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## OUR PHILOSOPHY ON ASSESSMENT

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At Platon School we use assessment in order to follow and analyze the different stages of the learning process. Assessment is connected with the whole teaching and learning processes.

We assess all five elements of the pyp: knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and action. The assessment policy is constantly revised and circulated within the whole school community, parents and teachers. By assessing, we analyze what the students have learned and the effectiveness of our written and taught curriculum, aiming to reach the standards and desired aims.

Assessment allows us to identify what the students understand- are able to do and to set goals for the future. It is also a tool that formulates and standardizes our instruction as well as our program of inquiry and contributes to the achievement of our teaching and learning expectations.

The purpose of assessment in the PYP is to guide teachers' planning and instruction. At our School, we believe that by assessing we can support students' essential learning needs.

The planning of our lessons is structured according to our assessment perspective, primarily based on the aims and objectives that reach the desired goals. Being aware of the goals in teaching, the teacher works towards their achievement and thus is always prepared to evaluate and adapt teaching methods accordingly.

The students, on the other hand, knowing from the beginning the elements and criteria of their assessment, learn where to focus their study, become organized and feel confident. As a result they learn how to assess themselves effectively.

Parents might find it useful, as well, as they will be able to understand the level of their child's learning progress and development.

# BELIEFS

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## In Platon school

### A. We use assessment :

- to identify our students' knowledge , understanding and skills and the level of their learning process.
- as we consider it to be helpful for goal setting.
- to strengthen our teaching and guide our instruction.
- as a continuous and frequent process , in which teachers and students are involved, using various methods ( rubrics , checklists , benchmarks and exemplars , continuums , observations and discussions).
- to identify progress and improve practices of both teachers and students.
- to check students' prior knowledge in order to clarify what they already know, what they can do and plan our teaching process accordingly (pre – assessment , anecdotal records) .
- bearing in mind that each student's development in every area of learning is different. That is why each child's assessment varies according to his/ her individual abilities, skills and knowledge.

### B. The types of assessment are :

- **FORMATIVE:** is directly connected to teaching and learning. It takes into account what students already know and plan the next stage of instruction, accordingly. It is constant and gains feedback from every activity to inform the instruction and planning of the next ones.
- **SUMMATIVE:** at the end of each unit we let our students choose the way with which they will prove their perception of the central idea of the unit. What we consider important is for students to give reliable proof of deep understanding, no matter how they will choose to show it (through presentations, speeches and project work).

**ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS**

**PEOPLE INVOLVED**

**DOCUMENTATION (SECTIONS OF ASSESSMENT)**

Assessing (set aims)	School community	Units of Inquiry
Recording (organizing)	Teachers	Anecdotal records Teacher made tests and quizzes.
Reporting (evaluating-presenting the results)	Students	Student portfolios Report cards
	Parents	Student-led conferences

## PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT

**The implementation of effective assessment aims at:**

The promotion of students' learning and problem solving techniques.

The provision of information about students' learning  
(Stimulating the student's interest and level of inquiry)

The evaluation of the Program of Studies  
(Assessing the effectiveness of the program, based on the aims and objectives in learning)

**The contribution of effective assessment is for:**

<p><b>The students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to demonstrate and apply their learning.</li> <li>use their own strategies and express their points of view.( Opinionating)</li> <li>understand what their needs are and build confidence in their own work.(Building their self – esteem. )</li> <li>be based on their prior knowledge to move on with the inquiry process.( Constructive learning through research and information gathering)</li> </ul>	<p><b>The teachers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to clarify their students' needs and guide their instruction accordingly.</li> <li>to adapt their teaching to the different learning abilities and styles.</li> <li>to define what they expect from the students and help them set goals.</li> <li>to evaluate whether students' cognitive development is proportional to their age.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The program of studies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to define areas in need of further explanation.</li> <li>to elicit which activities actually lead students to learning.</li> <li>to allow teachers to reconsider the learning strategies they used , revise those that have not been effective , remove them from the program and think of new ones.</li> <li>to be adapted to the student and community needs.</li> </ul>	

# ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

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## 1. UNITS OF INQUIRY

- The purpose and the means of assessment are clearly explained to the children from the beginning of the UOI.(Setting the educational aims)
- Provides feedback on the learning process.(Evaluating material according to the aims)
- All 5 essential elements are assessed.

