



COSTA RICA INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY ASSESSMENT POLICY

The aim of assessment at Costa Rica International Academy is to provide a positive, continuous and supportive mechanism that promotes and improves student learning and achievement, guides instruction and practice, and evaluates program as well as instructional effectiveness.

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

We, at Costa Rica International Academy, understand that:

- The primary purpose of assessment is to improve and encourage student learning***
Good assessment is based on a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and how they might best achieve these. It sets out to measure what matters most.
- Assessment works best when it is used to inform planning and teaching and is a continuous, on-going process.***
Student learning is best fostered when assessment involves a linked series of activities undertaken over time, so that progress is monitored towards the intended course goals and the achievement of relevant standards.
- Assessment should be based on an understanding of how students learn***
Assessment is most effective when it reflects the fact that learning is a complex process that is multi-dimensional, integrated and revealed in student performance over time.
- Good assessment provides useful information to report credibly to parents on student achievement***
A variety of assessment methods provide teachers with evidence of particular student strengths and weaknesses. Teachers then can report to parents on how far their child has progressed during the year, where they are compared to the relevant standards, and can discuss what the student must do to improve performance.
- Good assessments are directly related to learning outcomes/curriculum standards and are criterion based***
Assessment works best when it is based on clear statements of purpose and goals for the course, the standards which students are expected to achieve, and the criteria against which we measure success. Assessment criteria in particular needs to be understandable and explicit so students know what is expected of them from each assessment they encounter. CRIA utilizes the Virginia Standards of Learning and the Advanced Placement course standards. Any deviation from these standards must be approved by the Director prior to instruction.
- Good assessment uses a wide range of multiple strategies and tools which include assessment in an authentic/contextual manner.***
It is generally the case that a single assessment instrument will not tell us all we need to know about student achievement and how it can be improved. We therefore need to be familiar with a variety of assessment tools so we can match them closely to the type of information we seek.
- Assessment methods used should be valid, reliable and consistent***
Assessment instruments and processes should directly measure what they are intended to measure. They should include the possibility of moderation between teachers where to enhance objectivity and contribute to a shared understanding of the judgments that are made.
- Assessment engages the learner in the reflection of their learning and allows students to receive feedback to improve understanding***
All assessment methods should allow students to receive timely and meaningful feedback on their learning and performance so assessment serves as a developmental activity aimed at improving student learning. Assessment should also provide students and staff with opportunities to reflect on both their practice and their learning overall.

PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning.

Effective assessments allow students to:

- Have criteria known and understood in advance
- Understand and learn from errors and misunderstandings
- Reinforce reflection of own learning and growth and partake in peer and self-assessment
- Gain motivation and confidence
- Take ownership of learning and personal development / become independent learners
- Build capacity to use assessment in their own learning / identify areas of strengths and areas for improvement
- Challenge themselves to synthesize and apply learning to new situations/problems
- Demonstrate competencies in the desired outcomes / highlight strengths

Effective assessments enable teachers to:

- Determine degrees of prior knowledge before connecting new learning
- Ascertain degrees of understanding at various stages of the learning process
- Identify and support learning differences and learning styles
- Plan the next stages in the learning process
- Monitor and modify our curriculum, our teaching and our assessment practices

Effective assessments provide parents with:

- The opportunity to be partners in the learning process
- Accurate information on their children's progress
- Accurate information on their children's strengths, and areas in need of support
- Information to assist their children in planning for the future, both immediate and longer term

Effective assessments provide curriculum leaders with:

- Data necessary for effective curriculum evaluation and revision

Effective assessments provide other schools with:

- Data necessary for admissions and grade/year placement decisions
- The opportunity to place students effectively within a learning continuum

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING COLLECTED IN FOUR WAYS:

