Competency-Based Learning Simplified
Facilitators

From the Great Schools Partnership:
Becky Wilusz, Senior Associate
Angela Hardy, Director of Coaching
Is a non-profit support organization based in Portland working nationally with schools, districts and state agencies, providing coaching, and developing tools.
GSP has served as the coordinator of the New England Secondary School Consortium since its inception in 2009.
We Believe

In equitable, personalized, rigorous learning for all students leading to readiness for college, careers, and citizenship
We Believe

That schools must simultaneously attend to policy, practice, and community engagement.
We Believe

School improvement is **context-based**, not one-size fits all
Outcomes

Review the critical elements and research-base of a competency-based learning system
Outcomes

Explain how equity plays a role in a competency-based learning system
Outcomes

Locate and engage with resources to support implementation at a local level
Agenda

Equity, Personalization, and Rigor

Ten Principles of Competency-Based Learning

Standards

Assessment

Grading + Reporting

Personalization

Closing
http://www.greatschoolspartnership.org/leap/
Norms

- Respect time
- Monitor “air time”
- Listen well
- Respect differences
- Support a culture of possibility
- Freely attend to personal needs
- Foster good humor
- Maintain confidentiality

What else do you need in order to do your work well today?
Guiding Question

What are the critical elements of the learning system that support student success?
COMPETENCY is a student’s ability to transfer learning in and/or across content areas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Requirement</th>
<th>Reporting Method</th>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Transcripts and Report Cards</td>
<td>Cross-Curricular Graduation Standards 5–8 standards taught in all content areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Transcripts and Report Cards</td>
<td>Content-Area Graduation Standards 5–8 standards for each content area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Progress Reports</td>
<td>Performance Indicators 5–10 indicators for each cross-curricular and content-area standard that move students toward mastery and the achievement of graduation standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Teacher Feedback</td>
<td>Learning Objectives Learning objectives guide the design of curriculum units that move students toward mastery and the achievement of performance indicators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Body of Evidence**
Students demonstrate achievement of standards through a body of evidence evaluated using common rubrics.

**Verification of Mastery**
Students demonstrate achievement of content-area graduation standards through their aggregate performance on summative assessments over time.

**Summative Assessment**
Graded summative assessments are used to evaluate the achievement of performance indicators.

**Formative Assessment**
Ungraded formative assessments are used to evaluate student learning progress.
What Makes It Competency-Based?

Limited number, transferrable, verified, equitable outcomes & flexible pathways

Feedback against clear criteria
Opportunity to revise/improve
Opportunity for choice/voice

Introduce, practice, apply —> Learn, do, reflect

Learn, do, reflect

Performance Indicators

Proficiencies

21st Century Skills

Learning Targets
PBL is not a “thing”—it’s a constellation of practices supported by research.

Some of the research is new; some is from seminal works in education.
Read the document and identify two principles:
- the principle that is most aligned with your plans for personalization
- the principle that might challenge your plans for personalization

At your table, discuss your selections and share what led you to your conclusions. What do you notice?
Research Give and Go

1. Read your research brief.

2. Boil it down to 1-2 sentences.

3. Go find 4-5 more pieces of research from other people.

4. Return to your group.
Research Give and Go

Using the research you’ve gathered, summarize what you’ve learned.

What do you need + want to keep in mind as you move this work forward in your school?
A suite of practices resulting from the thoughtful combination of best practices currently used by expert educators with solid support in the literature.
COMPETENCY is a student’s ability to transfer learning in and/or across content areas.
“Transfer is affected by the degree to which people learn with understanding rather than merely memorize sets of facts or follow a fixed set of procedures; the research also shows clearly that “usable knowledge” is not the same as a mere list of disconnected facts.”

Bransford et. al, *How People Learn*, 1999
10 Principles Of Competency-Based Learning
Standards
Competency-Based Learning Principle

1. All learning expectations are clearly and consistently communicated to students and families—long-term, short-term, and general.
Competency-Based Learning Principle

2

Student achievement is evaluated against common learning standards and consistently applied expectations.
GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES

An Internationally Benchmarked
Self-Assessment Tool
for Secondary Learning
### 1.4 STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION

