

## Module 3: Unpacking and Connecting the Provincial Assessments

### Video 3a: Provincial Assessments

So one of the things we wanted to spend some time on is really looking at the new provincial assessments. Although we're focusing on grade 10, we really believe that this kind of goes more of the scope of K to 12. The reason we think it's important to look at this, is we really want our students to feel comfortable, confident when they engage with these assessments. And when I look at them, there's lots of things that we can do on purpose to support students in being successful. So this piece is looking at what are some of the skills and competencies that we see in the assessments and how do we collectively take up literacy and numeracy in a more focused way?

So one of the pieces that we need to consider is how do the old assessments compare to the new assessments? There's some pieces they have in common and then some significant departures from prior assessments, provincial assessments. So these were again, developed in conjunction with BC educators. They are required for graduation and they do allow us to have the same kind of supports that we had in past and they have the same duration of being written.

What's really significantly different is that they're no longer attached to a course. So it's no longer a certain percentage of a course and that they will be reported on to schools and hopefully in a way that we are able to act upon some of those results to support our students and use the assessments formatively. The grade 10 assessments in particular, use them formatively to change trajectories prior to graduation.

Students will get specific feedback around where they are on that proficiency scale and then the grade 10 one for literacy will not show up on their transcript. The intention is really formative, so that we can look at what do we notice about student learning? What are some of the ways that we can support? And then their grade 12 literacy assessment will be reflected on the transcript.

So structurally, there's a lot of similarity between the literacy and the numeracy assessments, in terms of there's common pieces that everyone needs to do. And then there's some student choice embedded within. They are done online with some portions of the numeracy done on paper. But the full literacy assessment will be online.

So you can see the structure of the literacy assessment, as Heather just said, there's a common part that all students do. And then students have some choice around what they select for the part B. That part B, does give them samples of what the text would look like. So students could then decide, "Do I want to do maybe more short pieces that are nonfiction? Or maybe I want to do fiction." But there's the opportunity for students to select what they might match best with their style of learning.

And one thing we get asked often is if students choose one option, can they then choose the other? And the answer's no. So they need to be thoughtful, to know and to really examine what the options are before they make their selection.

Personally, I think that's great because I think we have students who when they're nervous or excited and they want to do well, if they could spend a lot of time going back and forth trying to decide where they want to commit and that would take them a lot of time. So I think that being

able to pick and stick, helps them be more successful in the assessment. So what we'd like you to do now is just to consider the definition of literacy and numeracy.

So on your own, if you're working on this by yourself or with a partner, if there's two of you doing it, define literacy and numeracy.

### **Video 3a: Definitions**

Now that you've considered your own definition of literacy and numeracy, let us share what the province has published as a definition of literacy and numeracy. So literacy is the ability to critically analyze and make meaning from diverse texts and to communicate and express oneself in a variety of modes and for a variety of purposes in relevant contexts.

And then numeracy is the ability to interpret information within a given situation, apply mathematical understanding to solve an identified problem and to analyze and communicate a solution.

So there's a lot of things that overlap between them. Taking information from multiple places, discerning what's important, and then communicating your meaning from that. And justifying too, I think that justifying that both in literacy and numeracy.

### **Video 3b: Numeracy Assessment**

We'd like you to actually do a piece of the numeracy assessment. So in our experience, we had the opportunity to be around the province this year working with different teachers and educational assistants and admin in different places. And it was fascinating to consider what people bring to the thinking around numeracy.

For some folks it was that triggering almost they just like had maybe bad experiences, really were thinking that numeracy was just math and that therefore, they wouldn't be successful at it. And were quite anxious when we asked to do this, but we really think it's important for us, collectively, to understand and know what this work looks like. So that collectively, we can support our students in this learning.

We've provided you with the PDF of the assessment. It is available for the full assessment online, but we want you to have the opportunity to work with three other colleagues and you're just going to be doing one section of the assessment with the goal of coming back together and talking about what you noticed, what skills and competencies are being assessed and how you see that maybe connecting to your own curricular area.

### **Video 3b: Numeracy is More than Math**

Hopefully you've had a chance to consider on your own or with your colleagues what the skills and competencies are within the numeracy assessment and how you might support those within your own context.

One of the things that's published with the numeracy assessment is the five processes that are associated with or that this was designed around. So interpret, apply, solve, analyze, and then

communicate. So it's student choice within the document that's provided by the ministry. But really what student choice is about, is your ability to communicate your thinking and some of the decisions that you make around that. So what's interesting when you look at how those questions were designed, is that really only solving is the responsibility of the math and science curricular areas for developing. The rest, you can find overlap and be shared amongst all colleagues within a building, particularly within a secondary school building.

So if you have time to take a couple of seconds and just consider what are those, so analyze, when am I using analyze in my class? We know that we do, again, like we said earlier with curricular competencies, it might be about being more explicit. So if we were naming for students what these skills and competencies are. Again, kids are going to become more comfortable and confident when they actually sit the numeracy assessment.

What we've noticed in terms of what students have been writing in and where students have had some difficulties around, have we exposed them to the ambiguity that's necessary and to be able to state their assumptions of what they're seeing. Because when we try to make our thinking visible with respect to numeracy, then we're able to communicate in a way that allows students to be more successful on this assessment. So it's about creating some conditions that are a little more fluid and flexible. So students have to justify their thinking openly because that is a requirement to be successful in this assessment.

