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Grading from the Inside Out:

Bringing Accuracy to Student Assessment through a Standards-Based Mindset

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Solution Tree

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Grading from the Inside Out

Workshop Targets:

1. Why traditional grading practices are no longer relevant and how grading practices can modernize in a standards-based instructional classroom
2. Why the grading *true north* (accuracy and confidence) is the essential, overarching vision for sound assessment and grading practices
3. What it means to develop a standards-based mindset and the specific strategies that begin to shape a rethinking of how grades are determined.
4. How to hold students more accountable for learning without compromising the accuracy of their proficiency grades
5. How to ensure that students earn full credit for the learning, regardless of how *low* or *slow* their start.
6. Why homework should be repurposed to be a formative assessment strategy and the ways in which homework can become a more productive, learning-centered exercise

The Modern Assessment Paradigm

"The formative and summative purposes of assessment can be so intertwined that they are mutually supportive rather than conflicting. Unless this is done, formative assessment cannot achieve its full potential to improve learning,

-Paul Black (2013)

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Grading True North: Accuracy & Confidence

Grading
True North

Confidence Level
LOW   HIGH

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> "Validity is in question when the **construct to be measured is not purely achievement** but rather some mix of achievement and nonachievement factors."
>
> "Validity is in question when **grades mean different things** in different schools or subjects, in different teachers' classes, and for different types of students."
>
> -Susan Brookhart (2013)

Validity and Reliability

- **Validity** refers to whether an assessment is **measuring what it is intended to measure** … and is related to a specific use of an assessment or the interpretation of the data.

- **Reliability** refers to **how consistently** an assessment measures what it is intended to measure. If a test is reliable, the results should be repeatable.
  (Heritage, *Formative Assessment: Making It Happen in the Classroom*, 2010)

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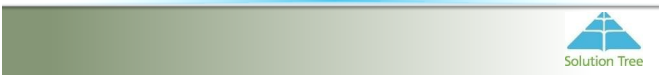
> "Expectations about the likelihood of eventual success determine the amount of effort people are willing to put in. Those who are convinced that they can be successful in carrying out the actions required for a successful outcome - who have the self-efficacy - are likely to try harder and persist longer when they face obstacles."
>
> Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Confidence, p. 39

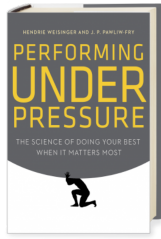## Performing Under Pressure (Weisinger & Pawliw-Fry, 2015)

- **STRESS**: Situation of too many demands and not enough resources.

- **PRESSURE:** Situation where something at stake is dependent on the outcome of your performance**.**

> "When we confuse daily stressful situations for pressure moments, we react physically, mentally, and behaviorally in ways that are out of proportion to the circumstances. The danger lies in the fact that continually confusing stress for pressure habituates, and we lose the ability to think clearly. Misdiagnosing stress as pressure reduces our abilities needlessly."
>
> -Weisinger & Pawliw-Fry, 2015

The "COTE" of Armor
(Weisinger & Pawliw-Fry, 2015)

