

Integrated Learning

2013 Chief Assessor's Report



Government
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INTEGRATED LEARNING

2013 CHIEF ASSESSOR'S REPORT

OVERVIEW

Chief Assessors' reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

2013 was the first year of the changed structure for Integrated Learning. Students are now able to do up to 40 credits of Integrated Learning, providing they have a different focus and address different capabilities in Integrated Learning I (ILG) and Integrated Learning II (ILH). Both can be used to complete the SACE but only the better will be counted towards an ATAR. Consequently many students whose preferred learning style includes practical activities were able to choose both subjects.

The number of students who undertook the subject therefore increased noticeably:

2ILG10	481
2ILG20	872
2ILH10	150
2ILH20	552
Total	2055

In general the standard of work was slightly improved this year with more students focussing on their progress in learning and the development of their capabilities.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 1: Practical

In general, the practical assessment type was done well.. Programs needed to have one practical task for the 10-credit program and two or three practical tasks for the 20-credit program, although most had three. Students undertook a wide range of activities in a number of different topic areas to demonstrate the knowledge, concepts and skills they had developed within the program focus.

The assessment design criteria for this assessment type were Application, Investigation and Analysis, Evaluation and Reflection, and Understanding.

Most students were able to provide extensive evidence to meet the Application criterion. Where photographic evidence was provided, students who annotated photos to explain how they demonstrated the criteria were more likely to have their assessment decisions confirmed through moderation. Similarly, videos that had a commentary gave students the best chance of success. Because of the flexibility of the subject and the open choice of the program focus, practicals took a variety of

forms, and the evidence provided demonstrated knowledge, concepts and skills developed and applied.

Tasks that requested students to do background research in relation to the practical, and then asked them to analyse their findings, provided the best opportunity to meet the Investigation and Analysis criterion. Evidence of this was provided in a variety of forms. Students who analysed their research in depth and related it to the program focus were able to demonstrate this criterion to a high level. Students need to ensure that their comments are addressing the Integrated Learning assessment design criteria and are not purely a recall of the activity.

A requirement of the practical was for students to have the opportunity for peer and self-assessment in at least one of the practical tasks. Students then needed to comment on the feedback received from their peers and any relevant decisions they made to improve their learning. Many students were not given this opportunity and as a consequence were not able to meet the performance standards at the higher levels.

The Understanding criterion was the least well-done in the practical. Tasks that were designed to request students to address the key areas of study or capabilities, and their connection to the program focus, guided the students to provide appropriate evidence to meet this criterion. Many tasks made no reference to this assessment design criterion and as a consequence students made little or no reference and provided little or no evidence to demonstrate the performance standards at the higher grades. This often made it difficult for moderators to confirm the grade levels given by the teachers. It is essential that tasks be designed in such a way that it is clear to students which criteria they need to address and what evidence needs to be provided.

The evidence provided for the practical must be student evidence. Teacher evidence such as a checklist or report can support it, provided there is student evidence as well.

Students who were successful in Assessment Type 1: Practical were able to provide a variety of individual evidence which demonstrated how their knowledge, concepts and skills related to the program focus had developed and been applied throughout the various tasks. They used a variety of research information and sources, analysed their findings and related them to the focus of the course. They were able to reflect on the process of their own learning, using the feedback from peer-reflection, and often projecting into the value of this learning to their future aspirations. Higher achieving students were able to make the connections to the program focus and comment on their development and understanding of the relevant capabilities.

Assessment Type 2: Group Activity

Most Integrated Learning programs only included one group activity whether the course was 10 or 20 credits in length. This single task then allowed sufficient time for the groups to research, plan, organise and carry out a significant group activity. A small number of 20 credit courses included two smaller group activities to ensure that students had more than one opportunity to meet the assessment design criteria for this assessment type. The key difference between the group activity and the practical task was that for the group activity students had to share ideas and decision-making,

and to work collaboratively with others. They had to be able to provide individual evidence of collaboration and communication.

The assessment design criteria for this assessment type were Application, Investigation and Analysis, Communication and Collaboration and Evaluation and Reflection. In general, most students were able to provide significant evidence of Application and Communication and Collaboration demonstrating an outcome or product by applying their knowledge, concepts and skills and providing evidence of how they worked together as a group.

