

Assessment for Project Learning (Primary and Secondary)

Introduction

There could be different ways of assessing what and how students learn in doing projects at both primary and secondary levels. Assessment for project learning should focus on both the process and the learning outcomes. Students should set their learning goals at the beginning for a clear direction. With the criteria of assessment, feedback from teachers can inform students of the gap between their performance and learning goals. Two examples are shown below, one from primary and the other from secondary.

Primary

Assessment criteria and different ways of assessment including self-assessment are important to engage students in reflecting upon their learning process and evaluating their performance. Students can gain insight into how they learn, how they can improve and become increasingly responsible for their own learning.

Background

Task: In PLK Leung Chow Shun Kam Primary School (PM), the students in P1 were to do one project towards the end of the first module 'Me and my friend' in the second term.

Teaching and supporting materials:

Textbook	Small readers
Unit 1 My friends and me	Guess who?
Unit 6 Colours we see	He and I
Unit 5 With my senses	
Unit 8 My pet	Big books
	Where do monsters live?
	Cinderella dressed in yellow
	I am special
	I can read

*Supplementary worksheets on 'third person singular: s/he is/has'

Setting assessment criteria

Assessment criteria were developed based on the learning and teaching focuses. Since students were told not to copy but to express ideas, apply knowledge and skills in their projects, 4 assessment criteria with scoring rubrics were used: language, ideas, skills and attitude. This assessment chart was pasted on the last page of the project.

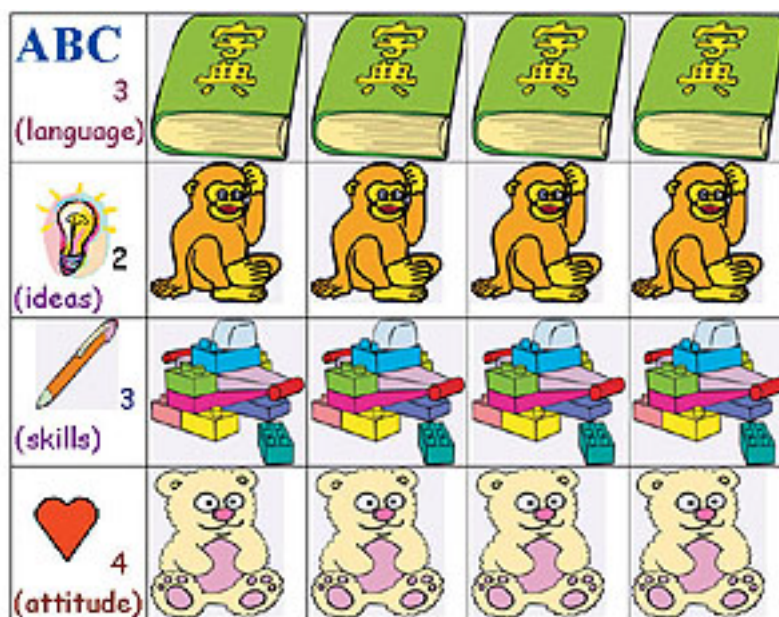
Items to be considered in assessing projects:

1. language: accuracy, appropriateness, application of language
2. ideas: content (e.g. appropriateness, variety),
feelings, creativity

3. skills: e.g. writing skills,
presentation skills (supported by pictures, drawings etc),
organization skills, speaking skills
4. attitude: e.g. willingness to try their best,
working independently / with parents' support,
effort made, neatness

Using self-assessment to enhance sense of achievement

Before the teachers marked the projects, the students were encouraged to do their self-assessment and indicate how they would score themselves. The assessment criteria were explained to the students before they did the projects so that the students knew what they were working towards and what teachers expected of them. Therefore, all students understood what these criteria were about and they could rate themselves by putting numbers against the criteria.





Self-assessment

Teacher assessment and feedback on learning

The teachers marked the projects and rated them according to the same set of criteria. Students' strengths and areas for improvement were identified. Feedback based on the 4 criteria was given to all students.

Examples of teacher's feedback on students' work:

 <p>2 pages from the student's project</p>	<p>Teacher's feedback:</p> <p>The student has all his work printed out from the computer and all pictures are downloaded. The project fails to reflect the student's own effort and creativity. Although the language is correct, the student should add to the project something of his own, use his own writing or drawing. The student's own ideas, effort and creativity are more important and should be valued more.</p>
 <p>1 page from the student's project</p>	<p>Teacher's feedback:</p> <p>Although the drawing is not very attractive, the work reflects the student's own effort. It's more important that the student has tried to apply what he has learnt and write a lot. He also shows some creativity in presenting himself and the work is very interesting.</p>

Source: PLK Leung Chow Shun Kam Primary School (PM)

Secondary

Different modes of assessment can be used to facilitate project learning. A secondary school uses a web-based tool which has four dimensions covering both the process and the product. As well as grading a project work, teacher also gives guidance during the process of learning.

Teacher assessment

Purposes: Grading & giving Guidance	
Dimensions of teacher assessment	Plan B Inquiry Question is well stated in your own words.
	Progress B Information is clearly presented.
	Product C More ideas are expected to be included in the conclusion.
	Presentation C More practice will make it better.

An example of teacher assessment for project learning

Student self-assessment

As well as teacher assessment, student self-assessment can be another powerful mode of assessment for promoting self-reflection. The following shows how a project team grade the skills they have learnt in carrying out a project.

Grade the skills you have learnt in doing this project	
Collaboration	Much
Self-management	Few
Searching Information	Few
Information Technology	Much
Communication	Very much
Critical Thinking	Few
Inquiry	Much

An example of student self-assessment for project learning

Teacher assessment and Student self-assessment

Thirty-five groups of Secondary 3 students used the tool to complete their project works in a school. A mini-survey was conducted for comparing the final grades given by the teachers and the students themselves. The findings are summarised as below:

Teacher assessment: 45.7% of the teachers graded the projects as low grade while 54.3% graded their projects as high.

Student self-assessment: 51.5% of the students graded their own projects as low grade while 48.5% graded their projects as high.

		Student self-assessment		
Teacher assessment		Low	High	Total
	Low	37.2%	8.5%	45.7%
	High	14.3%	40.0%	54.3%
	Total	51.5%	48.5%	100%

Comparison between teacher assessment and student self-assessment

77.2% of the groups received the same grades in both teacher assessment and self-assessment, showing a high level of consistency between these two modes of assessments.

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