#DistanceLearning Recommendations for Grading, Assessment, & Feedback

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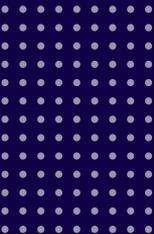
GRADING.
ASSESSMENT.
FEEDBACK.
LITERACY.

I'm a veteran English teacher & department chair at Highland High School in Bakersfield, CA.
I'm passionate about grading, assessment, feedback, & literacy at the secondary level.

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Distance learning has been tough on students and teachers alike, and the end isn't yet anywhere in sight. Now that we know that school closures will last months rather than weeks, we need to consider best practices to guide our distance learning through the rest of the school year.

These slides present some distance learning recommendations on *learning expectations, assessment, feedback, and grading* to consider when making decisions in learning teams.

They are presented in order of what I see as their importance in student learning.

1) Learning Expectations

- Begin by reevaluating priority standards/learning targets as a learning team, considering the current context of student learning.
- There's no obligation to stick to the unit maps created & used in years past. Our situation has greatly changed, and so our teaching––curriculum included––should adapt to adequately meet the needs of our students in the present situation.
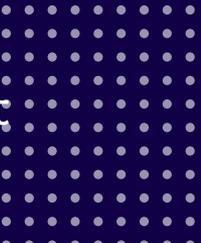
1) Learning Expectations

Here are some questions to consider while reevaluating priority standards/learning targets (answers should be *yes* to each question):

- Have students already learned at least a part of the standard this year?

- Are students mostly able to learn the standard on their own?

- Is the standard especially meaningful for their learning in the course this year?

- Is the standard especially meaningful for their learning next year?

1) Learning Expectations

Importantly, teachers should use rubrics to communicate and clarify learning expectations. Past rubrics may need to be modified or updated to meet the current learning context.

Example Rubric

AP Rhetorical Analysis Rubric: Unit 7

Criteria	Exceeds	Proficient	Developing	Beginning	N/S
Rhetorical Situation (RHS 2A)	Accurately and thoughtfully integrates essential parts of the rhetorical situation into the introduction.	Accurately integrates essential parts of the rhetorical situation into the introduction.	Accurately integrates some of the essential parts of the rhetorical situation into the introduction. Some parts may be unimportant or inaccurate.	Accurately integrates minimal parts of the rhetorical situation into the introduction.	*Unintelligible *Copied text *Off purpose *Too brief to evaluate *Not present
Analysis (REO5C)	Accurately and thoughtfully identifies and explains important rhetorical strategies the author uses to achieve a purpose.	Accurately identifies and explains important rhetorical strategies the author uses to achieve a purpose.	Accurately identifies and explains some rhetorical strategies the author uses to achieve a purpose; some strategies may be inaccurate or unimportant; some explanations may lack depth or accuracy.	Most strategies and explanations are inaccurate; explanations may be missing.	*Unintelligible *Copied text *Off purpose *Too brief to evaluate *Not present
Clarity (STL8B)	Words and sentences are throughtfully used to clearly communicate ideas throughout the entire text.	Words and sentences clearly communicate ideas in a majority of the text.	Words and sentences often communicate ideas in a clear way, but some areas of the text are unclear.	Words and sentences are often unclear in the text, leading to an overall lack of clarity of ideas.	*Unintelligible *Copied text *Off purpose *Too brief to evaluate *Not present

2) Assessment

Even though students are learning from home, teachers still need to collect evidence of student learning of reprioritized standards/learning targets.

This evidence is essential for the feedback students need to continue the learning process.

2) Assessment

A few recommendations:

- Formative before summative! Focus on formative assessment to determine students' current level of learning.

- Formative assessment can be anything used to collect evidence of student learning. Ex: individual assignments, quizzes, reflections, etc.

- Summative assessment may be used if a teacher feels the learning progression has come to an end and students are mostly at a proficient level.

- Summative assessments should focus on assessing skills, not knowledge. Teachers should assume students have many knowledge-level resources available (but these resources shouldn't be necessary to take the assessment).

- Students should be allowed multiple opportunities to retake assessments, especially considering the context of the current learning experience.
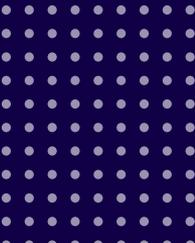
3) Feedback

Feedback is an essential part of the learning process, & students need this more than ever to continue learning from home.