#### Step 1 >> Read the Performance Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>INITIATING</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some efforts have been made to align coursework with career and college-ready learning standards, but in practice many teachers continue to use lessons that are unaligned or outdated. The school uses a standardized credit system based on seat time, letter grades, number averaging, and other traditional practices to measure academic progress and determine readiness for graduation. There is a great deal of variation from classroom to classroom in grading practices and standards. Students are often unaware of learning expectations for courses and lessons, and they rarely receive descriptive feedback on assignments. High-stakes external assessments often unilaterally drive instruction and lesson design.</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>DEVELOPING</th>
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<tr>
<td>School-wide curricula and instruction have been aligned with common learning standards, but this effort has not been systematic or systemic. District and school leaders have engaged in conversations about adopting a true standards-based system, and the principal and teacher-leaders have visited schools that are using effective standards-based practices. Teachers are employing multiple formative assessment strategies in the classroom, and academic support is being provided to ensure that struggling students have learned material before they move on to the next lesson. Some departments have developed common rubrics to enhance the consistency of grading and reporting, but this practice has not been embraced by all teachers or institutionalized school-wide. In some cases, learning expectations remain unclear and many students are still unaware of their own learning strengths and weaknesses or which learning standards teachers are addressing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The school has publicly committed to becoming a true standards-based learning community, and graduation policy has been modified to require all students to demonstrate mastery of learning standards and high levels of college and career readiness before receiving a diploma. The faculty has prioritized learning standards in every content area so that the most essential content, skills, and habits of mind are covered in depth before teachers move on to additional material and standards. Multiple assessments are used to determine that students have mastered what they have been taught, and underperforming students are provided with additional instructional time, academic support, and alternative learning options to ensure that they are able to learn and demonstrate achievement in ways that work best for them. All teachers use common scoring guides that provide detailed descriptions of required learning proficiencies at each developmental stage and expected level of performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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#### Step 4 >> Score Your School

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

- [ ] 1 NOT ADDRESSED
- [ ] 2 INITIATING
- [ ] 3 DEVELOPING
- [ ] 4 PERFORMING
- [ ] 5
...prioritized learning standards in every content area so that the most essential content, skills, and habits of mind are covered in depth...
Developing Content-Area Graduation Competencies
The Envelope Please...

Order the statements in the envelope on your table from broad to specific
A Graduation Competency Is...

A standard that focuses instruction on the most foundational, enduring, and leveraged concepts and skills within a discipline.
Foundational Lens:

To what extent is this statement at the heart of understanding the content area and to what extent does it align with national & state standards?
Endurance Lens:

To what extent does this statement provide students with knowledge & skills that will be of value beyond a particular point in time (ie, test, unit)?
Leverage Lens:

Will this provide knowledge and skills that will be of use in multiple disciplines?
Apply the attributes of a responsible and involved citizen to affect a real-world issue based on a local need.
Understand and analyze the characteristics, functions, and behavioral interactions within an ecosystem as demonstrated through the integration of scientific and engineering practices and crosscutting concepts (LS 2).
Table Discussion

What do students need to do to meet the expectations for the content area right now?

How is that similar/different from the sample standards?
## Design Criteria Chart

### Developing Content-Area Graduation Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Weaker Statements</th>
<th>Stronger Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content-Area Relevance</strong></td>
<td>• Are either too abstract (and therefore cannot be measured) or too specific (and therefore fail to address broadly applicable content-area skills and knowledge)</td>
<td>• Align with national, state, and/or local standards and frameworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the statement align with national and state standards? Is the statement central to understanding the content area?</td>
<td>• Are so detailed that they obscure their connection to higher-level cognitive skills</td>
<td>• Combine several standards into one graduation standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enduring Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>• Are limited to the scope and sequence of a textbook, resource, or program</td>
<td>• Use precise, descriptive language that clearly communicates what is essential to understanding the content area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does this statement provide students with knowledge and skills that will be of value beyond a particular point in time, such as when students take a test or complete the unit?</td>
<td>• Focus on factual content without connecting the statements to enduring cross-disciplinary and content-area skills</td>
<td>• Require students to develop understanding of relationships among principles, theories, and/or concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leveraging Learning</strong></td>
<td>• Describe topics that are only relevant to or applicable within a specific course or content area</td>
<td>• Require students to develop and demonstrate skills and knowledge that will endure throughout their education, professional careers, and civic lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the statement describe knowledge and skills that can be applied across multiple disciplines?</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Address skills and knowledge that are relevant to and can be applied in all content areas and educational contexts, including real-world and outside-of-school settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive Demand</strong></td>
<td>• Require only basic recall and lower-level cognitive skills, such as identifying, defining, summarizing, or listing</td>
<td>• Require students to demonstrate higher-order cognitive skills, such as those described in the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy, Marzano’s New Taxonomy, or Webb’s Depth of Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What level of conceptual comprehension, knowledge acquisition, and skill development does the statement encourage?</td>
<td>• Do not encourage the application of knowledge to diverse or novel problems and situations</td>
<td>• Promote deeper comprehension of content and the acquisition of transferable skills such as reasoning, planning, interpreting, hypothesizing, investigating, or explaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment Facilitation</strong></td>
<td>• Use descriptive language and verbs that are difficult to measure and assess</td>
<td>• Use descriptive language and verbs that facilitate reliable measurement and assessment practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the statement allow for a broad range of formative and summative assessments?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Protocol**
**Developing Graduation Standards**

**PURPOSE**
To distill the national or state standards in a content area to 5–8 graduation standards that will be required for high school graduation.