**A. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** evaluates inquiry, learner profile, student growth.

- Pre – assessment
- Student reflections
- Student conversations
- Classroom participation
- Individual and group information

TOOLS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anecdotal records</li><li>• Student and teacher created rubrics</li><li>• Exemplars</li><li>• Checklists</li><li>• Continuums</li><li>• Portfolios</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Classroom observations</li><li>• Performance assessment</li><li>• Process – focused assessment</li><li>• Selected responses ( quizzes and tests)</li><li>• Open – ended tasks</li></ul>

**B) SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** The teacher defines expectations clearly and the students are asked to demonstrate the desired result, based on a model and a learning strategy of their choice.

- At the end of each Unit of Inquiry.
- Students prove their acquisition of learning (Special emphasis on: Knowledge, Concepts and Skills).
- Teachers can evaluate their students’ understanding of the central idea and of the lines of inquiry.
- Includes:
  - a) Gathering and combination of data and information.
  - b) Knowledge application through specific process.

- To evaluate students' acquired knowledge of an entire unit the following tools and strategies are used:

TOOLS	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rating scales ( numerical scores, letter grades, developmental proficiency scale)</li> <li>• Narrative reports</li> <li>• Checklists</li> <li>• Verbal conferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Individual or group projects</li> <li>• Performance</li> <li>• Student initiated action</li> </ul>

## **2. LEARNER PROFILE**

- Kind of assessment driven by students. Parents can contribute by guiding their children towards reaching specific goals each time.
- Students demonstrate the attributes of the learner's profile.
- Students develop attributes by self – reflection and goal setting.

### **A. LEARNER PROFILE in the early years.**

- Various activities and routines are used in order the children to reflect on the IB learner profile. An activity that we consider to be effective for these ages is "Learning the IB profile" through stories.
- The story of the month focuses on one attribute and the students choose their way to reflect on this specific attribute.
- At the end of the month students are rewarded for achieving the goal.
- Our target is to encourage students collect rewards for all ten attributes and keep them in their portfolios together with the accompanying reflections.

### **B. LEARNER PROFILE in grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>.**

- There is a self – assessment report for each student, based on the IB learner profile. It's a simplified and adjusted to the needs and requirements of every grade level edition of the PYP learner profile based report given to the parents, at the end of each trimester. (December, March, June).

- Students keep their self – assessment report in their portfolio and fill it in after every reflection.
- Teacher has informed his/her students and adjusted his/her teaching so as the targets, he/she has defined for the development of certain attributes, skills and attitudes, through the UOI, are reached.
- The aim is for the student to prove that he/she has achieved all five essential elements combined with the attributes of the Learner Profile, by the end of the school year.

### **3. PORTFOLIOS**

#### **A. The role of portfolios in PLATON School.**

- Form an assessment of collection of students' work and shows development of the child in all subject areas.
- Identify students' growth, creative thinking and reflection.
- Provide a continuum for them to track their learning process, helps them reflect on their learning and define their growth as learners.
- Provide data to parents, teachers and students on students' progress, either for individual reflection or as members of a team.
- Students, teachers and parents can have a clear picture of students' development and improvement, as well as of their strengths and weaknesses.

#### **B. The contents of PLATON students' portfolios:**

- From nursery to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, students include both works their teachers have chosen and works they feel proud of in their portfolios.
- In both cases the works chosen are representative of their level of acquisition of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes.
- The object of the portfolio each student carries with him/her from one grade to the next one is not only to have a picture of his/her progress in all 5 essential elements but also to have approached a transdisciplinary theme from the perspective of all PYP key concepts.
- Our program of inquiry is formed accordingly (big ideas, adjusted to the grade level and to a constantly developing degree of difficulty, are examined under the six transdisciplinary themes), so that by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, students will be properly prepared for the Exhibition.