External Assessments*	Common Assessments
<p>Grades K-2: Each year, students write the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests in September and again in May for Reading and Mathematics.</p> <p>Grades 3-8: Each year, students write the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) in September and May for Reading, Language Usage and Mathematics.</p> <p>Grade 9-11: Each year, students write the PSAT test</p> <p>Grades 11-12: Students applying to universities sit for the SAT in Oct., Dec. or May or the ACT in Oct.</p> <p>Grades 10-12: Qualified students write a variety of AP exams in May</p> <p>*These tests are not used as part of a student’s evaluation (report card) but rather as a way for the CRIA to make program improvements.</p>	<p>Tasks designed by a group of teachers, given to all students across a grade level or course.</p> <p>Examples: Reading A-Z benchmark assessments, grade level writing prompts, common exams, rubrics</p>

Unit Assessments	On-going Assessments
<p>Teacher-designed tasks; given after a ‘chunk’ of learning has taken place, to assess achievement of unit standards. Examples: products, performances, tests, projects</p> <p>At least 2 unit assessments are used per quarter.</p> <p>Semester Exams are given during the last week of each semester. All students will be provided with a Study Guide for each course for which there is a semester exam. No further assessments will be conducted the week prior to exams.</p>	<p>Teacher-designed strategies for collecting evidence of standards related to learning processes, affective standards.</p> <p>Examples: observation of students working, homework*, running records</p> <p>*Homework is assessed on completion/effort and is practice of content or skills learned in class or is used to prepare students for further discussions in class. Guidelines for time spent on homework at each grade level can be found in the Family Handbook.</p>

GRADING PRACTICES

HS	MS	ES
<p>All High-School Level Courses</p> <p>Level 1: 50%</p> <p>Level 2: 25%</p> <p>Level 3: 25%</p> <p>Semester Grade: 80% course work from above + 20% semester exam</p>	<p>All MS Level Courses</p> <p>Level 1: 40%</p> <p>Level 2: 30%</p> <p>Level 3: 30%</p> <p>Semester Grade: 90% course work from above + 10% semester exam</p>	<p>3rd, 4th & 5th Grade</p> <p>Level 1: 35%</p> <p>Level 2: 30%</p> <p>Level 3: 35%</p>

Level 1 Assessments: unit tests, major essays/projects/papers, laboratories. There will be between 2 and 5 Level 1 assessments per quarter.

Level 2 Assessments: minor quizzes, mini-projects/essays/papers

Level 3 Assessments: work processes such as homework, participation, organization

REPORTING PRACTICES

<p>Primary School Grades Pre-K – 2</p> <p>Two full Report Cards per year; two Progress Reports at end of Q1 and Q3.</p>	Value	Description				
	1	The student consistently and independently demonstrates and applies a proficient level of understanding of the required knowledge, concepts, and skills. Understanding is accurate and thorough.				
	2	The student consistently demonstrates a considerable level of understanding of the required knowledge, concepts, and skills. The student requires minimal support to demonstrate this understanding.				
	3	The student is developing a greater understanding of the required knowledge, concepts, and skills. The student requires frequent support to demonstrate understanding.				
	4	The student has limited understanding of the required knowledge, concepts, and skills. The student requires continual one-on-one support to demonstrate this understanding.				
<p>Primary School Grades 3 – 5</p> <p>Two full Report Cards per year; two Progress Reports at end of Q1 and Q3; continual access to Quickschools.</p>	Letter	Percentage	<p>Secondary School Grades 6-12</p> <p>Two full Report Cards per year; Continual access to Quickschools.</p>	Letter	Grade Pt	Percentage
	A	90 – 100			A	4.0
	B	80 – 89		B	3.0	80 – 89
	C	70 – 79		C	2.0	70 – 79
	D	60 – 69		D	1.0	60 – 69
	F	0 – 59		F	0.0	0 – 59
				An additional 1 point is added to the GPA for an Advanced Placement course (AP) and 0.5 points for Honors classes.		

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Once in October and again in March, Parent/Teacher Conferences are held for Toddler to Grade 12. Meetings with individual teachers can be scheduled to discuss student performance and progress. Individual meetings at any time with a teacher can also be arranged by appointment.

Assessment Policy drafted: March, 2015

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