

Teacher-Librarians Assessment and Evaluation

Students from K–12 are all expected to participate in rich models of inquiry and learn the necessary steps to research and communicate their learning. It is important for teacher-librarians to not only be part of the planning, development and delivery of an inquiry project, but to also take part in developing and applying assessment strategies with clear, directive feedback to support summative evaluations.

Assessment, diagnostic or formative assessment is continuous throughout the teaching-learning cycle as students demonstrate their level of understanding, thinking, communication and application of the subject expectations. Overall curriculum expectations are graded or evaluated for a mark that “counts.” However, the process and assessment along the way are equally – if not more – important.

In essence, as we guide students through the stages of research, we are actually assessing. Conferencing with students, questioning and providing rich feedback that moves students to further understanding are all forms of formative assessment. What we need to do is formalize these steps to provide students, teachers and parents with the documentation for reporting this progress.

The performance task or culminating activity is an inquiry model which both elementary and secondary teachers and teacher-librarians use to address and meet curricular expectations. The first part generally introduces a scenario, which places students within a problem-solving situation requiring in-depth research to find an answer or solution to the problem. Issues and concerns with surface inquiry questions, incomplete projects, poor use of resources or problems with plagiarism can be avoided with proper assessment strategies throughout the project.

A well-designed performance task or culminating activity can be directly related to high student achievement on a summative evaluation. The project should address overall Ministry expectations with unit lessons clearly linked to specific expectations. The final evaluation can be created and shared with students in the form of a rubric used to evaluate overall

expectations. With levelled criteria, students will be able to determine the targets or goals of a project, which will give them greater control over their learning and may increase their motivation to learn and work to the best of their abilities.

It is recognized that not all situations will allow for full-time partnering or a collaborative model where a teacher-librarian is able to work with the classroom teacher to develop, plan and deliver all parts. Nevertheless, in whichever stage the teacher-librarian has an entry point, they should ensure that they have assessment strategies ready to inform their own teaching as well as pass on their assessment data to the classroom teacher.

Opportunities to offer diagnostic and formative assessment and summative evaluations within the research process could include the following:

- ◆ Before the official start of a performance task or culminating activity, the teacher-librarian should do a quick diagnostic with the classroom teacher and the students to determine where the students are in their overall understanding of the research process and what level of familiarity they possess about the school library in general. This could be a fast question and answer session, email or general discussion. This information will assist with the entry point for the library visit. Perhaps a library orientation lesson will be needed to familiarize the students with the various resources available.
- ◆ In Stage One of the research process, teacher-librarians can use a variety of tools to collect data to inform their teaching. Diagnostic assessments can be done in the form of a KWL chart, pen/paper questionnaire, oral questioning, or response technology (clickers), which can be used to activate prior knowledge and inform the teacher-librarian of the skills or content information, that need to be taught.
- ◆ During the development of an inquiry question, students should be given explicit feedback on their overall question, for example,