

Comprehensive learning experience

A COMMON problem most students in examination-based learning systems experience is last-minute cramming when examination season comes around.

Sunway International School's (SIS) students are spared this situation by the school's coursework-based assessment and evaluation approach as practised in the Ontario secondary school curriculum.

Seventy per cent of the final grade is attributed to daily assignments, group and individual projects, presentations and participation in class, periodic quizzes and tests, online exercises and various other coursework.

The remaining 30% is allotted to the end-of-semester evaluation in the form of either an independent study unit completed throughout the semester or an internal examination that is specific to each course.

In this way, learning is an ongoing process with formative assessment that is current and consistent.

This provides students, parents and teachers with a clear

understanding of how to meet a particular student's learning needs so students can enjoy timely and relevant feedback on how to improve their learning.

SIS-certified Canadian teachers leverage on the genuine feedback from students' coursework to apply Ontario Ministry of Education-endorsed methods in assessing a student's capability.

This allows lessons and classroom strategies to be designed to harness students' strengths and potential while also focusing on areas where students need further development.

This personalised and student-centred approach results in a flexible and comprehensive learning experience for students to grow according to their interests and capabilities.

At SIS, this practice is implemented from the start of the education process in the Middle School division, with the objective of inculcating early commitment to their coursework.

Middle School facilitator Toban Brownridge says, "Assessment in the Ontario education programme

is an ongoing process where daily observation and evaluation of learning skills and content occurs to give students feedback – assessment for learning – and prepare them for timely summative assessments – assessment of learning."

Students also reflect on their learning to know how and what to improve, what they must achieve and how to accomplish a goal (assessment as learning).

In addition, students are informed of four major categories that teachers are looking for: knowledge and understanding, thinking and inquiry processes, communication, and application.

This ensures that students attain a holistic learning of content and skills that they are able to use outside of the school setting, thus preparing them for the rigours of secondary school and beyond.

The Ontario curriculum standards of 70:30 assignment to examination ratio empowers students to be responsible for their contribution towards the final grade.



Students at SIS benefit from a coursework-focused education, which makes learning an ongoing process.

Students who are introduced to SIS become genuinely interested and committed to their coursework, knowing that their own opinions, careful research and arguments will be awarded value as opposed to conforming to a pre-determined set of answers by an examination board.

Simultaneously, the students learn and retain the concepts and lessons taught in class more effectively through the practical application of actions when they complete their experiments and assignments.

The broad goals of assessment and evaluation should go beyond the acquisition of the highest scores and ranks in class.

It should prioritise individual learning needs and help build

a curriculum that can fulfil this need.

The Ontario programme at SIS operates on the premise that students learn in different ways and hence need different ways to demonstrate how well they have understood their studies.

By offering an alternative approach via coursework-based assessment and evaluation, SIS provides a more realistic reflection of a student's capabilities and potential.

It also ensures equal opportunities for all students to achieve excellence and success in their performance.

■ For more information, visit www.sis.sunway.edu.my or call 03-7491 8070.