

How High School Teachers in Victoria, BC Are Implementing British Columbia's New Assessment Framework in Their Classrooms

Ariel U'Chong Muirhead



Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Context

2016

- British Columbia begins to rollout its revised curriculum from K-9
- Content-based, competency-driven
- Requires an assessment framework that reflects the new values

2019

- Draft K-9 Student Reporting Policy published
- Standards-based grading assessment model introduced
- Provincial Proficiency Scale introduced
- Pilot programs begin around the province

Proficiency Scale	→			
	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
	The student demonstrates an initial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a partial understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a complete understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.	The student demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the concepts and competencies relevant to the expected learning.

From "DRAFT K-9 Student Reporting Policy (2019): Handbook for Piloting Schools and Districts," by British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2019, p. 6.

2023

- JULY/AUGUST**
- K-12 Student Reporting Order and supplementary resources for educators published
- SEPTEMBER**
- New reporting guidelines mandated in all schools and grades across the province

Research Question

How have high school teachers in Victoria begun implementing the new assessment framework and the provincial proficiency scale in their own classroom assessment models?

Importance

The experiences, successes, and challenges of these teachers will be useful to colleagues, educational partners, and the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care.

Standards-Based Grading (SBG) Assessment

- Desired learning is broken into grade-level standards
- Students are assessed using a scale with broad ordered categories (like a proficiency scale)
- A student's proficiency is based on the evidence of learning they show for each standard
- Work habits and behaviour is assessed separately

Methodology

- Multiple case studies allowed for data to be analyzed individually and compared to data from other participants
- Semi-structured interviews provided participants the opportunity to describe their practices in their own voice
- Data was analyzed using thematic data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Sampling Criteria

- High school teachers
- Taught in Greater Victoria School District #61
- Had experience using SBG and/or the Proficiency Scale in their classrooms

Participants

	Tim Spray	Caroline Baldwin	Emily Mathias	Graham McLaren
School	Oak Day High School	Reynolds Secondary School	Lambert Park Secondary School	Mount Douglas Secondary
Years of Experience	25	28	12	23
Subject Area	Mathematics	English Chemistry	English French	ADST

Conclusions

Study Significance

- Changing assessment practices in BC is important and necessary to support the academic and emotional success of our students
- Implementing authentic, student-centered classroom assessment frameworks is the responsibility of all educators. Supporting educators during this transition is the responsibility of educational stakeholders.

Recommendations

Recommendations for teachers around the province:

- Don't hesitate to jump in!
- Take all opportunities to collaborate with colleagues
- Advocate for useful professional development opportunities

Recommendations for Districts/Educational Partners

- Create opportunities to share strategies and infrastructure, both online (i.e., resource sharing platforms) and in-person (i.e., conferences and workshops)

Biggest Takeaway

- Changing classroom assessment is difficult work
- Borrowing existing strategies/infrastructure can make it easier
- However, doing the work is actually beneficial, as it helps the teacher develop and refine their assessment philosophy and align it to their practice

Summary of Assessment Models

Competency Charts

- Used by Caroline and Graham
- Heavily reliant on infrastructure* (Google Sheets)
- One competency chart per student, with curricular competencies for the course
- As students complete assessments, their competency chart is shaded according to the proficiency they have demonstrated
- Students can self-assessment by shading in green, teachers use evidence of learning and student self-assessment to aid their own assessment of the competency

Colour-Coded Gradebooks and Digital Portfolios

- Used by Tim
- Heavily reliant on infrastructure* (Google Docs and Google Sheets)
- Content assessed with the proficiency scale and recorded in a colour-coded gradebook
- Green = Proficient
- Yellow = Developing
- Red = Emerging
- Students complete a digital portfolio throughout the course where they self-assess and provide textual/pictorial evidence for their growth in the curricular competencies

Google Classroom Portfolios

- Used by Emily
- NOT heavily reliant on infrastructure*
- Student work is submitted and assessed on Google Classroom
- At the end of the term, student proficiency is determined by collaboratively looking at the portfolio of work accumulated and progress shown

*Infrastructure: elaborate teacher-built and -maintained electronic tools used for recording student proficiency

Significant Findings

Philosophical Convergence

- Despite minimal collaboration or reference, the assessment philosophies of all participants significantly overlapped, and overlapped with the documents released by the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care in summer 2023

Notable Themes

- Learning is a process
- Students should be involved in their own assessment
- Students should be at the centre of teacher decision-making

Assessment Can Take Many Forms

- May highly rely or minimally rely on infrastructure
- And encouraging finding, suggesting every teacher will be able to implement a classroom assessment model that works with their teaching style

The Issue of Time

Changing assessment in BC is:

- Necessary (to meet the provincial mandate and align with the values of the revised curriculum)
- Important (to student academic and emotional success)

However, making these changes requires an undue amount of teachers' time in order to complete both practical work (i.e., creating resources) and mental work (i.e., self-reflection, development of assessment philosophy)

References

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*, 77-101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp0630a

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2019a). DRAFT K-9 student reporting policy (2019): Handbook for piloting schools and districts. Retrieved from British Columbia's Curriculum website: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/classroom-assessment/student-reporting-policy-pilot>

Acknowledgements

Sincerest thanks to my supervisor Dr. Kathy Sanford for her expertise, guidance, compassion, and support, and to my committee members Dr. Tim Hopper and Dr. Kristin Mimick for their excellent feedback.

Thank you to all of my participants for sparing some of their precious time to share their passion with a fellow assessment nerd.