Using Teacher Clarity to Demystify Grading

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Activity 1: Examining Grading Parameters

Grading Parameter to Consider	Direct Application for My Classroom, Department, PLC, School, or District
Truthfulness	
Reliability	
Impartiality	
Understandability	

Deeper Dive into Grading Parameters

Activity 2: Examining the Link Between Effective Success Criteria and Grading / Feedback

1. Are **LINKED** to the learning intention and aligned to focus / priority academic standard(s)
2. Are specific to an activity or set of tasks to reach them
3. Are discussed with pupils for understanding *prior to undertaking the activity or set of tasks*
4. Provide a scaffold and focus for pupils while they engaged in the activity or set of tasks
5. Are used as the basis for feedback and clear and peer and self-assessment

Take-Aways:

Five Strategies to Promote Assessment Capability Through Clarity of Grading

1	**Using Training Tasks**
2	**Create Challenges Through Tasks and Weight Appropriately**
3	**Tying Learning Progressions into Initial Assessment and Grading**
4	**Tying Scoring Guides and Grading to Learning Intentions and Success Criteria**
5	**Create a Selection Syllabus**

Strategy 1: Using Training Tasks to Check for Critical Prerequisite Learning Progressions

HS-LS3-3: Apply concepts of statistics and probability to explain the variation and distribution of expressed traits in a population.

Concepts (nouns)	Skills (verbs)	DOK
Concepts of statistics Concepts of probability	**Apply:** • Concepts of probability • Statistics of probability	**2- Apply**: Solve routine problem applying multiple concepts or decision points
Variation of expressed traits Distribution of expressed traits	**Explain:** • Variation of expressed traits in a population • Distribution of express traits in a population	**3-Understand:** Explain, generalize, or connect ideas using supporting evidence

Identifying and Assessing Critical Prerequisite Learning → Training Tasks

Mr. Jones, a biology teacher, and his collaborative team has determined that understanding probability is a key learning progression that students must have to be successful in the later, more rigorous tasks related to his teaching of ***NGS standard HS-LS3-3: Apply concepts of statistics and probability to explain the variation and distribution of expressed traits in a population.*** What students need more than anything for success later in this unit is the ability to **multiply fractions!** The first two *training* tasks are for students to practice and master this essential learning progression, but more so for Mr. Jones and his colleagues to assess where students are in their proficiency of this critical skill. If students show proficiency of this learning progression on the first two tasks, they can skip the third and move onto the more difficult material that will be graded.

Example of Training Task to Assess Critical Skill of Multiplying Fractions

Task	1	2	3
	Training task Probability lab (coin flipping)	**Training task** Genetic cross lab	**Optional training task** if lack of Significant Progress Shown on task 2 Double trait cross-probability lab
Kristen	M+	E	N/A
Brittany	M–	M	N/A
Mark	NME	NME	SPG
Samantha	SPG	NME	M–

Note. E= exemplary, M = mastery, SPG= significant progress, NME = no mastery evidence,

Deep / Full description of using training task with this standard

Strategy 2: Create Challenges Within Individual Tasks

Description: 11th grade English teacher, Mrs. Tonkovich's lesson focused on the *common core standard: RI. 11-12.1*: "Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain." She developed a task for her students that focused specifically on the learning intention for students to be able to *determine where an author's text leaves matters uncertain*. Mrs. Tonkovich selected a text that aligned with junior-senior level text complexity from appendix B of the common core standards: John Keats's poem: *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. Mrs. Tonkovich determined the task to be at a moderately deep level. Students would need to analyze and interpret Keats's poem and could provide multiple correct answers.

She also added an *challenge* task, designed at a higher level of rigor for students who *either had the ability* or the *desire* to go even deeper into analyzing several of Keats' poems. Both of her scoring guides are listed below.

Example

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General Task:

Students: Please Read *Ode on* a *Grecian Urn* and note where Keats left readers wondering about the urn and its decoration. Write a short two-paragraph essay citing specific examples why you felt Keats leave readers pondering. ***(30 points possible).*** You must score a two on the rubric for any points, or you will receive feedback, which you may apply before resubmission.