Most students were able to identify their contribution to the group task and to discuss the process of planning and collaboration with other members of their group. Group activities were many and varied, often working with other members of the community in training, coaching or volunteering capacity. The better students provided evidence of planning, communication, collaboration and organisation in the form of meeting minutes, lesson plans, reflections, notes, emails, presentations, programs and running sheets. Evidence of background research and analysis was less well-presented by many students and was non-existent for others. In many cases, there were indications that students must have done some research to complete their task, but they often did not state their sources and nor provide an analysis of what they had found. Most groups had set up peer and self-assessment for the group activity, but many students failed to reflect on the feedback provided to them, and did not discuss how they used that feedback to enhance their learning or improve their outcome or product.

When presenting a group product, it is essential that each student identify the section for which they were responsible and to verify this in the discussion in their self-reflection of the process.

Students who were successful in Assessment Type 2: Group Activity were able to provide individual evidence of their contribution to the planning, decision-making and successful implementation of their group activity. They were able to provide evidence of relevant individual research, its analysis and how it could be used to enhance their product or service. They were able to reflect on their own learning and their collaboration and communication within the group. Most had obtained feedback from their peers within the group and often the wider community and used this to reflect on, learn from and summarise the effectiveness of their activity.

Assessment Type 3: Folio and Discussion

For Integrated Learning, the folio and discussion is a single task assessed holistically. Many schools are now setting a separate task for the folio and discussion that focuses on the student's progress in learning, and links the relevant capabilities to the focus of the course. In general the students who presented their folio with this as a focus and were able to discuss these concepts in depth were able to meet the performance standards to a high level.

The assessment design criteria assessed in the folio and discussion are Application and Communication and Collaboration, Reflection and Evaluation, and Understanding. By being a single task, it enables students to expand on the ideas in the folio to show the depth of their learning and understanding within the group's discussion.

It is essential that students provide evidence of their discussion. This is usually done through a recording or video. Teachers should ensure they meet the SACE requirements for submitting electronic files so that recordings are audible and accessible, and so that moderators can find and select students quickly. Schools are advised to address this issue in recordings by providing a visual prompt of the student's name or an oral one where the student identifies themselves.

The best discussions had open-ended unseen questions where students could discuss their learning and refer to their folio for backup evidence. Some of the best discussions had minimal input from the teacher and the students discussed their learning amongst themselves. If there is no video or audio for whatever reason, students must provide a transcript or notes from the discussion.

Teachers are reminded that the subject outline states that students need to 'participate in a round table discussion with their teacher and class group'. Each student is entitled to up to 10 minutes airtime. Groups that did this well generally had 4 or 5 students in the group. Teachers need to ensure that the microphone is placed so that student responses, not just the question being asked, can be clearly heard. However, the questions asked are crucial to eliciting appropriate responses from students. The discussion is often the key factor in confirming or adjusting the school grade level given. The subject outline states 'each student responds to questions asked by the teacher'. Please note that a prepared presentation or written task is not a discussion.

Many schools are still treating the folio and discussion as two tasks even though feedback from the learning and assessment plans advised that this needed to be a single task (with two parts). Despite this being the third year that Integrated Learning has been in existence, there are still some schools who are presenting their folio as was done for the previous Integrated Studies course, and including everything that the students have collected or done throughout the year, without any thought to the organisation and relevance of the material included.

Students and teachers need to be aware that any work presented for assessment in any of the other three assessment types (including the external project) cannot be resubmitted for the folio and discussion.

Students who were successful in Assessment Type 3: Folio and Discussion had a well-organised folio that demonstrated the progress in learning throughout the course. The focus of the course was clearly demonstrated, and the development of concepts, knowledge and skills was evident throughout the folio. The student had evidence of their collaboration with others and the connection, development and relevance of the chosen capabilities was clearly demonstrated. The more successful students were able to discuss their progress in learning, its value to themselves and others, and how it will help them in future studies or career.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment Type 4: Project

The external assessment was an opportunity for students to explore an aspect of the program and/or capability relating to the overall Integrated Learning program focus, and to understand the connections between the program focus and the capability.

Students completed tasks covering a wide range of topics including sport, volunteering, dance, the environment, religion, information technology and a range of trade applications. Performance standards were met to a high standard when students were given the chance to develop individual responses which were related to areas of personal interest.

It was evident that students who developed a well-designed and functional guiding question were able to clearly demonstrate how they had developed and applied their skills. Those tasks that encouraged students to connect an area of research with personal knowledge for a specific purpose often meant that they achieved to a high standard; for example, a focus on a specific aspect or task associated with a trade e.g. planning hair styles and make up for a formal.

In these cases, diagrams or photographs supported by a written description of the student's process of learning and developing understanding usually led to success.

