

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

The Independent Education Union of Australia believes that assessment and reporting policies and practices must be developed by education authorities in collaboration with the teaching profession to ensure that such practices are valid, reliable, fair, equitable, and motivate students to further develop their learning.

The current environment in which assessment and reporting changes are occurring is characterised by a number of major aspects. These include increasing federal government intervention by linking compliance with government agendas to funding, increased focus on reporting on school performance and school improvement data and misuse of data by the media.

The development and implementation of assessment and reporting policies and practices must:

- Respect and involve the expertise of teachers and have their support and full confidence;
- Allocate appropriate timelines and resources for consultation and implementation of any changes in policy and practice, including consideration of workload implications.

Principles for Assessment

The IEU believes that the following principles should guide the development and use of assessment instruments:

- Assessment methods should be planned as an integral part of course developments
- Assessment processes must be reliable, fair and equitable
- Assessment should be based on an understanding of how students learn
- Assessment should be aligned with the curriculum
- Assessment should ensure that tasks are realistic, meaningful and worthwhile.

- Assessment practices should involve a range of measures and provide students with opportunities to display their knowledge, as well as their skills, understandings and attitudes.

The IEUA has expressed major concerns about mass standardised testing of student achievement such as through basic skills tests. In the light of international and national research, the IEUA remains opposed to such practices because they lead to a lowering of the quality of education and the overall level of student achievement; and because of the dubious educational validity of the instruments of testing.

Reporting

The primary purpose of reporting is to provide meaningful information so as to improve student learning. The reporting process must be an integral part of the teaching and learning process. The reporting process should enhance students' own capacities to reflect on their learning, their successes and areas for further learning.

Reporting should be based on teacher judgements which are themselves based on sound evidence and teachers' shared understandings of the standards that apply. The development of reporting policies and practices must involve teachers and must value their professional expertise and experience. Schools and systems must allocate sufficient resources to both adequate time release for reporting and for professional development to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge.

The IEU believes that parents should have access to timely, meaningful information about their children's progress and are entitled to comprehensive and accessible reports.