Integrated Learning

2011 Assessment Report

Government of South Australia

SACE Board of SA

INTEGRATED LEARNING

2011 ASSESSMENT REPORT

OVERVIEW

Assessment reports give an overview of how students performed in school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 1: Practical

In most cases the materials presented at moderation showed that students were engaged in the practical components of the course and often real-life assessments. Many of the programs focused on physical education or sport, religion, working with outside agencies, information technology, and a range of highly individualised tasks.

In this assessment type the assessment design criteria relating to application were generally well addressed, with the more successful packages presenting a range of evidence to document knowledge, concepts, and skills, including photographs, DVDs, written work, and checklists. At times the moderation panel had difficulty validating teacher marks when the students did not provide clear student evidence of learning aligned to the criteria for judging performance. When checklists from other established subjects, such as Physical Education, are used in isolation, they do not generally meet the learning requirements of this subject. These checklists should be accompanied by other evidence, including examples of peer assessment and self-assessment.

The better responses were able to show clear evidence of investigation and analysis throughout the task. This was particularly evident for those students who had chosen their own area of learning. The evaluation and reflection were generally apparent through the use of journals, multimedia, or self-assessment or peer-assessment sheets. In some cases, however, the responses lacked evidence, particularly those using checklists in isolation. The effective discussions clearly focused on self-assessment and peer assessment, which enabled the students to discuss their own learning in detail.

The specific features within the assessment design criteria *Understanding* were the most challenging component for moderators to confirm assessment grades. In many cases, there was little or no evidence of understanding and explanation of the connections between an aspect of the program focus and the chosen capability. Where task design was clear and showed the process to be taken and the connections that needed to be discussed, the students were more successful in meeting the higher grade bands.

Students provided evidence of their learning in a range of forms to address the criteria for judging performance, including:

- photographs of self in action, with annotations that described learning taking place
- audiovisual recordings
- multimedia presentations
- photographs of created products with explanatory notes
- publications in their original form
- feedback from tutors, mentors, community experts, or audience.

The most successful students — regardless of the focus of their program — provided in their responses authentic evidence of practical involvement, accompanied by some recorded oral, multimedia, or written information which explained the task; their application of the skills, knowledge, and understanding; the connection to their chosen focus or capability; and an analysis of their learning.

Assessment Type 2: Group Activity

This assessment type is designed to assess each student's ability to work collaboratively in a group to plan, organise, and implement a practical and/or theoretical task or project, and to reflect on, and evaluate, collaborative processes and outcomes.

Some successful programs used the group activity to plan, monitor, and evaluate tasks that developed as a result of one or more of the practical tasks; for example, working with community agencies. Others complemented many of the vocational educational and training (VET) options students were undertaking or developing and implementing training programs for participants within the community. These options allowed for clear investigation and analysis, with the better responses demonstrating focused and in-depth analysis using a variety of sources from more than one perspective.

Students relied heavily on written or oral 'reflection and evaluation' journals or questionnaires provided by their teachers to demonstrate their collaboration and their decision-making. In some cases, more evidence of the collaboration would have made it easier for the moderation panel to help confirm teacher grades. Other examples of evidence could include meeting minutes, peer assessment and self-assessment, or multimedia texts.

Generally speaking, however, students were able to provide clear evidence of their involvement in teamwork and were able to reflect on their understanding of their learning as a team member. It was pleasing to note that many students emphasised their understanding of the processes of collaboration and decision-making, as well as reporting on the outcomes of their group work.

Assessment Type 3: Folio and Discussion

For this component, consideration needs to be given to the documentation and/or recording of the evidence of learning. The format of the discussions, especially those filmed, must be easily viewed with adequate sound and each student must be clearly recognisable. This is particularly important to ensure that the moderation panel can confirm student grades. When using electronic forms of evidence, teachers should use the advice about the submission of electronic files that is found in the Learning Area Manual.