Challenge (Weighted) Task:

For Students wanting a *greater challenge for greater possible reward ...* In addition to citing the uncertainties in *Ode to* a *Grecian Urn,* include an additional 1-2 paragraphs, citing from at least two additional John Keats' poems (listed below), specific examples where he left matters open to interpretation for readers across multiple poems. This task carriers a weighted bonus of ten points for possible ***40 out of 30!!***

- *Addressed To Haydon*

- A Thing of Beauty (Endymion)

- Imitation Of Spenser

- Ode On Melancholy

- To Autumn

For the additional points, you must score a one on the three-point rubric to earn any points, or you will have to complete the

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General Task Rubric			Challenge (Weighted) Task Rubric	
Rubric Score	**Point Total**		**Rubric Score**	**Point Total**
3	30 / 30		3	40 / 30
2	20 / 30		2	30 / 30
1	None—Feedback and Re-attempt		1	20 / 30
			0	Feedback + chance to demonstrate mastery on general task before reattempting challenge task

Student	Task Performed	Demonstration of Skill	Grade
Kristen	General Task	3	30/30
Brittany	More Rigorous Task	2	30/30
Mark	More Rigorous Task	3	40/30
Samantha	More Rigorous Task	1	20/30
Gabe	General Task	1	No Points-Yet (Feedback)

Strategy #3: Tying Learning Progressions into Initial Assessment and Grading: 6th Grade ELA Example

Standard: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone

Concepts (nouns)	Skills (verbs)	DOK
Meaning of words, phrases, figurative and connotative meaning	DETERMINE (meaning) ● Words ● Phrases ● Figurative ● Connotative	Apply - DOK 2 - Use context to identify meaning of words/phrases
Impact of word choice	ANALYZE (impact of word choice) ● Meaning ● Tone	Apply - DOK 3 - Apply word choice, point of view, style to impact readers'/viewers' interpretation of a text

Learning Intention: Understand how to use context clues to determine the meaning of an unknown word in a text.

Success Criteria:
- Identify 3 unknown words in what you are reading
- Recognize the context clues present that support determining word meaning for each of the 3 words
- Explain how the context clues present support determining word meaning of each of the 3 words
- Determine the meaning of the 3 unknown words

HESS DOK RIGOR Matrix--Reading

Hess DOK Rigor Matrix— Math and Science

Learning Progressions:

1. **Define** "determine"
2. **Define** "context clue"
3. **Determine** different types of context clues
4. **Identify** unknown words in a sentence.
5. *Identify context clues present in a sentence that support word meaning***
6. *Recognize type of context clue(s) present that support word meaning*
7. **Explain** how context clues support determining the meaning of the unknown word
8. **Determine** the meaning of the unknown word in the sentence.
9. **Identify** unknown words in a paragraph
10. **Identify** context clues present in a paragraph that support word meaning.
11. **Recognize** type of context clue(s) present that support word meaning
12. **Explain** how context clues support determining the meaning of the unknown word(s)
13. **Determine** the meaning of the unknown word(s) in the paragraph

Concise Quick Progress Check for Learning w/ distractor analysis to check for learning progressions 5-6.

Excerpt from text:
Dad had pulled the car off the road so we could catch a few hours of sleep and turned the radio off. He said he was tired of the 'teenager rap music' I remember Vonetta snoring on one side of me, Fern with Miss Patty Cake burrowed into my side was also making deep slumbering noises. Somehow I managed to find myself snoring with my sisters and Dad. At once I, along with my cousins, was jolted into being wide-awake as there had been a loud rap against the window. We then could only see bright balls of flashing red and blue lights that had appeared to be flying around the entire car from the back seats to the front and then back again. It was a state policeman trying to get Dad's attention.

Assessment Item: The author described the state policeman approaching the family's car:

Then there had been a loud rap against the window.

Why did the author choose the words "loud rap" in this excerpt?

