Provincial Elementary Assessment and Evaluation:
A Resource Document to Support the Implementation of
Effective Elementary Assessment and Evaluation Classroom Practices

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW OF TEACHER RESOURCE DOCUMENT

Part One: (A) Introduction to the Resource Document

Purpose of This Document

This document:
- identifies guiding principles to effective assessment and evaluation and supporting statements in Ministry documents;
- provides key and clarifying messages for effective classroom practices;
- provides a common language about assessment and evaluation in Ontario;
- is a resource to support teachers as they refine their classroom practices;
- provides examples and models of practices which classroom teachers can personalize for their own use; and
- provides resource materials which can be used to initiate rich professional dialogue with colleagues in schools and school boards.

How This Resource Document Will Help Classroom Teachers

This document is intended to help teachers to:
- develop a deeper understanding of the curriculum;
- develop a better understanding of the variety of effective assessment and evaluation practices they can use in their classrooms;
- adopt effective assessment and evaluation practices to improve student learning;
- deal with assessment issues when working with students and parents;
- plan classroom programs that effectively and efficiently manage assessment procedures; and
- engage students actively in the learning process.

How This Resource Document Will Help School Administrators and Program Staff
This document is intended to help school administrators and program staff support staff learning in their school districts. Materials from the resource may be used to engage educators in rich conversations and learning activities.

Assessing for Learning
The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is **to improve student learning**. Students bring to the classroom a wide range of abilities, needs, experiences, cultures, and values which influence how they learn. So what are the **conditions for learning** to ensure that all students learn?

This document is built on the following set of **beliefs and understandings**:

Beliefs and Understanding Related To The Student

Students are more successful as learners when they:

- learn in an environment that is caring, safe, accepting, supportive, encouraging, stimulating, and fun;
- know what they are expected to learn;
- know their learning preferences (e.g., multiple intelligences, learning styles) and how they learn best;
- participate in a variety of learning opportunities that take into consideration their developmental stage, their readiness to learn, their interests, and their learner profile;
- are engaged in learning that is relevant, connected to their world, purposeful, and meaningful;
- know how they will be expected to demonstrate their learning;
- have multiple opportunities to demonstrate key learnings;
- demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways (i.e., write, say, and do)
- are actively involved in the assessment process (e.g., self assessment, reflective practice, responding to meaningful and purposeful assessment feedback from peers or teacher);
- know that they will be supported throughout the learning process and when they are not demonstrating that they are learning (e.g., pyramid of intervention).

Students need to value learning to become life long learners. They are more likely to take responsibility for their own learning when they:

- have an opportunity to identify what they are interested in learning;
- are encouraged to take ownership for their learning;
- are challenged and encouraged to take risks;
- know they will be supported through the learning process; and
- have experienced success.

Beliefs and Understanding Related To The Teacher

Teachers can improve student learning by:

- understanding and communicating to the students, in advance of teaching, the curriculum expectations that they are to demonstrate;
- informing students, from the very beginning of the teaching and learning process, about learning goals in terms that students understand;
- becoming assessment literate and able to connect the curriculum, gather the evidence, and determine the grade to reflect student achievement accurately;
- using classroom assessments to build their students' confidence as learners and to help them take responsibility for their own learning, so as to lay a foundation for life-long learning;
- translating classroom assessment results into frequent, descriptive, meaningful, non-judgmental feedback for students, and then providing the students with specific insights as to how to improve;
- adjusting instruction continuously, based on the results of classroom assessments;
- engaging students in regular self assessment, based on consistent standards, so that students can develop an awareness of the characteristics of good work, develop the ability to evaluate the quality of their own work, develop an awareness of what and how to achieve higher quality of work, and grow over time, thus taking charge of their own success; and
- involving students actively in communicating with their teachers and their families about their achievement status and improvement. (Adapted from: Stiggins, Richard J. (June 2002). *Assessment Crisis: The Absence of Assessment FOR Learning.* **Phi Delta Kappan**, 83(10), p. 761.)