**TIME**
3–4.5 hours

**ROLES**
Facilitator, timekeeper, notetaker

**PROCESS**

A. Review the Proficiency-Based Learning Simplified graphic. The facilitator guides the group through the levels of the pyramid. The group discusses the degree to which each level impacts classroom practice and reporting measures. The facilitator reminds the group that the focus for this session is at the “graduation standard” level. (15 min.)

B. Review the Design Criteria Chart independently and then discuss as a group. (15 min.)

C. Review national or state standards in a specific content area. If desired, review sample graduation standards at this time also. Reviewers should circle, mark, or connect standards that they believe fit the criteria of a graduation standard. It is appropriate to consider combining statements, creating statements from headings, or making slight revisions to existing statements to clarify the local graduation standard. (60 min.)

D. Share the identified standards in round-robin fashion until all possible graduation standards have been stated. Write the proposed standards on chart paper or within a shared online document. (10–15 min.)

E. Discuss as a group any overlapping standards. Refer to the Design Criteria Chart as needed. (30–60 min.)
Developing **Content-Area** Performance Indicators
A Performance Indicator

Describes or defines what students need to know and be able to do to demonstrate mastery of a graduation standard.
A Performance Indicator

Is measurable.
A Performance Indicator

Students can demonstrate their performance over time.
A Performance Indicator

The aggregation of proficiency on these performance indicators measures whether a student has met the graduation standard.
Social Studies

Civic Engagement

Analyze how people influence government and work for the common good. (MLR B2 D)
Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment. (5-LS2-1)
# Design Criteria Chart

Defining Performance Indicators for Content-Area Graduation Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Weaker Statements</th>
<th>Stronger Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduation-Standard Alignment</strong>&lt;br&gt; <em>To what extent does the statement align with the relevant graduation standard? Is the statement central to understanding the standard as described?</em></td>
<td>- Are either too abstract (and therefore cannot be measured) or too specific (and therefore fail to address broadly applicable content-area skills and knowledge)&lt;br&gt;- Are so detailed that they obscure their connection to the graduation standard</td>
<td>- Describe and define what students need to know and be able to do to demonstrate proficiency in and achievement of the content-area graduation standard&lt;br&gt;- Use precise, descriptive language that clearly communicates what is essential to achieving the graduation standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enduring Knowledge</strong>&lt;br&gt; <em>To what extent does this statement provide students with knowledge and skills that will be of value beyond a particular point in time, such as when students take a test or complete the unit?</em></td>
<td>- Are limited to the scope and sequence of a specific textbook, resource, or program&lt;br&gt;- Describe only knowledge and skills that are relevant or unique to a specific unit&lt;br&gt;- Are “nice to know” but not essential for students to learn if they are going to succeed in next unit, course, or grade level</td>
<td>- Require students to develop and demonstrate skills and knowledge that will endure throughout their education, professional careers, and civic lives.&lt;br&gt;- Answers the question: “What do we want students to remember, understand, and be able to do several years from now, perhaps long after they have forgotten the details?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive Demand</strong>&lt;br&gt; <em>What level of conceptual comprehension, knowledge acquisition, and skill development does the statement encourage? What depth of knowledge does this statement promote? Is the level of cognitive demand expected measurable?</em></td>
<td>- Require only basic recall and lower-level cognitive skills, such as identifying, defining, summarizing, or listing&lt;br&gt;- Do not encourage the application of knowledge to diverse or novel problems and situations</td>
<td>- Require students to demonstrate higher-order cognitive skills, such as those described in the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy, Marzano’s New Taxonomy, or Webb’s Depth of Knowledge&lt;br&gt;- Promote deeper comprehension of content and the acquisition of transferable skills such as reasoning, planning, interpreting, hypothesizing, investigating, or explaining&lt;br&gt;- Are measurable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment Facilitation</strong>&lt;br&gt; <em>To what extent does the statement allow for a broad range of formative and summative assessments?</em></td>
<td>- Suggest only limited options for assessing and demonstrating learning&lt;br&gt;- Fail to describe in precise and understandable language what will be measured&lt;br&gt;- Focus narrowly on factual recall and rote skills&lt;br&gt;- Suggest that a single task or activity can be considered a valid demonstration of proficiency</td>
<td>- Help define the specific knowledge and skills that will be assessed and measured&lt;br&gt;- Promote the assessment of deeper content comprehension and the acquisition of transferable skills&lt;br&gt;- Promote multiple and varied options for students to demonstrate evidence of learning, particularly through performance assessments and body-of-evidence strategies such as portfolios</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Based on the work of Larry Ainsworth, Doug Reeves, and the New Hampshire Department of Education’s Course Level Competency Validation Rubric.