Confidence
Optimism
Tenacity
Enthusiasm

PERFORMING UNDER PRESSURE
THE SCIENCE OF DOING YOUR BEST WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

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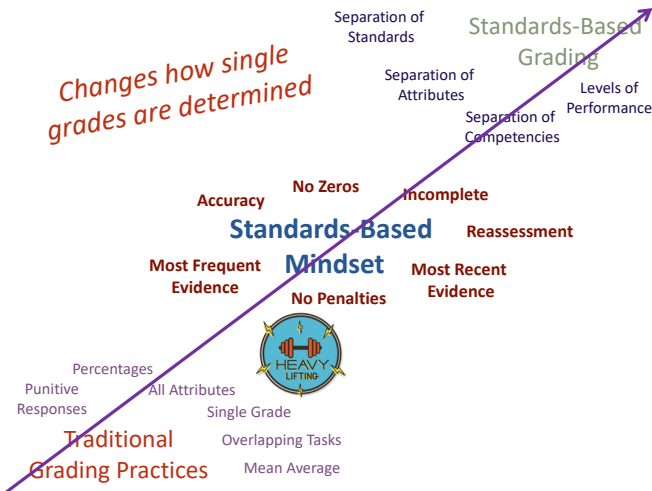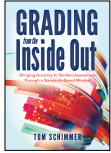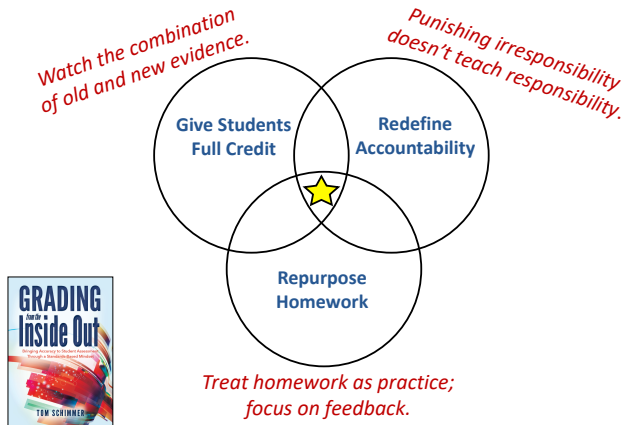_____
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"Current research shows that the parts of the brain responsible for impulse control (measured in the lateral prefrontal cortex) may not completely develop until early adulthood, while the parts of the brain that boost sensation-seeking (the ventral striatum and the orbitofrontal cortex) start growing just after puberty begins. Teenagers may cheat (or do drugs or drive too fast) partly because their sense of thrill outweighs their sense of risk."

-Weisinger & Pawliw-Fry, 2015

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## Developing a Standards-Based Mindset

Changes how single grades are determined

Separation of Standards

Standards-Based Grading

Separation of Attributes

Levels of Performance

Separation of Competencies

Accuracy   No Zeros   Incomplete

Standards-Based   Reassessment

Most Frequent Evidence   **Mindset**   **Most Recent Evidence**

No Penalties

HEAVY LIFTING

Percentages
Punitive Responses   All Attributes

Single Grade

Traditional   Overlapping Tasks

Grading Practices   Mean Average

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The Standards-Based Mindset

Watch the combination of old and new evidence.

Punishing irresponsibility doesn't teach responsibility.

- Give Students Full Credit
- Redefine Accountability
- Repurpose Homework

Treat homework as practice; focus on feedback.

GRADING
Inside Out

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Give Students Full Credit

The Mean Can Be *Mean!*

- **Averaging over time:** The combination of old and new evidence **within the same standard** is the real issue.

- **Averaging along the percentage scale:** Averaging along 101 levels can create **the potential for significant swings and variations**.

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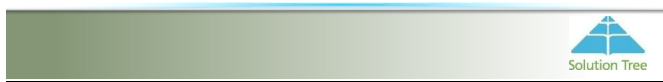
> "If students demonstrate that past assessment results no longer accurately reflect their learning, then that information must be discarded and replaced by the new information."
>
> -Thomas R. Guskey, *On Your Mark* (2015), p. 89

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The Mean Can Be *Mean!*

| 91 | 14 | 69 | 91 | 80 | 71 | 91 |

Mean = 72   Median = 80   Mode = 91

| 91 | 14 | 69 | 91 | 80 | 71 | 91 | 0 |

Mean = 63.4   Median = 75.5   Mode = 91

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Neutralize Extreme Scores!

| 4 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Mean = 2.85 (3)   Median = 3   Mode = 3

| 4 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 |

Mean = 2.5 (3)   Median = 3   Mode = 3

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$\dfrac{15}{20}$

First five incorrect?
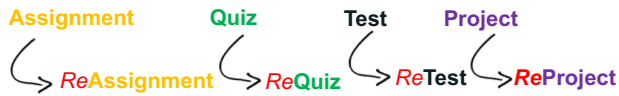
Last five incorrect?

75%

One question worth five incorrect?

Ratios don't distinguish between the *types* of errors.

Were all of the questions at the same cognitive complexity?

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"You're already reassessing!"

When the focus is on the **event**, then we think we have to create ***duplicate events***.

Assignment   **Quiz**   **Test**   **Project**

↘ *Re*Assignment ↘ *Re*Quiz ↘ *Re*Test ↘ *Re*Project

When the focus is on the ***meeting standards***, reassessment is a ***natural part*** of a learning progression.