Choices	Possible / likely Inference
A. To show the policeman had tried to get their attention	Student selects a choice that demonstrates an understanding of the clues in the text. (Selection indicates development towards learning progression). ***Moves onto graded task must demonstrate additional mastery during class work time.***
B. To show the policeman tapped on the window	Student took very literal interpretation of what they read and missed the clues the author was stating related to the intensity of the sound.
C. To show that the sound reminded her of a rap song from the radio	Student misinterprets the clue earlier in the passage about teenager music
D. To show that the knocking sound startled the people in the car	***Best Answer (Moves onto graded task independently)***

Strategy 4: Tying Scoring Guides and Grading to Learning Intentions and Success Criteria

High School Social Studies Example

Priority Standard: Analyze the roles and activities of political parties, interest groups and mass media and how they affect the beliefs and behaviors of local, state, and national constituencies.

Supporting Standard: 9-10.WS.1: **Write arguments focused on** discipline-specific content. I**ntroduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims,** and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), **counterclaims,** reasons, and evidence.

Learning Intention(s):

- Understand how political parties, interest groups, and mass media impact how people believe and act at the local, state, & national levels.

- Develop an argument as to why certain factors influence people's beliefs & actions.

- State possible counterpoints to your claim

Success Criteria: *Students will be able to:*

- Analyze evidence from multiple sources to make a strong claims (arguments)***

- List and expand upon 1-2 possible counterpoints to your claims (arguments)***

- Determine the power & limitations of political parties, interest groups and mass media

- Identify possible (likely) beliefs of 2 or more constituent groups

- Indicate specific examples of how constituent beliefs drive their actions and behaviors

Extended Constructed Response Item:

After analyzing your sources, demonstrate your understanding of the influence political parties, interest groups, and mass media have on constituent beliefs and their voting behaviors. In a 3-5 paragraph essay develop and defend a claim of which of the three has the most power over political outcomes.

Your essay must include the following:

- *Develop a strong claim (argument) as to who (you feel) has the most power (influence) over political outcomes*

- *Formulate a clear / concise thesis to support your claim*

- *Supports claim(s) with textual evidence w/ accurate data (evidence), statistics, & historical events*

- *Accurately*

    - *Identify the powers of influence identified*

    - *Identify the limitations of influence identified*

- *State possible 2-3 counterpoints to your claim*

- *Include a prediction and rationale for the general election of 2016*

- *Include a terse conclusion statement that aligns well to your overall thesis*

Short Constructed Response Item:

Considering the results of the 2016 Presidential primary election, write a short 2 political parties, interest groups, and mass media may have affected paragraph essay explaining how constituent beliefs.

3-Proficient (Achieves Success Criteria)	2-Approaching Success Criteria	1-Beginning (Towards Success Criteria)
Ensure your essay includes the following: Accurately • Identify political parties & interest groups closely involved w/ the primary elections of 2016 **(30)** **Correctly:** • Identify three common constituent beliefs related to their party affiliation **(15)** • State w/ examples 3 constituent behaviors likely influenced by mass media activities **(30)** • Explain w/ examples your argument for how interest groups reached voters & impacted the candidates they supported **(40)**	**Meets 3 of 4** of Proficient Criteria	**Meets 2 or less** of Proficient Criteria

4 – Excelling (Above Success Criteria)	3 -Achieves Success Criteria (150 points)	2-Approaching Success Criteria	1-Beginning (Towards Success Criteria)

Achieves Critical Success Criteria Elements (over 120 points) Plus any of the following:
 	
• Prediction of election results should their claim not hold true and why **(20)**
 	
• Include Historical examples refuting their claim from previous elections **(20)**
	1. Thesis statement is clear and concise for the claim being made: ***Who has the most power / influence over elections*** **(20)**
	
	2. Claim is supported with accurate:
	   a. Evidence from recent primary elections **(15)**
	   b. Historical evidence / statistics from previous general elections **(15)**
	
	3. Includes at least 2 clear and accurate examples of:
	   a. Powers of influence **(10)**
	   b. Limitation of influence **(10)**
	
	4. State 2-3 possible counter points of claim identifying at least one other possible strong influences over elections **(35)**
	