And the other piece is, I think students are still hearing numeracy, thinking math. So I think it's our collective responsibility around how can we support our students in understanding that this isn't about math, that there's other skills and competencies that they need to be proficient with in order to be successful? And we hear students that say, "Well, like I did pre-calculus 11 and I didn't do well on the numeracy assessment." Again, we're trying to help explain the shift and so we really encourage students to look at the videos and look at the examples and understand that what we're asking is not math, we're looking at numeracy.

One thing that province is developing, is a report that can go to schools around the progress of a cohort or individual students or even the school level that's focused on not just the outcome of the assessment. So not just who has a developing or how many students are proficient. But actually where they are with respect to these processes.

So we're really hopeful that, that report will be available to us and that will allow us to action and improve things for students. So that we can actually have conversations around what can we do on purpose with the cohort or with individual students, so that they can be more successful if they choose to write it again or just more successful in life?

Yeah, and again, with the cross-curricular nature of these skills, we're going to see if we're attending to these, skills that are a numeracy, that students will be more successful when they do the literacy 12 as well.

### **Video 3c: Literacy Assessment**

When we look at the literacy assessment, what we'll notice is that there's an essential question that frames the entire assessment and then there's sub questions that students will address for both part A and part B.

We'll also notice that there's a lot of diverse texts that have been pulled together. So students are required to read information from multiple places and then synthesize it to make meaning from it. The texts can come from an image, it can come from a short story, it can come from a piece of nonfiction.

An infographic, so we're pulling from a really diverse set of texts. So when we're looking at how we support students, we need to be considering what kinds of texts can we offer and how can we do that with diverse sets?

So when we've worked with teachers in the province, it's been super refreshing for them because when they look at the assessment, they can see themselves in it. So we often hear science teachers go, "Wow, like that's directly for my curriculum." Or a socials teacher who says, "Well I use that kind of texts all the time." So that's one of the reasons we want you to have a look at it because I think it allows us to be more deliberate in the texts we're using with our students.

Then again, we're not saying teach to the assessment, but we want to be explicit about the kinds of texts and making sure that we're offering students a way into the text. Reading an infographic takes a really specific set of skills. So who's supporting students in understanding, how do you navigate an infographic or how do you make sense of maybe something that's really visual with some words but not maybe as complex as a literary piece?

Okay, so one other piece that we can also consider is the essential questions. In this province, we've been working with essential questions for quite a number of years. So it's actually refreshing to see that the assessment now mirrors that practice.

But we know that when we are working with essential questions, we are supporting students with being successful on this because essential questions require us to actually consider integrating multiple sources of information. So again, it mirrors that idea that our definition of literacy and numeracy requires us to pull information from multiple places.

So the frame that's being used for the nature of the questions is Webb's depth of knowledge. It's a point progression and it's similar to Bloom's taxonomy in terms of the language it offers us for how the questions are structured.

So it's worth looking at. It is part of the supporting documents with both assessments on the website, but looking at it to offer... it offers us some language that we can use both with our students and then with our colleagues around how we're being intentional about increasing the depth of understanding and how we're approaching our learning.

So I encourage you to maybe consider like pull column three and maybe sit with your department and then brainstorm like what are ways that we're addressing this within our particular department? Students will receive their information back reported on a proficiency scale. So the province has examples of that in the materials and you'll notice that students will go from emerging, developing, proficient, extending, and that information will be detailed for students on the reports that they get back, as well as information that goes to the school.

So again, it's important that students have an opportunity to maybe have a look at that and understand what that scale is and means. And also that we're thoughtful in the way that we communicate that with parents because it is going to be different. Often parents are looking for the, did they pass? Did they get an A? Did they get a B? And these assessments are not going to be reported in that way. Students will be given a level with indicators around why they received that particular band.

Yeah, it's important that we've removed the numbers because it's not meant to be a ratio. So it's not a one out of four, it's not 25%, you can't convert it to that scale. It is meant to be different. So now that we've talked about the literacy assessment, it's your turn to write a section of it.

So this is best done with a group of three, but if you're on your own, just have a look at all three parts and try one segment. But we want you to consider this assessment both as a student and as a teacher. So when you're writing it, look for what are the skills and competencies embedded within this assessment and then in what ways can you support that within your content?

So when you work with your triad, there will be, if you're in a group of three, collectively you will write one full assessment. So after you write the assessment, we would be asking you to come back and you may not have time to do the whole piece, but we just want you to experience what kind of texts they're using, what are the questions like? And then be able to talk to your partners, who haven't seen that piece of the assessment, to share kind of big ideas and what kinds of texts you experienced, what kind of questions you had, what were the writing pieces students were required to do.

We'd like you to notice the flexibility in the writing pieces. Is there something that stands out for you? Then again, with that lens of you as a content area teacher thinking, "Wow, how does this mirror some of the things that I'm doing in my classroom and how could I maybe make some explicit links for students?"

### **Video 3c: Supporting Literacy and Numeracy Skills**

So we hope you had the opportunity to have a great conversation with your colleagues. Again, if you were doing this independently, we hope you took some time to notice what are the things that stood out for you in the assessment? I guess what we really want us to consider as what we said at the beginning, how do we best support our students in being confident and competent when they do these assessments.

I think that comes to us owning and knowing that it really is our collective responsibility to support literacy and numeracy in our schools. I think it's really important that we consider how do we do that and how do we do that together? How do we work in our department? How do we work across department? How do we work across our schools to make sure that our students are in the best position possible? Not just for the assessment, but that those skills, they're becoming more capable and able, through the learning piece around an area that we've identified in our province as really significantly important for kids.