There was a clear difference between those students who successfully investigated and referred to their findings by analysing the importance of their findings, and those whose information consisted of either basic internet research or materials provided by teachers. When students were able to include both primary and secondary sources they could show a more thorough investigation and use their findings more efficiently in their project. Again bibliographies are recommended as a way of encouraging students both to use a variety of sources and to confirm their validity.

Unfortunately, the analysis of concepts, ideas and skill development from different perspectives again posed problems for some students. Some students did take the opportunity to look at issues from different perspectives in depth; for example, for a trade focus, considering the best options for solar energy depending on a range of circumstances for both the client and environment.

When tasks were well-structured, they allowed students to show their ability to communicate ideas successfully and provide informed opinions. Again, it is important to ensure that students do not only recount personal experiences as this often means that students fail to address the investigation and analysis to a high standard. It was also evident that those students who completed projects independently with less scaffolding provided by the teacher were often able to achieve against the performance standards to a higher level.

Throughout the project it is vital that students are able to understand and explain the connections between the program focus and the capability in each chosen key area; for example, to show the link between their focus on wiring a house and the capability of work. Those who discuss this link explicitly often did well; however, some students still either did not address their capability, or did so to only a competent level.

To meet performance standards to a high level, it is recommended that students present the project in two parts: a project outcome and an explanation of the connections between program and capability. It is crucial that students are able to present a clear understanding of their chosen capabilities and how this connected with their task. It is recommended that teachers ensure that students fully understand the capabilities before beginning their project.

Word count remains an issue with some projects being well over the 2000 word limit for 20 credits, or 1000 for a 10 credit, or the multimodal equivalent. Unfortunately this will have a detrimental impact on the grades achieved. Teachers must ensure that

students adhere to word limits and time restrictions with this information clearly stated on the student's external cover sheet available from the Integrated Learning minisite.

OPERATIONAL ADVICE

With the new structure of Integrated Learning, all schools were required to submit a new learning and assessment (LAP) in 2013. The revised plan included the program focus and the chosen key area/capabilities. For Integrated Learning I, at least two key areas of study from Citizenship, Learning, and Personal Development were required. For Integrated Learning II at least two key areas of study from Communication, Learning, and Work were needed. It is important that schools use the current LAP pro forma and consult the subject operational information for advice on submitting learning and assessment plans.

Many schools took the opportunity to have more than one Integrated Learning class each with a different focus – in these instances it is essential for schools to familiarise themselves with the subject codes, and check that the key areas of studies/capabilities match the subject and that the enrolment entered into DATEX matches the learning and assessment plan. Many schools who submitted an Integrated Learning II (ILH) plan mistakenly enrolled the students into Integrated Learning I (ILG).

Plans that focussed on the capabilities and identified opportunities for peer and self-assessment in both the practical and group activity assessment types gave students the best chance for success. It is important that the learning and assessment plans are submitted by the due date early in the year, so that any feedback can be actioned before assessment tasks are attempted. Any changes to the original approved plan; need to be recorded on the Addendum page, which must be submitted for moderation. The principal or delegate must sign the addendum to indicate that changes have been made and be included with the moderation materials.

Teachers and/or students need to ensure they keep all their marked assessment tasks throughout the year in case they are selected for moderation. If for any reason a task(s) is missing the teacher must include a Variations – Moderation Materials form with their moderation materials. Unfortunately, several schools had many missing tasks with no explanation as to why. Teachers are reminded that the subject operation information advises that *student materials should not be submitted in hard-covered folders*.

Schools need to ensure that evidence of the group discussion is included, that students are identifiable and that DVDs and CDs meet the requirements of SACE for submission of electronic materials. Where students are submitting electronic files it is essential that there is clear indication as to which file is the final assessed piece of work. Student work needs to be clearly labelled with the student's details. An indication as to how the final grade level was determined is helpful for moderators. Teachers need to consult the Subject Operational Information when packaging materials for moderation. This information can be found on the Integrated Learning minisite under Planning to Teach.

GENERAL COMMENTS

It is essential that where more than one class has been combined as a single assessment group, that the whole group is assessed together and that the grade levels are consistent between teachers. Similarly, if a single teacher has more than one class, the grade levels and standards need to be consistent across all classes.

Several schools are still trying to convert from another subject into Integrated Learning at the last minute, and this does not always prove successful, as the assessment design criteria for Integrated Learning are quite different from many other subjects. Schools, which include Integrated Learning within another SACE subject, must be sure that they assess the students against the Integrated Learning performance standards, and not the skills checklists from other subjects.

Teachers who are new to the subject and whose work has been subject to changes at moderation are advised to attend the clarifying workshops to ensure they fully understand the full expectations of the subject. Teachers are also encouraged to be part of the moderation and marking teams.

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