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Protocol
Developing Performance Indicators

PURPOSE
To identify 5–10 performance indicators for each content area graduation standard

TIME
3–4 hours

ROLES
Facilitator, timekeeper, notetaker

MATERIALS
A. Proficiency-Based Learning Simplified graphic
B. Locally developed content-area graduation standards
C. National- and state-level standards documents
D. Sample graduation standards and performance indicators for the content area
E. Cognitive taxonomies (e.g., Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy, Marzano’s New Taxonomy, or Webb’s Depth of Knowledge)
F. Design Criteria Chart
G. Chart paper and markers or projector and laptop(s)

PROCESS:
A. Review your locally developed content-area graduation standards to confirm agreement on the content and language. Review the Proficiency-Based Learning Simplified graphic to clarify for the group that the focus of this session is at the Performance Indicator level. Then, determine how this phase of the process will be conducted. It can be done in small groups whereby each group works on one content-area graduation standard and aligns the supporting performance indicators to that graduation standard. It can also be done collectively. (15 min.)

B. Review the Design Criteria Chart independently and then discuss as a group. (15 min.)
Assessment
Competency-Based Learning Principle

All forms of assessment are standards-based and criterion-referenced—not relative; not a student-to-student comparison.
Formative assessments measure learning progress during the instructional process. The results inform instruction and support.
Summative assessments evaluate a student’s level of proficiency at a specific point in time.
Amanda Ripley: Ask the Kids

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-42hks_qvf0
## English Language Arts

### Sample Graduation Standards and Performance Indicators

**English Language Arts: Reading Foundations**

**READING FOUNDATIONS**
Understand concepts of print and basic conventions of English (CCRF). *Proficiency in this area should be demonstrated by the end of grade 5, at which point students should apply these skills into their daily reading routine.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fifth-Grade Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Eighth-Grade Performance Indicators</th>
<th>High School Performance Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Demonstrate an understanding of spoken words, syllables and sounds (phonemes). (RF.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Know and apply grade level phonics and word-analysis skills in decoding words. (RF.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. (RF.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**English Language Arts Graduation Standard 1**

**READING COMPREHENSION**
Read and comprehend appropriately complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently. (CCRA 10)

<table>
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<th>High School Performance Indicators</th>
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<tr>
<td>A. Determine the theme of a story, drama or poem from details in the text; summarize the text. (RL.2)</td>
<td>A. Determine the theme or central ideas of the text, analyze its development including its relationship to character, setting, and plot, and provide an objective summary. (RL.2)</td>
<td>A. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text. (RL.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text. (RI.2)</td>
<td>B. Determine a central idea of the text, analyze its development including its relationship to</td>
<td></td>
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Assessment Pathways Simplified
A Great Schools Partnership Learning Model

LESS
Student Choice in Learning

OPTION 1
COMMON Learning Experiences
COMMON Demonstration Tasks
COMMON Scoring Guides

OPTION 2
COMMON Learning Experiences
UNIQUE Demonstration Tasks
COMMON Scoring Guides

OPTION 3
UNIQUE Learning Experiences
COMMON Demonstration Tasks
COMMON Scoring Guides

OPTION 4
UNIQUE Learning Experiences
UNIQUE Demonstration Tasks
COMMON Scoring Guides

OPTION 5
UNIQUE Learning Experiences
UNIQUE Demonstration Tasks
UNIQUE Scoring Guides

VALID and RELIABLE results

VALID and RELIABLE results that are COMPARABLE across STUDENTS, COURSES, SCHOOLS, DISTRICTS, or STATES

MORE
Student Choice in Learning
### 1.4 STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION

**STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS**

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<td>Some efforts have been made to align coursework with career and college-ready learning standards, but in practice many teachers continue to use lessons that are unaligned or outdated. The school uses a standardized credit system based on seat time, letter grades, number averaging, and other traditional practices to measure academic progress and determine readiness for graduation. There is a great deal of variation from classroom to classroom in grading practices and standards. Students are often unaware of learning expectations for courses and lessons, and they rarely receive descriptive feedback on assignments. High-stakes external assessments often unilaterally drive instruction and lesson design.</td>
<td>School-wide curricula and instruction have been aligned with common learning standards, but this effort has not been systematic or systemic. District and school leaders have engaged in conversations about adopting a true standards-based system, and the principal and teacher-leaders have visited schools that are using effective standards-based practices. Teachers are employing multiple formative assessment strategies in the classroom, and academic support is being provided to ensure that struggling students have learned material before they move on to the next lesson. Some departments have developed common rubrics to enhance the consistency of grading and reporting, but this practice has not been embraced by all teachers or institutionalized school-wide. In some cases, learning expectations remain unclear and many students are still unaware of their own learning strengths and weaknesses or which learning standards teachers are addressing.</td>
<td>The school has publicly committed to becoming a true standards-based learning community, and graduation policy has been modified to require all students to demonstrate mastery of learning standards and high levels of college and career readiness before receiving a diploma. The faculty has prioritized learning standards in every content area so that the most essential content, skills, and habits of mind are covered in depth before teachers move on to additional material and standards. Multiple assessments are used to determine that students have mastered what they have been taught, and underperforming students are provided with additional instructional time, academic support, and alternative learning options to ensure that they are able to learn and demonstrate achievement in ways that work best for them. All teachers use common scoring guides that provide detailed descriptions of required learning proficiencies at each developmental stage and expected level of performance.</td>
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**STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL**

