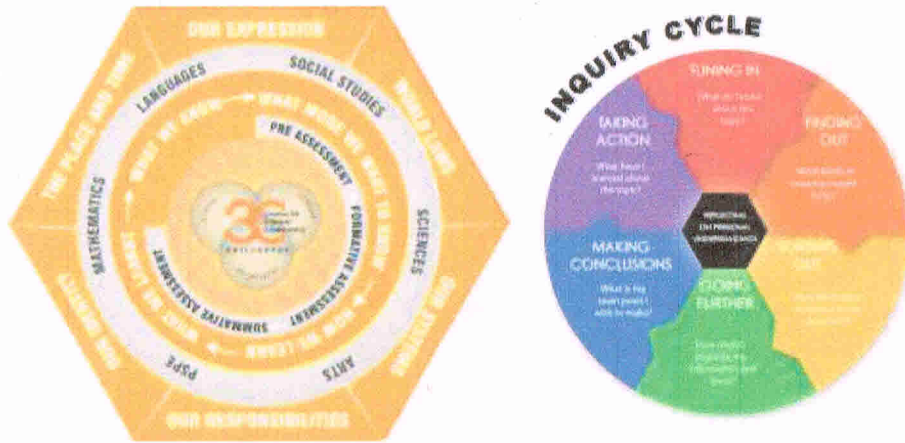


CURRICULUM DETAILS

Why Inquiry based Learning ?



Inquiry, interpreted in the broadest sense, is the process initiated by the student or the teacher that moves the student from his or her current level of understanding to a new and deeper level of understanding. Inquiry takes place at the knowing/not knowing intersection (Wells, Lindfors 1999).

It can take many forms, including:

- exploring, wondering and questioning
- experimenting and playing with possibilities
- making connections between previous learning and current learning
- making predictions and acting purposefully to see what happens
- collecting data and reporting findings
- clarifying existing ideas and reappraising perceptions of events
- deepening understanding through the application of a concept
- making and testing theories
- researching and seeking information
- taking and defending a position
- solving problems in a variety of ways.

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Inquiry involves an active engagement with the environment in an effort to make sense of the world, and consequent reflection on the connections between the experiences encountered and the information gathered. Inquiry involves the synthesis, analysis, and manipulation of knowledge, whether through play or through more formally structured learning.

Assessment is the process where information on each student's performance is gathered and analyzed to identify what students know, understand, can do and feel at different stages in the learning process.

Assessment is integral to all teaching and learning and the 3C curriculum uses thoughtful and effective assessment processes by guiding students through the **SIX** essential elements of learning:

The displaying of Character,
The understanding of Concepts
The acquisition of knowledge,
The mastering of Competence,
The development of Content, And
The decision to take responsible Action.

Everyone concerned with assessment – students, teachers, parents, administrators, and board members – must have a clear understanding of the reasons for the assessment, what is being assessed, the criteria for success, and the method by which the assessment is made.

The 3C describes the taught curriculum as the written curriculum in action. Using the written curriculum in collaboration with colleagues and students, the teacher generates questions which guide structured inquiry and instruction.

These questions address the eight key concepts which help lead to productive lines of inquiry.

Assessment focuses on the quality of student learning during the process of inquiry as well as instruction and on the quality of the products of that learning.

Assessment is, therefore, integral to the taught curriculum. It is the means by which we analyze student learning and the effectiveness of our teaching and acts as a foundation on which we can base our future planning and practice. It is central to our goal of guiding the student through the learning process, from a novice to becoming an expert. The assessment component in the school's curriculum can itself be subdivided into three closely related areas:

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Assessing – How we discover what the students know and have learned.

Recording – How we choose to collect and analyze data.

Reporting – How we choose to communicate information.

What Do We Assess?

