

Facilitator's Guide to the Video: Assessment Literacy in B.C.

Assessment Literacy in B.C. is intended to provide educators with an overview of assessment literacy and encourage further exploration of assessment principles and practices.

Purpose: This guide accompanies the video [Assessment Literacy in B.C.](#) and was designed by B.C. educators to promote deeper learning about assessment through reflection, conversation, and collaboration. It can be used to support professional learning in schools.

Definition of assessment literacy

Assessment literacy is the knowledge, understanding, and application of assessment principles and practices necessary to support and empower students in their learning.

Below are some examples of common practices of teachers who demonstrate assessment literacy. Consider the following:

- How do these resonate with you?
- What is missing?

Informing Instruction – “I use information gathered from assessments to inform and transform my instruction.”

Supporting student ownership and agency – “I support students in becoming self-aware self-advocates by encouraging reflection and peer and self-assessment throughout the learning process.”

Collaborating and co-constructing – “I collaborate with students to co-create assessments, helping them identify, develop, and clearly communicate criteria that describe successful performance.”

Differentiating instruction and learning opportunities – “I can determine what is important for my students to learn and design differentiated instructional activities and assessments to foster growth in relation to the Core Competencies and the learning standards.”

Planning, interpreting and reflecting – “I plan assessments with intention, interpret data accurately, and use evidence gathered to support further learning. I reflect on my teaching and evaluate the efficacy of my instructional and assessment choices.”

Focusing – “When assessing, I stay focused on what’s important and I am not distracted by factors that are not important. I can offer many options and opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning.”

Enabling growth – “I can model and encourage a growth mindset in my students by focusing on their strengths when providing descriptive feedback and helping them to set achievable goals.”



Pre-viewing/introductory activity ideas

- Teams brainstorm what “assessment literacy” means to them and record ideas, questions, and comments on chart paper, sharing back with the larger group.
- Colleagues work together to define a few terms in the glossary (i.e., how do we define, for example, “formative assessment,” “differentiated instruction,” and “growth culture”?). Teams then explain their definitions.

The video

Section 1: Why is assessment literacy important?



Key ideas

- **There has been a shift in the role of competencies and content.**
Previously we used competencies to help students acquire content knowledge, with the new curriculum, we are now using knowledge (content) to help students to develop competencies. These competencies are the transferable skills, strategies, and processes students need to succeed in school and beyond.
- **A common language is foundational to professional growth in assessment.**
When we share a common language, we can communicate effectively. We can work together to continue to advance our understanding of effective practices, resulting in a more assessment literate culture, greater provincial consistency, and increased student success.
- **A conceptual evolution of assessment and assessment literacy is underway.**
“The redesigned provincial curriculum has inspired a renewed focus and interest in how assessment practices build proficiency and allow students to grow in their understanding.” – Tom Schimmer
“There has been an evolution around assessment practices in schools and districts; everyone is on a journey and we are all at different places on that journey.” – Suzanne Hoffman



Questions for facilitation

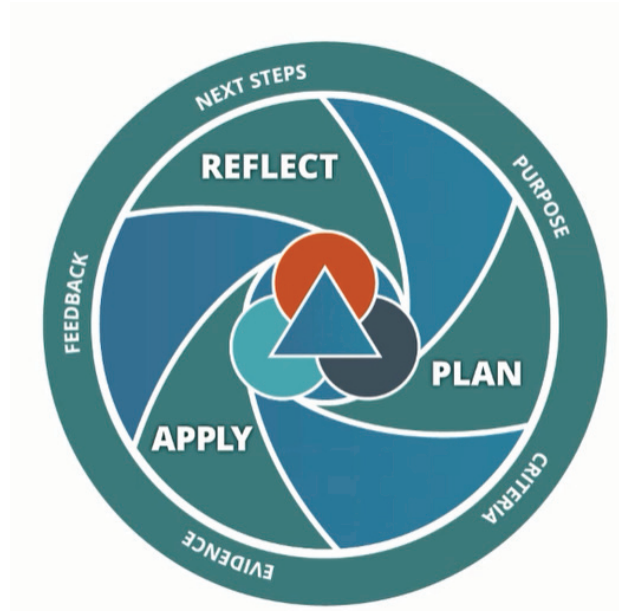
1. What is assessment literacy?
2. Why do we assess?
3. How does ongoing feedback help students?
4. What is the difference between assessment and reporting?