Teachers can develop a greater consistency in assessment and evaluation practice by:
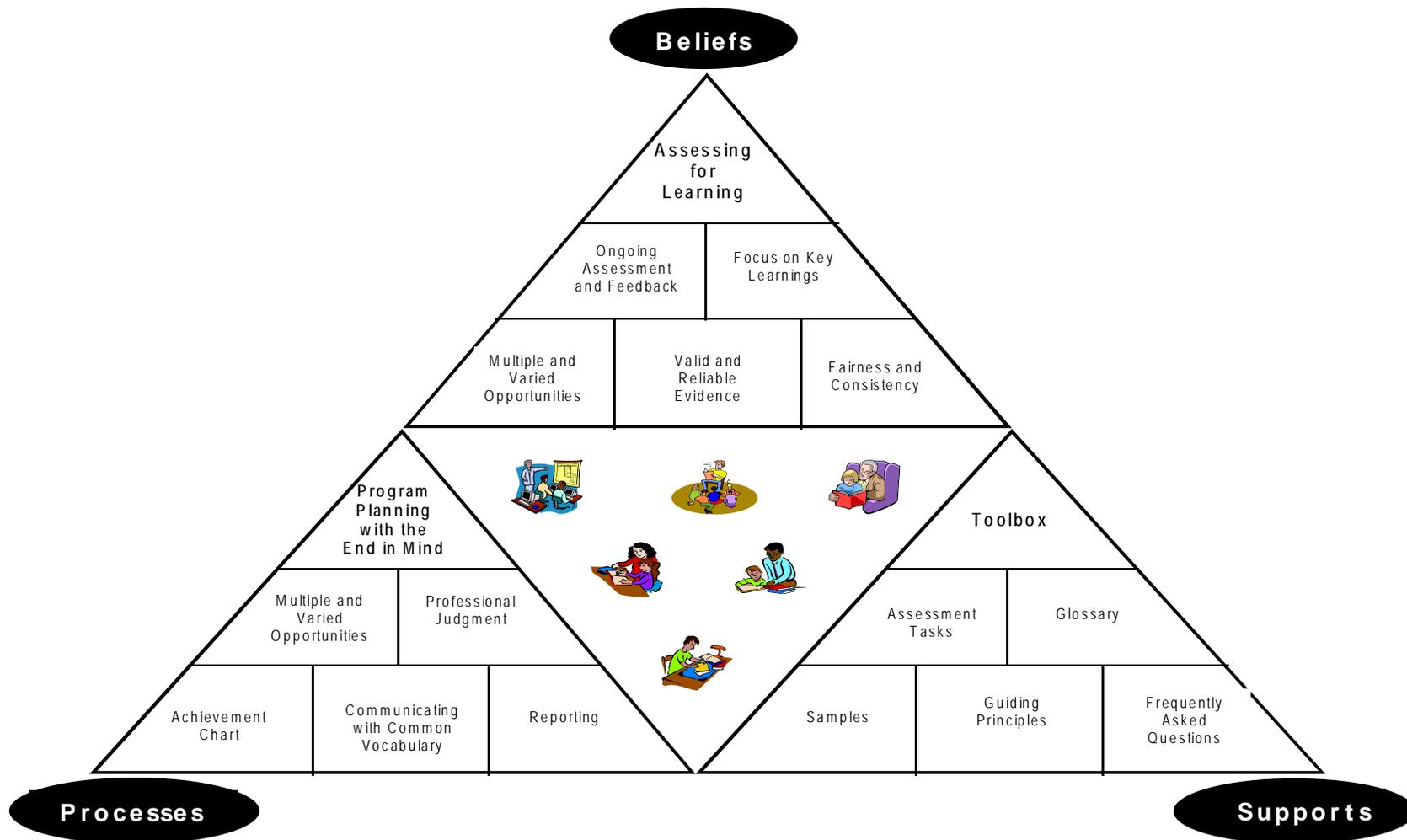
- understanding and implementing board and school guidelines;
- collaborating with other teachers who teach the same grade, division, subject, or discipline;
- sharing assessment tools which they use to gather evidence of student learning;
- analyzing results obtained from the use of particular assessment tools to ensure that they have accurately gathered the relevant evidence that was set out in the criteria;
- revising assessment tools appropriately to gather evidence of student learning more accurately;
- providing numerous and varied opportunities for students to demonstrate their achievement; and
- becoming aware of provincial curriculum exemplars and how their students' work compares.