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school's performance in this dimension.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT Addressed</td>
<td>Initiating</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Performing</td>
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### 1.4 STANDARDS-BASED EDUCATION

**GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES**

#### STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

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<td>Some efforts have been made to align coursework with career and college-ready learning standards, but in practice many teachers continue to use lessons that are unaligned or outdated. The school uses a standardized credit system based on seat time, letter grades, and several other traditional practices to assess student performance. External assessments often unilaterally drive instruction and lower diversity. Strategies in the classroom, and academic support is being provided to ensure that struggling students have a clear and consistent understanding of what is required. The school is committed to implementing a true standards-based system.</td>
<td>School-wide curricula and instruction have been aligned with common learning standards, but this effort has not been systematic or systemic. District and school leaders have engaged in conversations about adopting a true standards-based system, and the principal and teacher-leaders have visited schools that have successfully transitioned to this system.</td>
<td>The school has publicly committed to becoming a true standards-based learning community, and graduation policy has been modified to require all students to demonstrate mastery of learning standards and high levels of college and career readiness before receiving a diploma. The faculty has prioritized this goal in the recent past so that the relevant content and habits of mind are covered in depth before teachers move on to additional material and standards. Multiple assessments are used to evaluate student performance, and they are provided with additional instructional time, academic support, and alternative learning pathways that adapt to their needs. Some schools have adopted an integrated curriculum that makes students more aware of their own learning needs and goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Designing Scoring Criteria
Before You Start

**Consistency in Structure**
Levels of proficiency are named and consistently applied throughout the school within the common scoring scale (i.e. Does not meet, Partially meets, Meets, Exceeds or 1, 2, 3, 4)

**Common Phrasing**
- Phrases defining each level of proficiency are structured in a similar manner
- For example, phrases all begin with an active verb, “I can,” “Students are able to”
“…if I don’t look carefully at the types of thinking required by the standard, I most likely will miss teaching and assessing at the appropriate level of rigor.”

—Jan Chappuis (2014)
Designing Scoring Criteria

Scoring criteria describe levels of proficiency for each performance indicator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Does Not Meet</th>
<th>Partially Meets</th>
<th>Meets</th>
<th>Exceeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to develop appropriate research questions. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.11-12-7)</td>
<td>I can <strong>list</strong> some specifics about a topic that would help develop my understanding</td>
<td>I can <strong>identify</strong> broad questions that are relevant to my studies and focus my research</td>
<td>I can <strong>construct</strong> open-ended questions that build on one another and require evidence and support</td>
<td>I can <strong>analyze</strong> my own research questions to refine them based on my earlier questions and learning</td>
</tr>
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**Designing Scoring Criteria**

Scoring criteria describe levels of proficiency for each performance indicator.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment. (5-LS2-1)</td>
<td>I can <strong>label/sort</strong> a food chain.</td>
<td>I can <strong>identify</strong> examples of energy/matter transfer within an ecosystem.</td>
<td>I can accurately <strong>model</strong> the movement of matter within an ecosystem.</td>
<td>I can <strong>model</strong> how human interactions/impacts can alter the flow of energy throughout the ecosystem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crafting Scoring Criteria
Design Guide: 5 Components

Scoring criteria:

• Are task neutral

• Are aligned with cognitive demand in the performance indicator

• Include all elements of the performance indicator

• Describe complexity rather than frequency

• Focus on what students can do
Applying the Design Guide

In your packets, find the **sample scoring criteria** and the Design Guide for Scoring Criteria.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits of Scoring Criteria</th>
<th>Weaker Statements</th>
<th>Stronger Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the criteria <strong>task neutral?</strong>?</td>
<td>lists tasks or elements specific to this assessment&lt;br&gt;ex: Analyzes the Articles of Confederation and Constitution for similarities and differences</td>
<td>can be applied to a variety of assessments and tasks&lt;br&gt;ex: Analyzes primary source documents independently and in relation to other primary source documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the criteria use a <strong>clear taxonomy of thinking skills</strong>? Does the <strong>level of thinking expressed in the “meets” match that of the Performance Indicator?</strong>?</td>
<td>uses verbs not included on taxonomies of thinking (such as understands)&lt;br&gt;uses verbs from different level of thinking than that of the Performance Indicator to describe “meets” work</td>
<td>applies the levels of thinking in a chosen taxonomy (Bloom’s, Webb’s, etc.) consistently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all elements of the Performance Indicator included?</td>
<td>leaves out elements of the Performance Indicator</td>
<td>includes all elements of the Performance Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the criteria describe <strong>complexity and quality</strong> rather than frequency?</td>
<td>emphasizes only frequency rather than cognitive demand&lt;br&gt;ex: criteria include use of rarely, never, frequently, 1,2,3, etc.</td>
<td>describes what a student knows and is able to do at each level of proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do the criteria <strong>describe the complexity and quality positively?</strong></td>
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<td>describes what a student includes and does at each level of proficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Applying the Design Guide