Suggested approaches

- Provide analogies for the change in assessment.
- Draft a “purpose of assessment” proclamation/statement.
- Create an assessment versus reporting T-chart.

Section 2: How are curriculum, instruction, and assessment connected?



Key ideas

- **Instruction and assessment are interconnected in a cyclical or spiral concept of education.**

Assessment takes place throughout the learning cycle. We use the information we gather through assessments to inform our instruction. Sharing this information with students through ongoing feedback encourages them to recognize their successes and to set learning goals, further engaging them in the learning process.

- **The learning cycle enables responsive and targeted learning.**

Assessments enable us to pinpoint where students need additional support, instruction, and guidance to help extend their learning. When we use assessment for action, this allows us to be more agile in our instructional approach.



Questions for facilitation

1. Describe the learning cycle in your classroom. In what ways do you see your practices reflected in the learning cycle graphic above?
2. What are some examples of feedback that aid in student learning?
3. How could the partnership between instruction and assessment support co-learning and co-designing in a classroom?



Suggested approaches

- Share the learning cycle graphic as a tool for classroom design.
- Create illustrations to represent the shift from a “knowledge-centric” to a “competency-centric” model.
- Share examples of the shift in emphasis from knowledge to competency in specific instructional samples.



Section 3: Given the shifts in curriculum, how do you see assessment practices evolving?

Key ideas

- **Assessment is:**
 - formative and differentiated
 - infused in the learning cycle
 - co-constructed
 - strength-based and includes goal setting
- Infusing formative assessment into the learning cycle enables responsive teaching
- We differentiate instruction and assessment “to ensure that we are providing access points for all students in our schools.” – Joanne Chrona

Questions for facilitation

1. How do you define and distinguish between formative versus summative assessment?
2. What does “responsive teaching” mean to you?
3. Why/how do we differentiate in assessment?

Suggested approaches

- Categorize assessment examples as formative or summative.
- Co-create criteria for quality assessment.
- Draft principles of differentiated assessment.
- Share anecdotes that demonstrate how your classroom assessment practices are evolving.

Section 4: Why is it important for students to take more ownership of learning?

Key ideas

- **Co-reflection and co-construction are collaborative processes that support student ownership of learning.**

When students and teachers collaborate to co-construct strength-based criteria and students are engaged in peer and self-assessments, students become more invested in the assessment process and take greater ownership of their learning.

- **We help students value learning and the process of learning to build ownership; ownership is the foundation of student agency.**

With greater ownership comes increased motivation, engagement, and self-awareness, building students’ capacity to direct their learning. We encourage this development of agency by ensuring that students are at the centre of their learning experience: they are given a voice and choice in what and how they learn.



Questions for facilitation

1. What feedback do you provide to your students and how do they reflect on it?
2. What do you do to help students “own” their learning?
3. When do students see you as a learner alongside them?
4. How do we continue to shift from teacher-centred to student-centred learning?

Suggested approaches

- Share authentic examples of co-reflection and/or co-construction of criteria.
- Brainstorm ideas about how and when to incorporate time for student reflection.
- Generate a list of effective practices to foster student ownership.
- Role-play a growth mindset conversation (teacher/student).

Section 5: How do we best build assessment literacy across our education system?

Key ideas

- **Set goals and collaborate with your students and colleagues.**
Think of assessment as an opportunity to build relationships with students and colleagues.
- **Take risks in a supportive environment.**
Nurture a culture of learning in an environment where all learners (students and teachers) feel supported.
- **Work to develop a common understanding of assessment literacy.**
“Investing in our assessment literacy is arguably the most efficient and effective professional investment any teacher can make.” – Tom Schimmer

Questions for facilitation

1. Where are you in your assessment practices? What do you wonder about?
2. What are your next steps?
3. What do you want to try in your learning space?
4. What supports do you need?

Suggested approaches

Create an action plan. For example:

- Co-construct a clear vision.
- Collaborate to share and build assessment literacy.
- Create a safe place for thoughtful risk-taking.
- Renew thinking and refine assessment practices.
- Commit to continuous improvement.

Special thanks to British Columbia’s Adolescent Learning Network – Okanagan and the Classroom Assessment and Reporting Advisory Group for their contributions to this guide.