	5. Include prediction and rationale for upcoming general election based on current polls tied back to your original claim / thesis **(35)**
	
	6. Include concise conclusion statement tightly tied to thesis **(10)**
		Meets 4 of 6 Proficient Criteria	**Meets 2 or Fewer** of Proficient Criteria

Strategy 5:
Developing a Selection Syllabus

Unit Planning Starter for Selection Syllabus

Unit of Study	Priority / Power Standards Addressed		% of Importance / Weight in Academic Points	Amount of Instructional (Days) Planned for Including Buffer (85 total)
1. The United States in WWII (1939–1945)	USH 5.1USH.5.2 USH 5.6* USH.5.7 USH.5.8 USH.5.9	CCSS.ELA.W.11-12.1.C CCSS.SL.11-12.1.B CCSS.SL.11-12.5 CCSS.RST.9-10.1, 9-10.2, 9-10.5	575 (33%)	4 Weeks plus 3 days buffer: Total Days: 23 % of available 27%
2. Postwar United States (1945–1960	USH.6.1* USH 6.3 USH 6.4		205 (12%)	2 weeks plus 3 days buffer: T days: 13 % of available: 15%
3. America in Troubled Times (1960–1980)	USH.7.1 USH.7.11	CCSS.SL.11-12.6 CCSS.SL.11-12.1.B CCSS.W.11-12.1	490 (29%)	4 weeks plus 4 days buffer: T Days: 24 % of available: 28%
4. Contemporary United States (1980–Present)	USH.8.1; USH.8.5 USH.8.7; USH.8.8 USH 8.9	**Multiple**	290 (17%)	3 weeks plus 4 days buffer: T Days: 19 % of Available: 22%
All Units— Effective Student Collaboration		CCSS.SL.9-10.1d (As an overarching process Skill)	90 (5%) Process:	On Going-Self Evaluate
History Repeating Itself—Lessons to Be Learned (Current EVENT Tasks)		CCSS.ELA.W.11-12.1.A & B	75 (4%)	On Going

Deep description of how to develop a selection syllabus

Selection Syllabus for Ninth-Grade U.S. History

Unit of study or overarching topic	Primary standards assessed	Assignments/assessments/performance tasks	Point or mark values	Total possible
History Repeating Itself—Lessons to Be Learned	Multiple social studies: Applying historical thinking to present-day issues. CCSS.ELA.W.11-12.1.A and B	1. Current event write-ups: 3/4 of a page that states the event and argues its significance to historical context	Up to five 15 points for mastery	75
The United States in WWII (1939–1945)	USH 5.1-5.6	2. Vocabulary assessments	Two: 40 for mastery 30; for significant progress	80
	USH.5.2 CCSS.ELA.W.11-12.1.C	3. Looking through another's lens. Create written (1–2 pages), oral (5–8 minutes), and/or visual comparisons of views of two different pairs of world leaders from their perspective	Two: 75 for exemplary; 50 for significant progress	150
	CCSS.ELA.W.11-12.1.C	4. Written critiques of peer comparisons of former world leaders	Up to three for 15 points apiece	45
	USH.5.6 CCSS.SL.11-12.1.B CCSS.SL.11-12.5	5. Collaborative task: Sharing their voice: Student teams create a virtual and social media presence to describe and promote the message related to how certain ethic groups in the United States were treated and viewed their situation during WWII. Choice element: Teams can select any of the following: Japanese Americans, African Americans,	115 for exemplary 100 for mastery 85 for significant progress	100*