Working with your colleagues, apply the design guide to the first set of scoring criteria

- Would you classify these as strong or weak?
- If they are weak, how can they be strengthened?
Unpack the Performance Indicator

What skills and knowledge does this performance indicator describe?
### Designing Scoring Criteria

**Skills + Knowledge Review**

**Performance Indicator**

| c. Determine or clarify the meaning of word and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word and phrase choices on meaning and tone (4, Language 4,5) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I Can..</th>
<th>Need to Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• I can figure out precisely what an author means by each word in a text.</td>
<td>• parts of speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I can tell the difference between when an author intends a word to be understood literally and when an author is using a words as part of a figure of speech.</td>
<td>• sentence structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I can analyze how the author’s word choices affect his or her meaning or tone.</td>
<td>• context clues, parallel text, footnotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• the tools of figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• vocabulary; connotation/ denotation, figurative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• tone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**9/10 Fiction/Non Fiction**
Designing Scoring Criteria

Process

Step Two:
Describe Proficiency

Describe the level of cognitive demand that will be met at each level of proficiency within this indicator.

Craft a statement describing student work that “meets” expectations for that particular performance indicator.
Avoid Terms Focused on Frequency

• Frequently
• Reliably
• Rarely
• Never
Use Terms
Focused on Cognitive Demand

• Create
• Evaluate
• Explain
• Describe
## Classroom Observation Bloom's Taxonomy Level Reference Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVELS + DEFINITIONS</th>
<th>SAMPLE QUESTIONS</th>
<th>SAMPLE ACTIONS</th>
<th>SAMPLE PRODUCTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CREATING</strong></td>
<td>How would you design...</td>
<td>Hypothesizing</td>
<td>Story, Poem, Film, Multimedia Project, Song, Painting, Sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting new elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganizing elements into new patterns and structures</td>
<td>What would happen if...</td>
<td>Designing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVALUATING</strong></td>
<td>How would you justify your position?</td>
<td>Testing</td>
<td>Debate, Report, Investigation, Conclusion, Verdict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making judgments based on criteria or standards</td>
<td>What data support your conclusions?</td>
<td>Critiquing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANALYZING</strong></td>
<td>What are the pros and cons?</td>
<td>Differentiating</td>
<td>Survey, Database, Graph/Chart, Spreadsheet, Outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking down material into its constituent parts and determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure and purpose</td>
<td>How do the parts fit together?</td>
<td>Parsing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPLYING</strong></td>
<td>What actions will lead to the result?</td>
<td>Executing</td>
<td>Experiment, Illustration, Demonstration, Interview, Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrying out and using a procedure in a given situation</td>
<td>What could happen next?</td>
<td>Implementing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNDERSTANDING</strong></td>
<td>Can you outline?</td>
<td>Clarifying</td>
<td>Explanation, Definition, Recitation, Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing meaning from instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication</td>
<td>Can you clarify?</td>
<td>Categorizing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REMEMBERING</strong></td>
<td>How many?</td>
<td>Recognizing</td>
<td>Worksheet, List, Reproduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retrieving relevant knowledge from long-term memory</td>
<td>Who was it that?</td>
<td>Recalling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGHER-ORDER COGNITION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOWER-ORDER COGNITION</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


NOTE: Sample products are illustrative purposes only—they are not intended to be an observation checklist. Observers should not make recording decisions based on the presence or absence of these sample products, but rather on the level of cognition students are utilizing.
## Designing Scoring Criteria

### Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
<th>Disaggregate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One descriptive statement for each performance indicator</td>
<td>More detailed description based on unpacking of PI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can analyze the impact of word and phrase choices on the meaning and/or tone in a text.</td>
<td>I can figure out precisely what an author means by the word choices in a text.</td>
</tr>
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Designing Scoring Criteria Process

Step Three:

Describe Levels of Proficiency

Craft statements that describe what a student CAN do above and below “meets”
### Designing Scoring Criteria

