

Integrated Learning

2010 ASSESSMENT REPORT

Flexible Learning Area



Government
of South Australia

SACE
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INTEGRATED LEARNING

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Introduction

This report communicates the performance of students enrolled in Integrated Learning 2010, and provides information and suggestions useful to teachers and students involved in Integrated Learning 2011.

For the past five years, Stage 2 Integrated Learning has provided a relevant curriculum choice for students from different circumstances and backgrounds, and with a variety of abilities and interests.

In 2010, the vast majority of students undertook the 2-unit, rather than the 1-unit, versions of Stage 2 Integrated Learning. Over 110 classes were formed in 65 schools, with nearly 1000 students achieving a result. The Group 2 (mathematics, science, technology) enrolment was by far the more popular choice.

It is pleasing to note that in 2010 many teachers sought information and advice about assessment through the Integrated Learning support moderation process.

Program Focus

The focus of programs in 2010 was similar to previous years and provided relevant learning opportunities for students. Integrated Learning aims to bring together aspects of student's lives to enable them to learn actively, both individually and through collaboration, in a variety of contexts. Many programs were designed to meet the particular needs of a group of students or, in some cases, a single student.

Examples of 2010 program foci were:

- school service programs overseas
- career programs (for example, trade areas)
- environmental or conservation programs (for example, marine studies)
- film-making, animation, and digital media projects
- enterprise programs (for example, jazz music gigs)
- peer-mentoring programs
- agricultural programs
- school and community sporting programs
- performance arts skills (for example, cabaret)
- health and well-being programs (for example, for young mothers, family services)
- community dance programs (for example, Indigenous focus)
- outdoor adventure programs
- community design and technology programs (for example, pedal prix, robotics)
- community visual arts programs
- cultural awareness programs
- Web design and social-networking programs.

Many programs of work were designed to offer alternative options for students in other Stage 2 SACE subjects, including:

- Art Practical
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Design and Technology
- Early Childhood Studies
- English Communications
- Food and Hospitality Studies
- languages
- Mathematical Applications
- Outdoor and Environmental Education
- Physical Education
- Psychology
- religion studies
- Work Education.

This year the practice of adapting or converting existing subjects to meet the requirements of Integrated Learning was usually completed very early in the year, or planned for prior to the program commencing.

Very few late 'conversions' took place this year and, although challenging for those involved, they were in the main successfully managed by teachers.

Coherent Programs of Work

Students are not required to complete the four assessment components in the order presented in the curriculum statement.

Teachers are advised to think carefully about the use of multiple tasks within components and to plan their program so that a logical sequence of tasks provides coherence to student learning.

Some coherent programs culminated in the portfolio and discussion task in which students could provide insights into, and draw conclusions about, their learning over the program. Other coherent programs culminated with the negotiated task that was used to demonstrate the significance of the development of their skills and their understanding of the integrated nature of their learning.

Presenting Student Evidence of Learning for Moderation

This year many teachers clearly presented the student evidence of learning for moderation divided into component packages for each student and sent the sample specified in the Flexible Learning Area Manual.

Evidence of student involvement in round-table discussions was presented in varying forms and degrees of clarity. The most accessible evidence was well-organised electronic recordings, with students clearly identified and with good sound levels. Some student self-assessment was completed in written form, and teachers' written recording of the responses by students was useful if completed in some detail.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 1: SITUATED LEARNING TASK

In many cases the materials presented at moderation for this component showed that students both enjoyed and appreciated the practical and real-life aspects of the assessments.

Over one-third of programs this year focused on physical education or sport, and students were often guided through three situated learning tasks, all based on different sports or physical activities. Some students worked with community resources or personnel, others were part of a class initiative at school, and in some cases students were highly individual in their approach.

The moderation panel had difficulty validating teacher marks for some classes that did not provide clear student evidence of learning aligned to the criteria for judging performance for this component of Integrated Learning. Physical Education practical checklists were again used as evidence of learning, with sometimes little or no reference to Integrated Learning assessment criteria. Teachers are reminded that such checklists do need to be adapted to suit the criteria of Integrated Learning. Checklists and competency-based assessment and certification were also used as evidence in other programs; for example, in trade, and food and hospitality focus programs. Skills checklists and certification should not be used in isolation. They should be accompanied with student-generated written or oral (recorded) analysis of their learning.