		Native Americans, Hispanics, and women.		
	A = USH.5.8; B = USH.5.9 CCSS.RST.9-10.1, 9-10.2, 9-10.5	6. . Essay: Student choice: One of the following Roar of Guns and Rivets to the Roar of the 1950s: Explain and argue how American culture was shaped by the events of and end of WWII. From Friend to Foe: Explain and argue how World War II led to the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union as rival superpowers.	165 for exemplary 150 for mastery 120 for significant progress	150*
	USH.5.7 Summarize the efforts the national government made to regulate production, labor, and prices during the war and evaluate the success or failure of these efforts. (Government)	7. . Bonus/optional tasks: Short essay or multimedia presentation forming an argument related to the success/failure and long-term impact of regulation of production, labor, prices, etc. during WWII and its continued impact (regulation) today.	50 for exemplary 40 for mastery	*50
Postwar United States (1945–1960)	USH.6.1-6.4	8. . Vocabulary assessment	40 for mastery 30 for significant progress	40
	USH.6.1	9. Domino or No-Domino: Analyzing the beliefs and ideas that formulated the belief in the "domino effect."	65 for mastery 45 for significant progress	65
	USH.6.3	10. Constitutional and societal effects for civil rights through education: Analysis of one of the following:	110 for exemplary 90 for mastery	*100

		Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court case Little Rock Nine (Little Rock High School) Optional methods for demonstrating mastery: Essay, presentation, or multimedia. Student choice with teacher approval.	75 for significant progress	
America in Troubled Times (1960–1980)	USH.7.1-7.11	11. Vocabulary assessment	Two: 40 for mastery; 30 for significant progress	80
		Track selection: Students select from one of the following tracks to focus on during this unit: Civil rights Vietnam War Education reform Developing trends in science (progress) Political issues and scandals	Group task: Students investigate their area in detail. (Some mandatory resources will be provided.) Their task is to design several tasks that demonstrate understanding of the major elements of this focus area, events that happened, significant individuals, and impact both short and long term. Their product must include impact seen within the last 5 years.	
	Depends on track	12. Quiz/test assessment: Over major aspects of track (50 questions, 10 of which are short answer)	90–100 for mastery 75–89 for significant progress	100
	Depends on track CCSS.SL.11-12.6	13. Individual 4-minute argumentative speech	50 for mastery 40 for significant progress	50

	CCSS.SL.11-12.1.B	14. Group product/performance of evidence of mastery: Convey individual and group solid understanding of what the most significant events were and their short and long term impact.	Individual grade: 165 for exemplary 150 for mastery 120 for significant progress Group grade: 65 for exemplary 50 for mastery 30 for significant progress	*200 (20 points max bonus for individual or group)
		Optional methods for demonstrating mastery: Essay, presentation, multimedia. Student choice with teacher approval.		
	CCSS.W.11-12.1	15. Written critiques of peer products and individual speeches	Up to four for 15 points for mastery	60
Contemporary United States (1980–Present)	USH.8.1-8.9	16. Vocabulary assessment	40 for mastery 30 for significant progress	40
	USH.8.5	17. How the Cold War turned warm: Analyze events and argue which were most significant in reducing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union.	60 for exemplary 50 for mastery 40 for significant progress	*50
	USH.8.7	18. Supreme Court analysis: Explain the constitutional significance of two the following landmark decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court: *Westside Community School District v. Mergens* (1990), *Reno v. American Civil Liberties Union* (1997), *Mitchell v. Helms* (2000), *Bush v.*	120 for exemplary (60 per case) 100 for mastery (50 per case) 80 for significant progress (40 per case)	*100

		Gore (2000).		
	USH.8.8 Multiple ELA Common Core	19.. 9/11 analysis: Argue with evidence of three major changes in U.S. society and culture and three changes that didn't happen because of American resolve.	115 for exemplary 100 for mastery 85 for significant progress	*100
Speaking and listening/participation	CCSS.SL.9-10.1d	20.. Engage in weekly discussions that propel conversations	5 per week for 18 weeks (up to 90)	90
Total possible points/grade distribution			Total possible: 1,725 (bonus not included) *Total possible bonus: 155 (Tasks listed with an * are ones where students can earn more than the possible point total point values).	1,575 **A** 1,400 **B** 1,225 **C** 1,224 or less (Feedback and chance to improve grade with resubmissions of tasks or assignments)

Note. This example is one I have modified from several versions I personally observed teachers implementing. I have aligned standards for tasks with Indiana Social Studies Standards for U.S. History 1939–present: http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/standards/socialstudies/ss-2014-ushistory-20140325.pdf.