**Example**

**Health Education Graduation Standard** 5- ADVOCACY, DECISION-MAKING AND GOAL-SETTING SKILLS: Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication and advocacy skills; make decisions; and set goals to enhance personal, family and community health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formulate</strong> a long-term personal health plan, incorporating decision-making and goal-setting strategies</td>
<td>I can <strong>list</strong> goals I have for my own health.</td>
<td>I can <strong>explain</strong> ways I can reach a goal I set for my own health.</td>
<td>I can <strong>create</strong> a plan to meet immediate and long-term health goals.</td>
<td>I can <strong>adapt</strong> my plan and <strong>evaluate</strong> my progress so I can continue to positively impact my personal health.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Design Guide for Scoring Criteria

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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you included <strong>all elements of the Performance Indicator?</strong></td>
<td>leaves out elements of the Performance Indicator</td>
<td>includes all elements of the Performance Indicator</td>
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<tr>
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# Protocol: Tuning Scoring Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Process to Use in Your School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Assign Roles</strong> - Facilitator, Presenter, Note taker, Time keeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Presenter</strong> - Share a limited set of draft scoring criteria + pose a focusing question (5 min)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Participants ask <strong>clarifying questions</strong> (2-3 min)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Examine</strong> scoring criteria using Design Guide (10-15 min)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Provide warm and cool <strong>feedback</strong> (10-12 min evenly split)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Presenter reflects</strong> on the take-away (2-3 min)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
USE STUDENT WORK TO GROUND THE DISCUSSION AND REVIEW
Grading + Reporting
6 Academic progress and achievement are monitored and reported separately from work habits, character traits, and behaviors such as attendance and class participation, which are also monitored and reported.
Competency-Based Learning Principle

7

Academic grades communicate learning progress and achievement to students and families, and grades are used to facilitate and improve learning.
## Proficiency-Based Learning Simplified

### A Great Schools Partnership Learning Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduation Requirement</th>
<th>Reporting Method</th>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Transcripts and Report Cards</td>
<td>Cross-Curricular Graduation Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5–8 standards taught in all content areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Transcripts and Report Cards</td>
<td>Content-Area Graduation Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5–8 standards for each content area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Progress Reports</td>
<td>Performance Indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5–10 indicators for each cross-curricular and content-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>area standard that move students toward proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and the achievement of graduation standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Teacher Feedback</td>
<td>Learning Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning objectives guide the design of curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>units that move students toward proficiency and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>achievement of performance indicators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Body of Evidence**

Students demonstrate achievement of standards through a body of evidence evaluated using common rubrics.

**Verification of Proficiency**

Students demonstrate achievement of content-area graduation standards through their aggregate performance on summative assessments over time.

**Summative Assessment**

Graded summative assessments are used to evaluate the achievement of performance indicators.

**Formative Assessment**

Ungraded formative assessments are used to evaluate student learning progress.

---

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Key Concepts

• Grading ≠ Reporting
• Proficiency-Based Learning ≠ New Report Card
• Start with teaching, learning and grading practices, not a new report card
Key Learning in Our Work

- Report Cards ≠ Step One

The Washington Post

Education

New report cards confuse parents across the country, not just in Montgomery County

By Lynh Bui  May 30, 2013

Parents in Montgomery County aren’t the only ones struggling with new standards-based report cards that replace traditional letter grades with different codes.

The New York Times

Report Cards Give Up A’s and B’s for 4s and 3s

By WINNIE HU

PELHAM, N.Y. — There is no more A for effort at Prospect Hill Elementary School.

In fact, there are no more A’s at all. Instead of letter grades in English or math, schoolchildren in this well-to-do Westchester

filled with numbers indicating how they are faring on dozens of specific skills like reading fluency, and math

mark 1, indicating not yet
Before Report Cards

- Clear Standards and Criteria
- Consistent Assessment Practice
- Consistent Grading Practices
- Broad Base of Champions
Assessing, Grading, Reporting: Process

- Students attempt Summative Assessment Task
- Scoring - with rubric
- Supports/Interventions
- Reporting Learning
- Instruction
- Unit Design
- Standards
- Performance Indicators
- Scoring Criteria
- Designing Summative Task
- Formative Assessment
- Supports/Interventions

- Summative Assessment Task
- Scoring - with rubric
- Reporting Learning
Assessment, Grading, Reporting

- **Assessment** = Eliciting evidence of student knowledge and skill.

- **Grading** = Practices used to arrive at judgments of proficiency.