The use of a round-table discussion, with students responding to questions from the teacher and using their portfolios to help inform and verify their responses, is now generally well understood by teachers and students. It is important, however, that the discussions held are not too highly scaffolded, as in some cases the questions asked by teachers excluded students from providing evidence in the higher grade levels. This was particularly evident in the explanation of the connections between the program focus and the capability in each chosen key area. Successful students tended to be asked open questions that enabled them to reflect on their learning in specific areas of the program, resulting in a more natural discussion occurring. The highly successful students understood the value of the discussion and took the opportunity to critically evaluate their learning. These students often referred to their portfolios to support their responses.

It must be clear that the portfolio is not simply resubmitting the group and practical tasks. It should, however, allow students to reflect on the program focus and their learning. It does not need to relate directly to other assessments, but it should allow students to demonstrate connections with other parts of the program and their lives. On the SACE website there are some very clear examples of task sheets which will help in understanding of this assessment type.

Some of the very effective portfolios comprised a collection of information, data, or research on a particular focus area from the program of work. For example, some food and catering programs collected and analysed recipes useful for people with specific dietary needs which were then related to the students' chosen capabilities of work and personal development.

The more successful portfolios gave clear instructions to allow students scope to demonstrate evidence against the specific features of the performance standards across all levels. This included discussion preparation to ensure students are guided to successfully discuss the depth, extent, and focus of their learning.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 4: Project

The external assessment task was an opportunity for students to explore an aspect of the program focus and/or capability in a chosen key area and to understand the connections between the program focus and the capability. These projects covered a vast range of topics including sport, work, religion, ethics, information technology, biographies, and a range of very personal and individualised responses.

Generally, the specific features related to *Application* were completed successfully. Projects which met performance standards to a high level often coupled the research with personal knowledge and information acquired through research to create the project. This was particularly successful in practical tasks like constructing light switches or repairing cars. Evidence in diagrams or photographs supported by written descriptions of the process of learning was an effective method, allowing clear evidence of application of a range of knowledge, concepts, and skills for a purpose. A well-designed and well-formulated guiding question also helped in this process.

The specific features in the *Investigation and Analysis* criteria were completed to varying levels. The most successful projects showed real strength in the area of investigation, with students speaking to community members, or using surveys and interviews as evidence combined with Internet research. This allowed for a wider and more developed investigation, rather than what was produced from a basic Internet

search or teacher-provided notes. Bibliographies are also necessary to ensure validity of sources.

The analysis of concepts, ideas, and skill development from different perspectives posed some problems for students. One successful technique used was to analyse information from a customer and/or supervisor's perspective, as well as their own. This allowed performance standards to be met to a high level.

Most successful projects were able to show successfully communicated ideas and informed opinions. This was completed in a range of ways, with oral responses being used to enable students who are less confident in their written literacy skills to communicate their ideas and thoughts. It must be ensured, however, that word-counts and time restrictions are adhered to.

The understanding and explanation of the connections between the program focus and the capability in each chosen key area was an issue which needs to be addressed further if students are to meet performance standards to a high level. Generally those students who followed the SACE recommendation of presenting the project in two parts, an outcome and an explanation, were able to meet the performance standards to a high level.

Those projects that were of a higher standard made clear and in-depth connections between the project and the capabilities. This was particularly evident in the capabilities of work and personal development. A clear understanding of the nature of capabilities is necessary if students are to make these connections, so well-designed task sheets are vital.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

Generally, the work was presented according to SACE guidelines. It would be beneficial for students to include the word-count on all tasks to support the moderation process. Any tasks submitted on discs, including websites, must be easy to access and clearly labelled as individual students' work.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The nature of Integrated Learning ensures that a vast array of topics and methodologies are covered within the subject scope. This was particularly evident this year. All subjects can be incorporated successfully into Integrated Learning, but to ensure success, performance standards and assessment design criteria must be met.

It was evident in all tasks that, where task design was clear and showed the process to be followed by students, the students generally performed more successfully against performance standards. There are many examples of task design on the SACE website across a range of focus areas to ensure that this can occur.

Integrated Learning
Chief Assessor