

Managing assessment

Wallace High School, Stirling Council

Science and Physics

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This case study has a focus on reducing the burden of assessment in physics. However, it is worth noting that the department's approach to learning, teaching and assessment in the BGE underpins their approaches in the senior phase.

BGE

In the BGE, there are several approaches to assessment including:

- **Literacy, numeracy** and **practical skills** are assessed within the contexts of the topic
- **Knowledge and understanding** and **inquiry skills** via a test

S1 – all learners undertake experiments and complete a **lab report (LO 1.1 – 1.6)**. This provides a first introduction to the requirements and terminology expected in writing a scientific report. A plan is in place to introduce this to primary cluster schools.

S2/S3 – learners continue to develop their knowledge, undertaking and skills from S1. Learners **select their own context**, complete three experiments and the subsequent lab reports and present their findings in an **assignment-style report** reflecting the skills required at third and fourth level in reporting on scientific findings. This supports progression to the demands of the assignment in the National Qualifications. For example, one learner took 'make-up' as the context and completed three experiments – the efficiency of sun screen, the durability of lipstick and the effectiveness of waterproof mascara.

High-quality evidence of learning in the BGE is collated and used in the senior phase.

Senior Phase

By the time learners move into S4 they are already confident in the preparation of lab reports and assignment-style reports. This practice has been embedded in the science department for a number of years.

Every opportunity is taken to reduce the burden of assessment on learners and to ensure relevance of tasks. Units 1, 2 and 3 are typically assessed via a test and in order to reduce the burden of assessment, Unit 2 assessment is incorporated into the prelim examination.

Reflecting approaches in BGE, learners research a topic, complete experiments, write up Lab reports, write an assignment-type report all of which provides evidence of learning for the external assignment. For example, an assignment relating to road safety, research on forces and an experiment investigating the impact of seat belts.

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