Students provided evidence of their learning in a range of forms to address the criteria for judging performance, including:

- photographs of self in action, with annotations that described learning taking place;
- audiovisual recordings;
- photographs of created products with explanatory notes;
- publications in their original form;
- feedback from tutors, mentors, community experts, or audience.

The most successful students, regardless of the focus of the program, provided authentic evidence of practical involvement, accompanied with some recorded oral or written information which explained their contribution to the task; their application of the skills, knowledge, and understanding; and an analysis of their learning.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 2: COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY AND DECISION-MAKING

This component is designed to assess each student's ability to work collaboratively and make decisions in a team situation, and to reflect on, and evaluate, collaborative processes and outcomes.

Some programs used the collaborative activity and decision-making task to plan, monitor, and evaluate one or more of the situated learning tasks. Other programs used more self-contained problem-solving teamwork exercises.

Students relied heavily on written or oral 'reflection and evaluation' journals or completed questionnaires provided by their teachers to demonstrate their collaboration and their decision-making.

In 2010 more teachers used or adapted the Collaborative and Decision-making Student Performance Checklist, from the support materials on the SACE website, to assist in providing evidence.

Generally speaking, students were able to provide clear evidence of their involvement in teamwork and were able to reflect on their understanding of their learning as a team member. It was pleasing to note that many students emphasised their understanding of the processes of collaboration and decision-making, as well as reporting on the outcomes of their team work.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 3: PORTFOLIO AND DISCUSSION

The use of a round-table discussion, with students responding to questions from the teacher and using their portfolios to help inform and verify their responses, is now generally well understood by teachers and students.

Portfolios were generally more focused in 2010. Students often selected highlights of their learning to include in their folders of work. Some of the very effective portfolios comprised a collection of information, data, or research on a particular focus area from the program of work. For example, some food and catering programs collected and analysed recipes useful for people leaving home. Some sports-related programs comprised research and analysis about one sport of particular interest to the student.

Other effective folios comprised fully analysed media articles related to the program focus, or simply included all formative work completed throughout the program of work.

Many discussions were electronically recorded, while others used teacher notes as evidence of individual student contributions to the discussion.

The quality of questioning techniques used by teachers during discussions varied. Successful students tended to be asked open questions that enabled them to reflect on their learning in specific areas of the program, resulting in a more natural discussion occurring.

The highly successful students understood the value of the discussion and took the opportunity to critically evaluate their learning. These students often referred to their portfolios to support their responses.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT 4: NEGOTIATED TASK

The negotiated task is a significant and defining part of the program for some students, but for others it appeared to be simply another task that had to be completed towards the end of the program of work.

The negotiated task is an individually assessed task with 30% weighting. Students were to negotiate the topic or the style of task and the method of presenting the outcome.

This year some students provided very little evidence of time and investment in this important component of their program of work. These students may have researched

their chosen topic quite well, but did not provide evidence of meeting all the criteria for the task.

The most successful students were those who:

- negotiated a task that was either practical or research-based (or both), and that reflected an interest area connected to other parts of the course and their lives;
- were often working on the negotiated task concurrently with other tasks;
- were well informed and monitored by their teachers (who provided a clear and flexible structure for the task that allowed students to branch out into their preferred areas of interest, and that explicitly addressed the criteria for judging performance);
- provided evidence of products, publications, events, or significant outcomes that were a result of their efforts;
- provided conclusions or evaluative comments to demonstrate their understanding of the significance of the skills they had developed and the learning they had achieved.

The negotiated task is similar to the external assessment, Assessment Type 4: Project (30% weighting), as described in the 2011 subject outline. The comments above provide some insights into the strategies which may be useful in supporting students engaged in the processes of completing an effective project for their external assessment for Integrated Learning 2011.

Chief Assessor
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