3) feedback

A few guiding ideas:

- Spend a majority of your time providing students with feedback on their learning progress. Align feedback to priority standards/learning targets, and be as timely as possible.
- Use formative assessment to gather evidence of student learning for feedback. Provide feedback early and often.
- If a student wants to retake a summative assessment, treat the first take of the summative assessment as a formative assessment, providing feedback to help the student learn from his mistakes.

4) Grading

While grading isn't essential for learning & we could do without it for the rest of the school year, it may still be appropriate in some distance learning cases.

More than anything, when creating grades, ensure the grade represents student learning of your prioritized standards/learning targets.

4) Grading

Some grading recommendations:

- Don't grade practice, whether this is called classwork, homework, etc.,
  - This is too much of an equity issue when there is such a great disparity in students' learning resources.
  - Work completion doesn't necessarily indicate learning, so the grade accuracy can be questioned when practice is included in grades.
- Why should kids do it if it's not graded? Because they see the relevance and importance of the practice. We need to aim for intrinsic motivation instead of extrinsic motivation

4) Grading

Some grading recommendations:

- If you do create grades, make them from summative assessments that assess only repeat standards. This way, grades simply represent a more updated look at student learning of those prioritized standards/targets.
  - If a student doesn't complete an assessment, considering using alternative forms of evidence or past evidence of learning from before school closures.
  - However, in light of the current learning context and considering the desired meaning of grades (see above), it doesn't seem appropriate for a student grade to be lower after school closures than it was before the closure.
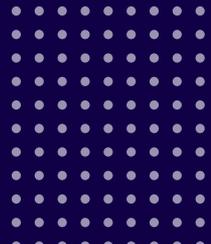
Final Thoughts

More than anything, use your professional judgment when making these pedagogical decisions.

- Make team decisions
- Prioritize equity
- Strive for a balance between learning, grace, & understanding.
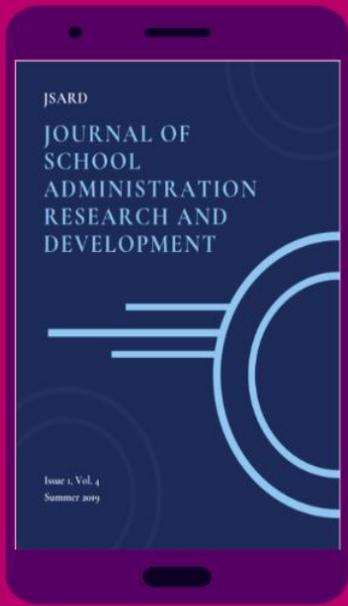
THANKS!

Questions?

Contact me: @joshkunnath, joshkunnath@gmail.com, or joshkunnath.com

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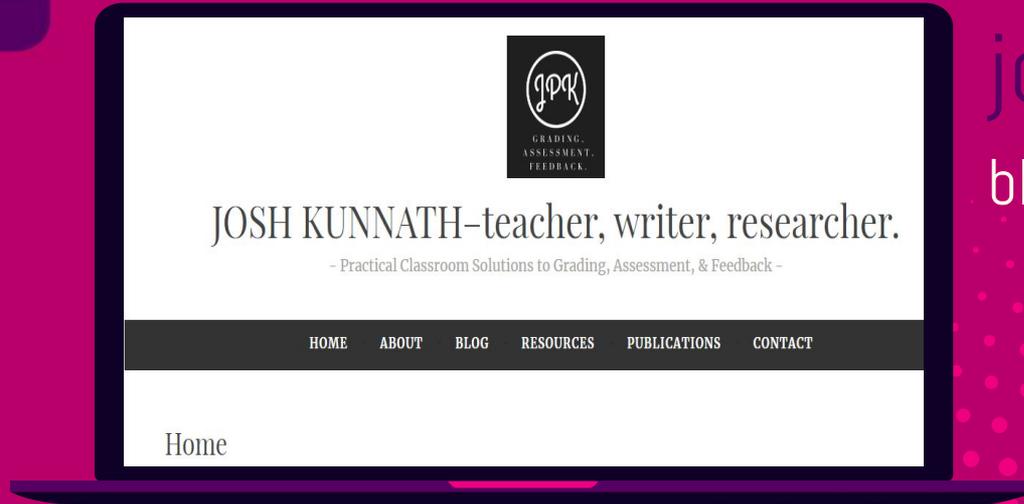
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