Glossary

assessment literacy: The knowledge, understanding, and application of assessment principles and practices needed to support and empower students in their learning.

co-construct: Teachers and students co-construct their learning when students are at the centre of the assessment process, involved in setting criteria, setting their own learning goals, and designing demonstrations of learning.

collaboration: The coordinated act of working alongside others to achieve a shared goal. Collaboration in an educational environment can involve district leaders, school administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, students, and others. In collaborative school-based teams, educators can build community, share resources and ideas, identify student learning needs, measure competency acquisition, and evaluate students' progress toward meeting provincial learning standards.

competencies: The combined skills, processes, behaviours, and habits of mind that learners use to make sense of the world.

Core competencies are sets of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need to develop in order to engage in deep learning and lifelong learning. Core competencies are evident in every area of learning; however, they manifest themselves uniquely in each discipline. In B.C., there are three Core Competencies: Communication, Thinking (Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking), and Personal and Social.

Curricular competencies are the skills, strategies, and processes that students are expected to develop in a given area of learning at a given level. They represent what students are expected to be able to do as a result of their learning.

content: Content learning standards represent what students are expected to know (knowledge) as a result of their studies in a given year in a given area of learning.

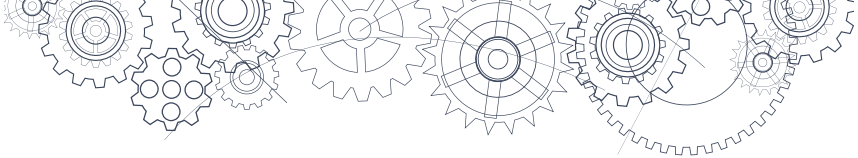
co-ownership: Teachers and students share responsibility for the learning process when students are empowered to take ownership of, and be responsible for, their learning. For example, a student's self-assessment of the Core Competencies supports co-ownership of their learning.

culture of learning: A culture that engages students in a positive learning process and encourages ownership of their learning; a learning environment that is created and sustained to intentionally promote students' continuous learning through facilitation, support, and growth toward independence.

curriculum: B.C.'s provincial curriculum contains the learning standards for each area of learning from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The curriculum describes what students are expected to know, understand, and do at each grade in each area of learning.

differentiated instruction: An approach to learning in which instruction and assessment are based on the specific needs, interests, developmental level, and other learning preferences of the individual student.

formative assessment: The ongoing collection of evidence of learning for the purpose of informing instruction and providing feedback to students to help extend their learning.



growth culture: A school culture that promotes continuous growth and learning for students and educators, and encompasses the attitudes, behaviours, and values they need to achieve their learning goals. Students are encouraged to engage in experiences that are personally meaningful and to highlight their strengths, accomplishments, and growth in areas of learning.

learning cycle: Learning is a continuous process, a cycle, not an event. Learning is a natural outflow of the instruction-assessment-evaluation cycle.

proficiency: The degree to which a person is qualified to take on a task, based on their skillfulness and command of the fundamentals in an area. In B.C., *proficiency* often refers to a student's progress in relation to the learning standards of the curriculum.

reflect: To reflect is to think deeply and at length. As lifelong learners, students are encouraged to think deeply on where they are in their learning journey. They can reflect on their growth as a learner by reviewing their collected demonstrations of learning and thinking about their growth over time. As they review their learning journeys, students can gain clarity about their growth in areas that are personally meaningful.

responsive: Being responsive means being attuned to students' needs and offering timely and positive support. For example, educators are responsive when they use strength-based descriptive feedback to communicate student progress in an ongoing and timely way with students and parents.

self-advocacy: When a person acts on their own behalf, identifying and expressing their needs with a goal of improving their quality of life.

student agency: Students have agency when they are given a voice and choice in what and how they learn. Engagement, motivation, and ownership increase when students are encouraged to explore their interests in personally meaningful ways.

summative assessment: Whereas formative assessments are ongoing throughout the learning cycle, summative assessments usually take place at the end of an instructional period (e.g., at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, program, or school year) to evaluate students' progress in relation to the learning standards of the curriculum.

student ownership: A student's awareness of what they **Know**-can **Do**-and **Understand** as they set learning goals and pursue them with the support of teachers, parents, and peers.

