

Molalla High School Assessment Practices

Molalla High School is currently beginning a transition in our assessment practices to better reflect our student’s abilities. Rather than students concentrating on how many points they can earn, we are turning the focus of the students on what specific knowledge and skills have been mastered or still need to be obtained. Teachers are beginning this process by clarifying what students should be able to know and do in their classes. Teachers will refer to the knowledge and skills to be obtained as “learning targets”. We believe that once students know what is expected of them academically, they will have a better chance of hitting the “target”.

As teachers begin to define the learning targets in their classes, they will begin assessing the student’s level of understanding on **each** learning target. By assessing to each target, the teacher, student, and parent get a much clearer picture of the student’s strengths and weaknesses. All of the users of this information can either adjust their teaching (teacher), study habits (student), and support levels (teacher and parent) to help the student meet the target.

Teachers transitioning to this new model of assessment—assessing to each learning target—will likely be using a different scoring method. If the assessment measures more than one target at a time, the targets will be scored independently of each other. Rather than students earning a percentage score on an entire assessment and “collecting” points (70% or 70/100), students will earn a score on a scale of 0-4 or 0-5, with 4 or 5 being the highest score on each of the learning targets. Each level of the grading scale represents a progression of abilities, from no ability or evidence of the learning target (0), to having an advanced understanding of the learning target (a 4 or 5 depending on the scale used).

Example Scale

0	1	2	3	4	5
No Evidence or Ability					Advanced Understanding

Students will be assessed multiple times on each learning target during the trimester. Students will then have an opportunity to improve their skills, and ultimately their grade, on each target. Teachers will use a grade replacement method that allows the student to replace the current score with the improved score. They may be re-assessed on a learning target usually after attempts have been made by the student to better their understanding of the material. This method of assessment, grade replacement, allows for a student to progress in their learning without being penalized for improvement overtime. The final grade in the class will be an average or percentage of the scores on each of the learning targets resulting in a traditional letter grade.

Teachers fully implementing this assessment system will still assign homework and expecting students to complete it. The difference will be that some students might need to practice more than others on specific learning targets. For example, if student A understands the target fully in class, there is little need for the student to complete an extensive homework assignment on that target. This student can then focus their efforts on other classes and learning targets in which they have yet to master. On the other hand, Student B may have either struggled with the concept or just superficially understood the material in class, and therefore would need to complete an appropriate amount of homework to become proficient in the learning target.

Homework will be reviewed during class, providing feedback to the teacher and the student about their ability level. The student will be expected to self-assess as well to understand their need for further instruction and/or practice. This exercise of self-assessment will direct the next stages of learning.

Due to the varying amount of practice/homework a student needs, a grade for the homework will generally not be issued. In addition to the varying homework levels it is difficult for the teacher to be assured that the homework completed was done by the student or how much help they received at home. Even though the homework will not be officially “graded”, students will receive the appropriate feedback from the teacher, letting the student know how well they understood the learning target. Since the completion of homework will not be included in a student’s final course grade, a student’s grade will be based on the assessments of each of the learning targets. Students who struggle with taking tests may at times work with the teacher to possibly demonstrate their understanding of the learning target in an alternate way.

Students of all abilities levels should benefit from such an intense focus on the learning targets of the course. This assessment model will provide clarity like never before, helping students know what is important, where they are in mastering the target, and how to go about becoming proficient in the target.

It is the High School’s intention to support our student’s learning and to provide multiple opportunities for them to be successful. We encourage you to have a conversation with the classroom teacher if you have further questions.