## 1. Portfolios in the early years.

- From the nursery (3 year olds) to Kindergarten, portfolios are used as an assessment tool. Drawings and art work relevant to the Units of Inquiry are included, as well as children's monthly activities.
- Children choose with their teacher's guidance the work they want to be included in their portfolios and which declares their progress.
- Portfolios are viewed and examined by the parents during the parent - teacher meetings.

## 2. Portfolios in grades 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>.

- Portfolios are plastic folders with transparencies. The student writes a text with which he/she introduces him/herself and sticks a photo of him/her in the first transparency.
- The transdisciplinary theme, the title and the central idea of the UOI are written on colored pages divided with tabs.
- Students' reflections are placed behind each UOI. They either follow teacher's guidelines or is the student's successful choice of reflection.
- Students' works and reflections for every UOI can be from 3 to 5 and always include various written forms , depending on the grade level (argumentative, advertising posters, invitations, instructions, fictions and stories, letter writing , narratives ),in every subject involved in the specific UOI. Texts are usually accompanied by artistic performances.
- At the end of every UOI students explain the process they followed for their reflections, mention what they accomplished, what they found difficult and fill in their self – assessment report.
- **Language arts (Language A, Language B, Literature):** reading, oral language, book response, evaluated writing samples based on exemplars and/or guided writing.
- **Math:** any relevant to the UOI math reflections, problem – solving pieces, reflections on: data handling, measurement, shape and space, pattern and function, numbers.
- **Special classes (art, music, computer / social/ environmental studies, physical education):** works and reflections from these subjects are assessed by rubrics and checklists (either as single subjects or as subjects involved in the UOI).

# RECORDING

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- Grade level teams keep copies of all assessments, formative and summative.
- Data to be recorded are considered to be photos, videos or audio tapes of activities, rubrics, anecdotal note taking, work samples that have been collected , scores , copies of Learner profile based self – assessment records ,tests and quizzes.
- Not everybody has accessibility to formative assessments or to records kept aside from student portfolios.
- These documents are only accessible to the student and his/her parents, the teaching and administrating staff as well as to specialists that might be working with him/ her (speech therapists, psychologists, special educators).
- The teacher’s portfolio is a folder kept by all homeroom teachers and contains anecdotal records of each unit of inquiry’s process, composed from photos of the basic unit’s activities and written definitions about the aim of each activity.

# REPORTING

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## Conferences

### **A. Parent-Teacher:**

It is an opportunity to meet with the parents, learn more about the child and share evidence of the student’s learning. In addition it is a time for setting the goals with the parents and sharing concerns. These conferences take place six times a year. The first meeting is usually held in the fall and parents are informed about the requirements of the new grade. At the end of every trimester (December, March, June) parents receive their child’s formal report. The formal report cards are adjusted to each grade level’s needs, using the scope and sequence documents. The IB learner profile, conceptual understanding, skills, actions and attitude are

assessed as well. The grading tools used are mostly rubrics as well as brief descriptive comments.

The rest three conferences are done in the middle of the trimesters. The teachers present to the parents the work that they have been doing in the current unit(s) of inquiry and inform them about the teaching and learning in the PYP classroom, as well as several other aspects of the IB philosophy.

### **B. Teacher-Student:**

Conferences of that kind take place on a daily basis. Teachers guide students, providing them with feedback on their learning, helping them to set goals and giving them advice on how to move further with their learning.

### **C. Student-led conferences**

The first student led conference is set to be in Spring 2016, for Grades 4-5 . Students' parents will be invited to the classroom. Children will demonstrate their learning using different kinds of tools. They will do oral presentations, power point presentations and show them what they have learned throughout the year, highlighting their strengths and personal inclinations, having their portfolios as guides. These conferences are planned to take place twice a year, one at the middle and one at the end of the school year. The plan is student-led conferences to begin in Grades 1-3, from next year.

### **D. Assessment for different learning styles**

At Platon School, students with different learning styles and abilities are assessed differently. The assessment strategies and tools used for these students vary and are appropriately adjusted to their needs with the help of a specialist.