tasks are converted into final 7(high)- 1(low) reported grades by measuring students' performance against moderated grade boundaries, based on boundaries published by the IB titled as "Grade descriptors".

DP IB results are also used for self-reflection and evaluation of teachers teaching and assessment strategies in both IA and predicted grades.

Recording and Reporting in the DP

Assessment in the diploma program (DP) is recorded in the following ways:

- Each student has a ManageBac account in which each subject and all its evidence of formative and summative assessment such as homework records, lab reports, quizzes, projects etc are recorded.
- Each teacher has a class on ManageBac in which all data about the teachers teaching report, student attendance and behavior as well as student's achievement grades and assessment details and the teacher's comments are recorded.

- Assessment in the diploma program is reported in the following ways:
 - Parents have access to all assessment reports on ManageBac
 - Biannual official school report cards
 - Student report their CAS activities on the ManageBac

Formative and summative assessment

Formative and summative assessments are an integral part of the teaching and learning process in the diploma program and will be conducted by ways of monthly quizzes, observations of student personal and social development, projects, lab reports, preparation as well as internal assessment components for subjects. Formal examination sessions will be held at the end of each semester and therefore a total of three times before official IB examinations in May session.

National Requirements

There are no national assessment requirements imposed on high school students except in terms of the subjects they must take, the hours they must attend in each subject and their final achievement mark which is out of 100. MIS has made sure the students schedule is organized in a way that both the Ministry and IB requirements for subjects are met. The final achievement mark out of 7 will be converted to a mark out of 100 for ministry purposes.

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