Assignment   **Quiz**   **Test**   **Project**

Redefining Accountability

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

On a scale of 1-10, I am a _____ when it comes to **eliminating punitive responses** from my grading practices. To move to a _____

(+3) I would *need* or would *need to know* _____

	Infrequent Issue	Chronic Issue
Can't Do Students	Teacher → These students occasionally need further instruction and support.	Teacher and Support Team These students need predictable and more targeted support.
Didn't Do Students	School (System) → For these students, learning must be *mandatory* instead of invitational.	Teacher and Administration These students need *behavioral* interventions.

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> "If our objective is to improve student behavior, then our first obligation as teachers and leaders is to describe with clarity and specificity the behavior that we wish to achieve."
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> -D. Reeves, *Elements of Grading* (2011)

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American Community School
K12 Approaches to Learning

At ACS, we believe that **Approaches to Learning** develop over time through purposeful modeling and guided practice. These skills provide a solid foundation for lifelong learning, both independently and with others.

Co	S	R
Consistently	*Sometimes*	*Rarely*
When demonstration of the skill is typical	**When demonstration of the skill happens at certain times, but is inconsistent**	**When demonstration of the skill happens infrequently**

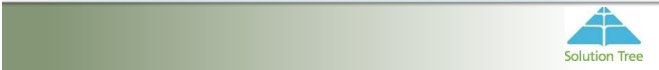| AtL Skill	Specific Performance Criteria
Collaboration ***Collaborative*** *skills that elevate the learning for oneself and for others*	● Commits to and works productively toward the shared goals of the group ● Takes an active role without dominating the group ● Engages in give-and-take dialogue to build on learning and ideas of others ● Encourages others to share ideas
Responsibility ***Responsible*** *skills that maximize learning opportunities*	● Comes to class prepared to learn ● Uses time constructively ● Listens actively ● Sustains focus on tasks ● Follows rules and expectations ● Takes responsibility for actions and the consequences that accompany them
Self-Directed Learning ***Reflective*** *skills that lead to greater self-efficacy*	● Demonstrates self-awareness ● Persists when faced with challenge ● Approaches mistakes and challenges as opportunities to grow ● Seeks and uses feedback provided ● Reflects on past and present learning ● Adjusts thinking to new contexts
Citizenship ***Respectful*** *skills that demonstrate open-mindedness and global awareness*	● Shows respect ● Demonstrates a consideration of multiple perspectives ● Contributes to a positive learning environment and respects others' right to learn ● Recognizes needs and actively responds

> "Too much or too little; too easy or too hard; a spur to student achievement or student alienation; a marker of enlightened or lazy teaching; a builder of character or a degrader of self-esteem; too demanding or too dismissive of parents; a stimulus of national economic vigor or behavioral conformity. The range of complaints about homework is enormous, and the complaints tend—as much today as in the past—toward extreme, angry, often contradictory views."
>
> —Gill & Schlossman, *The American Discourse on Homework, 1850–2003* (1996), p. 174

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Productive Homework

- Is it learning centered?

- Is it necessary?

- Is it reasonable?

- Is it of high quality?

- Are the students ready?

- Were the students involved?

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Homework as PRACTICE	Homework as EXTENSION
• Skill development	• Deepening the learning
• Building foundational knowledge	• Connecting multiple standards
• Usually early in the learning progression	• Authentic or real-world application
• Nongraded	• Graded (if necessary)

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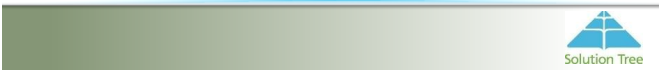
Potential Inaccuracies

- Whose work is it?

- Is your instruction flawless?

- Are your directions clear?

- Are you emphasizing learning or completion?

- Immediate feedback matters.

- When do students take academic risks?

- Grade the *games*, not the *practice*.

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"When it comes to grading homework, we're asking the wrong question. The question is not whether to grade work completed outside of the classroom but instead what type of work is it. Is the work formative and intended to provide further experiences for students to apply to content or skills? Is the work summative and assigned after students have had ample opportunity to practice?"

-E. Depka, *Bringing Homework Into Focus* (2014), p. 71

I used to think…	Now I think….

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