Through this innovative curriculum, teachers strive to provide the opportunity for students to construct meaning primarily through structured inquiry. This is accomplished by emphasizing the connections between subject-specific knowledge and it provides a focus for inquiry, while literacy and numeracy provide the tools. Feedback is given on student progress and performance in each of these areas. Additionally, feedback is provided on the attributes listed in the 3C Profile:

This profile serves to increase the student's awareness and sensitivity to the experiences of others beyond the local or national community, thus promoting an understanding that there is a commonality of human experience.

At Edify School, we assess performance and progress in all inquiry and in addition stand alone skills that may be taught in Physical Education, the Arts, Language, Mathematics, and the entire 3C Profile.

We also continue to inculcate student attitudes and attributes to everyday learning.

How do we discover what the students have learned?

Assessment is something that occurs every day in some fashion to become aware of the how much of what is intended is actually understood by the student. The use of a variety of assessment tools demonstrates our belief that students learn in different ways, at different rates, and at different times. The result of assessment is considered a critical element that influences teacher decision-making and guides student learning.

Summative Assessments aims to give teachers and students a clear insight into what the student has understood. Summative assessment is the culmination of the teaching and learning process, and gives the students opportunities to demonstrate what has been learned.

Formative Assessment provides information that is used in order to plan the next stage in learning. It is interwoven with learning, and helps teachers and students to find out what the students already know and can do. Formative assessment aims to promote learning by giving regular and frequent feedback. This helps learners to improve knowledge and understanding, to foster enthusiasm for learning, to engage in thoughtful reflection, to develop the capacity for self-assessment, and to recognize the criteria for success.

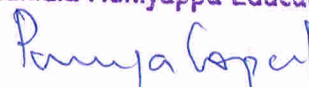
Assessment in the classroom will include:

- Using representative examples of students' work or performance to provide information about student learning.
- Collecting evidence of students' understanding and thinking.
- Documenting learning processes of groups and individuals.
- Engaging students in reflecting on their learning.
- Students assessing work produced by themselves and by others.
- Developing clear rubrics.
- Identifying exemplar student work.
- Keeping records of task results.

Effective assessments allow students to:

- Share their learning and understanding with others.
- Demonstrate a range of abilities based on knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills.

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- Use a variety of learning styles, multiple intelligences and abilities to express their understanding.
- Know and understand in advance the criteria for producing a quality product or performance.
- Participate in reflection: self and peer assessment.
- Base their learning on real-life experiences that can lead to further inquiries and understanding of the real world.
- Express different points of views, interpretations and perceptions.
- Analyze their learning and understand what needs to be improved.

Effective assessments allow teachers to:

- Be informed and aware during every stage of the teaching and learning process.
- Plan in response to student and teacher inquiries to help students understand better.
- Develop criteria for producing a quality product or performance.
- Gather evidence from which sound conclusions can be drawn.
- Provide evidence that can be effectively reported and understood by the whole school community to make improvements in the quality of education.
- Collaboratively review and reflect on student performance and progress.
- Take into account a variety of learning styles, multiple intelligences and abilities including different cultural contexts.

How do we collect and analyze the data?

Assessment strategies and tools of the 3C curriculum form the basis of a comprehensive approach to analyzing and represent the school's answer to the question "How will we know what we have learned?" The strategies are the methods or approaches that teachers use when gathering information about a student's learning. Teachers' record this information using a variety of tools, which are the instruments, used to collect data.

Assessment Strategies

Observations: All students are given individual attention and are observed regularly as well as in the group, and/or as a whole class.

Performance Assessments: Students are presented with a task that represents the kind of challenges that adults face in the world beyond the classroom. It requires using a repertoire of knowledge and skills to accomplish a goal or solve an open-ended problem. In addition, it entails the thoughtful application of knowledge rather than recalling facts.

Open-Ended Assessments: Students are presented with a challenging task and are asked to provide an original response which strengthens their problem solving ability.

Selected Response Assessments (Tests/Quizzes): These single-occasion assessments provide a snapshot of students' specific knowledge.

Portfolios: An ongoing, purposeful collection is composed of selected student work and is designed to demonstrate growth, creativity, and reflection.

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