

The Story of Learning at HKIS High School

***Changes we made in 2014-15 to align
instruction, assessment, grading and
reporting...**

Mr. Brent Brayko, Associate Principal for Teaching & Learning

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From...

- Few if any 2nd chances
- Zeroes
- Extra credit
- Deductions of points for every late assignment
- Scores on everything whether they got it or not & including in a final grade
- Behaviors mixed in with achievement/proficiency
- Rewarding compliance
- Averaging a time period's worth of work to determine a grade based solely on points

Averaging...

“...I am reminded of the statistician who drowned while wading across a river with an average depth of three feet.”

Averaging grades...

- often does not result in a fair representation of what the student knows, understands and can do, because...
- ...‘outlying’ grades (anomalies) have a disproportionate impact on the grade.
- does not adequately account for growth in learning and a student’s final performance

To...

- More consistent approaches to assessment, grading and reporting. (Course teams now meet regularly during collaboration times)
- Focus on learning rather than a focus solely on grades.
- More student self-reflection of their own learning.
- Understanding difference between formative work (practice) and summative work (measure of learning at a point in time)
- A more Standards-referenced mindset with the goal of PROFICIENCY in the Learning Targets.

Standards-referenced mindset?

Standards based instruction is about more students reaching proficiency through authentic demonstrations of learning rather than accumulating points and finding that average whether it is practice (formative) or “final” (summative).

Formative assessment (support learning)

Assessment tasks (homework and in-class) that are designed to give students feedback over time that will enable them to set goals and move forward with their learning as well as inform the teacher on their instruction.

****opposed to making a final judgement about a student's ability.***

Summative assessment (certify learning)

Assessment tasks that are designed to capture a student's performance at one point in time after instruction and to make a judgment about the student's proficiency according to course Standards/Learning Targets. ***These assessments are primarily used to inform report card grades.***

But...

- we still have grades - ✓
- we still have GPA - ✓
- we still have rigor - ✓
- students still get to college - ✓

From UCLA (sentiment from all...)

“HKIS is a strong high school, with a solid reputation around the world. Universities are aware of the challenging nature of your school, and the successful track-record of previous graduates reinforces its well-deserved reputation. The changes will not impact on a student’s chances of admission to a selective university or program of choice.”

Who has informed our thinking?

Grant Wiggins

Robert Marzano

Douglas Reeves

Thomas Guskey

Rick Wormelli

Rick Dufour

Bambi Betts

Dylan William

Ken O'Connor

Harvard University's Project Zero - Howard Gardner, David Perkins, Ron
Ritchhart et al

“A grade should be...

- 1) a measurement of what a student **knows, understands and can do.***
- 2) a demonstration of a student’s **growth in her/his learning.***
- 3) a way in which students are made aware exactly how they are performing according to the published content, knowledge and skills standards for each class.*
- 4) a way to demonstrate **how a student can improve.***
- 5) consistent, accurate, **meaningful, and supportive of learning.**”*

Ken O’Connor

Are we on our own? NO - many of our sister schools have been and are making research-based changes, including but not limited to...

Chinese International School

Canadian International School

American International School Hong Kong

Hong Kong Academy

Singapore American School

Shanghai American School

International School of Manila

UNIS Hanoi

American School Bombay

International School of Kuala Lumpur

Zurich International School

Washington International School

International School of Amsterdam

Practices we have adopted

- recording late or missing summative work with an 'Insufficient Evidence' vs. "0". MUST be done to get credit for a course. (Doctor's note needed for a missed summative)
- measure and report effort, behavior, participation etc using the "[Approaches to Learning](#)" rubric. (***Reported out quarterly via the report card link - 1st one coming in late October before conferences!***)
- course teams meeting on Collaboration Days to create common assessments, calibrate results, use data to inform instruction, discuss instructional strategies...
- students doing much more self-reflection and self-assessment
 - Allows students to see importance of their own learning process (meta cognition)
 - Can identify what they did well, what they had problems with
 - Provides opportunities to come up with solutions and strategies to improve their learning

Practices we have adopted

- commitment to looking at the most common and sustained level of achievement, growth in learning and recent evidence of learning which is then correlated to the Grade Descriptor language which describes achievement level. (Professional Judgment)

'A' grades

Consistently and with great accuracy, and in various assessments students have the ability to...

demonstrate knowledge

analyse

apply knowledge

synthesize

create

transfer skills and knowledge

work in new and maybe ambiguous situations

What does an A mean?

Knowledge and Concepts - The student demonstrates an especially high level of knowledge and deep understanding of the relevant concepts and content associated with all key aspects of the learning standards.

Communication, Problem Solving and Critical Thinking - The student distinctly creates and communicates effective analysis and solutions in a variety of contexts with fluency and at an especially high level of quality. The student readily applies knowledge and skills to new and unfamiliar situations with strong and convincing evidence and/or explanations.

What does a B mean?

Knowledge and Concepts - The student demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the concepts and content associated with most key aspects of the learning standards.

Communication, Problem Solving and Critical Thinking - The student often creates and communicates analysis, solutions to problems, and applications in a variety of contexts. The student uses sufficient evidence to support explanations. The student applies knowledge and skills to most new situations with evidence or explanations. The student may be highly capable in some contexts and some aspects of the learning focus, and less capable in others.

What does a C mean?

Knowledge and Concepts -The student demonstrates limited knowledge with significant gaps in content, knowledge or skills and understanding of the concepts and content associated with key aspects of the learning standards.

Communication, Problem Solving and Critical Thinking
The student does not yet create and effectively communicate analysis, solutions to problems and applications without support. The student is unable to apply knowledge and targeted skills in new situations.

Subjectivity and objectivity

“...I conclude that we have to see grading not as simply a numerical, mechanical exercise, but primarily as an exercise in professional judgement”.

Ken O'Connor

- There is and always has been a degree of subjectivity in assessment and grading. That is part of the art of teaching.

Homework

- homework is formative assessment - practice and preparation.
- should be checked/scored with feedback which informs students of progress and teacher for instruction.
- points for completing homework do not compute in the final grade.
- completion of homework will feature in the Approaches to Learning report.
- homework should be differentiated - one size and type does not suit all students.
- homework should be meaningful - not busywork.
- homework and other formative work for class preparation or in-class work can be considered in final grade determination if directly linked to standards/learning targets and aligned to summative expectations (borderline situations)

How can I keep track of my child's learning progress?

- Schoology - course grades section
 - Look for the feedback
 - Be aware that formative work may still show up as a “number” but most often the number is NOT what matters - it is the feedback!
 - The number often correlates to a category on a rubric and the program is simply adding those numbers - it is NOT a percentage.
- Email teachers if questions/concerns

Report cards will...

- be available online at mid-year (after winter break) and end of year.
- include a course scope (what was covered).
- include checkpoint grades at mid-year (final if a semester course) *based primarily on evidence from summatives to that point.
- have ratings according to the Approaches to Learning document *and possibly specific comments related to the ATL's if there are issues.

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