Teachers can provide clarity in reporting by:

- understanding the achievement chart categories and levels for their particular subject or discipline;
- understanding the relationship of the curriculum expectations to the achievement chart categories;
- providing numerous and varied opportunities for students to practise and then demonstrate their achievement;
- ensuring that ongoing assessment and evaluation takes into consideration students' most consistent and more recent level of achievement;
- observing and assessing students regularly as they demonstrate their learning skills; and
- communicating clearly to parents and students what is being done well, what needs to be improved, and how to make suggested improvements.

The Content of the Resource Document
The content of the resource document, as outlined on the following pages, has been developed based on the beliefs and understandings related to assessing for learning.

Beliefs

Assessing for Learning

| Ongoing Assessment and Feedback | Focus on Key Learnings |

| Multiple and Varied Opportunities | Valid and Reliable Evidence | Fairness and Consistency |

Program Planning with the End in Mind

Toolbox

| Multiple and Varied Opportunities | Professional Judgment |

| Assessment Tasks | Glossary |

| Achievement Chart | Communicating with Common Vocabulary | Reporting |

| Samples | Guiding Principles | Frequently Asked Questions |

Processes

Supports

Clarification of Ministry Expectations Related Elementary Assessment and Evaluation

Various Ministries within the government develop provincial government policy. In education, these policies provide clear direction and they mandate *what* boards are responsible for doing. It is each board's responsibility to determine *how* these policies are implemented. A policy identifies mandatory actions for boards, schools, and educators (e.g., teachers, principals, superintendents, etc.).

"The government is responsible for developing policy; school boards are responsible for implementing it. They move policy into practice in their schools and classrooms."

"Government policy is stated in general terms; it establishes a framework. The framework provides a clear sense of direction, yet allows boards the flexibility to make the best decisions for the students in their schools." (*Catherine Rankin, Director of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch*, *Ontario Ministry of Education.*)

This resource document supports ministry policies outlined in the various elementary documents and provides school boards and teachers with related guiding principles that support the implementation of practices for effective assessment and evaluation.

Relevant Ministry Documents
The Ministry of Education documents listed below provide the framework for the implementation of effective and consistent practices in Ontario schools. See Part 5 for additional details.

Name of Document	Policy (P) or Resource (R) Documents
Education Act	P
Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 1-8, 1998	P
Choices Into Action, 1999	P
Individual Education Plans, Standard for Development, Program Planning and Implementation, 2000	P
Curriculum Policy Documents, Grade 1-8, 1997 to 1999	P
Curriculum Policy Documents, Grades 1-8, 2004	P
The Ontario Curriculum – Grades 1-12: The Achievement Charts (Draft), 2004	R
Kindergarten Program	R
ESL/ELD Resource Document	R
Ontario Curriculum Exemplars	R
Ontario Curriculum Planner	R

Structure of This Resource Document
This document is divided into five parts.

Part One	Introduction and Overview of Teacher Resource Document
	    A. Introduction to Teacher Resource Document
	    B. Overview: The Teacher Resource Document at a Glance

Part Two	Guiding Principles of Effective Assessment and Evaluation
	    A. Curriculum Expectations
	    B. Achievement Chart
	    C. Learning Skills
	    D. Ongoing Assessment Evaluation and Reporting

Part Three	Frequently Asked Questions
	    A. Curriculum Expectations
	    B. Achievement Chart
	    C. Learning Skills
	    D. Ongoing Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

Part Four	Effective Classroom Practices
	    A. Planning With the End in Mind
	    B. The Planning Cycle
	        i) Unpacking the Curriculum
	        ii) Gathering the Evidence
	        iii) Ongoing Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting
	    C. Communication Strategies

Part Five	Glossary and Resources

Scenarios

Each section in **Parts Three and Four** of the document is introduced with a scenario that describes effective classroom practices. These scenarios outline the thinking and decision making the teacher goes through during the program planning process.