- **Reporting** = Communicating student learning to a variety of audiences.
## Proficiency-Based Learning Reporting Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Grade Book</th>
<th>Report Card</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Record of daily performance</td>
<td>Indication of progress</td>
<td>Summary of Academic Accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Students and Parents</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Scores, evidence for completed tasks; Attendance; Habits of Work</td>
<td>Performance to date on performance indicators assessed and progress toward applicable graduation standards</td>
<td>List of learning experiences; Honors and recognitions; Final proficiency levels on graduation standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instruction
Students are given multiple opportunities to improve their work when they fail to meet expected outcomes.
Students can demonstrate learning progress and achievement in multiple ways through differentiated assessments, personalized-learning options, or alternative learning pathways.
Students are given opportunities to make important decisions about their learning, which includes contributing to the design of learning experiences and learning pathways.
From Standards to Units

- Standards
- Performance Indicators
- Scoring Criteria
- Designing Summative Task
- Unit Design
- Instruction
- Formative Assessment
- Supports + Interventions
- Reporting Learning
- Scoring - with rubric
- Students attempt Summative Assessment Task
Stages of Backward Design
Planning

1. **Design Relevant Instruction**
   - learning experiences and formative feedback

2. **Determine Acceptable Evidence**
   - How students will demonstrate learning

3. **Define Desired Results**
   - What students will know and be able to do
Stages of Backward Design

1. **Define Desired Results**
   - What students will know and be able to do

2. **Determine Acceptable Evidence**
   - How students will demonstrate learning

3. **Design Relevant Instruction**
   - Learning experiences and formative feedback ties to learning targets

4. **Reflection**
   - Planning

   - Implementation
Unit Design Template

STAGE 1: Desired Results

Guiding Principles
21st Century Skills

STAGE 2: Evidence of Student Learning

Graduation Standards

STAGE 3: Instructional Design

Performance Indicators

Learning Targets
School-Based Reflection + Planning
Planning for Proficiency-Based Learning

**POLICY**
- Engage school board in developing conceptual understanding about proficiency-based learning
- Review existing policies
- Draft new and revised policies
- Collect feedback on draft policies from faculty, staff, students, parents, and local officials
- Refine policies based on feedback
- Adopt new and revised policies

**PRACTICE**
- Establish a district wide proficiency-based committee
- Establish a school wide proficiency-based committee
- Collaboratively develop the conceptual framework with faculty and staff
- Engage faculty and staff in professional development on proficiency-based learning
- Engage faculty in professional development on proficiency-based curriculum design and instruction
- Engage faculty in professional development on assessment literacy
- Develop cross-curricular graduation standards
- Develop content-area graduation standards
- Develop performance indicators for cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
- Create communications plan for proficiency-based learning
- Develop Record Keeping Process, Transcript, and Report Card
- Develop a process for verifying achievement of content-area standards
- Develop body-of-evidence assessment process for demonstration of cross-curricular graduation standards
- Develop system for reporting on the achievement of student learning.
- Engage local media
- Engage students, parents, and the public about proficiency-based learning
- Implement system for reporting on the achievement of student learning.

**KEY**
- Policy
- Practice: Graduation Requirements
- Practice: Instructional System
- Community Engagement
1. Where are we going?

2. What do we need to do?

3. What resources do we need to do this?
Tools + Resources
Chicago LEAP Innovations Group
By Gwen Merrick On June 25, 2015 · Add Comment · In Presentations [Edit]

This workshop will provide an overview of the traits and elements of a competency-based learning model as well as key steps and processes essential to implementation.

Competency-Based Learning, Chicago LEAP Innovations
Lorca Elementary School | June 27, 2015

Presenters
Becky Wilusz | Senior Associate, Great Schools Partnership
Angela Hardy | Director of Coaching, Great Schools Partnership

Materials

→ Overview

→ 10 Principles of Competency-Based Learning
**TEACHER AUTONOMY**

The concept of teacher autonomy refers to the professional independence of teachers in schools, especially the degree to which they can make autonomous decisions about what they teach to students and how they teach it. In recent years, teacher autonomy has become a major point of discussion and debate in American public education... [Read More »]
How Does Proficiency-Based Learning Work?

How is it possible that a student can graduate from high school and yet be unable to read or write well, do basic algebra and geometry, identify major countries on a map, understand how our political system works, or explain the scientific method? While it may be difficult to believe, countless students graduate from high schools every year without the fundamental knowledge and skills they will need to earn a college degree, succeed in the modern workplace, or contribute meaningfully to their communities. How is this possible?

The answer is that many schools do not use teaching, testing, grading, and reporting methods that require students to prove they have actually acquired the most critically important knowledge and skills. In fact, high schools give out thousands of grades, report cards, and diplomas every year, but many of them would not be able to tell you what their students have specifically learned or not learned.

Luckily, there’s an alternative option for today’s schools: proficiency-based learning.

How It Works

- **All students must demonstrate what they have learned before moving on.** Before students can pass a course, move on to the next grade level, or graduate, they must demonstrate that they have learned what they were expected to learn. If students fail to meet learning expectations, they are given more support and instruction from teachers, more time to learn and practice, and more opportunities to demonstrate progress. Until they acquire the most essential skills and grasp the most important concepts, students do not move on to the next level.

- **Teachers are very clear about what students need to learn.** In every class, students know precisely what teachers expect—no guesswork required. The learning expectations for the course are clearly described and communicated, and students will know precisely where they stand throughout the course—for example, a student will know that she has achieved three of six expected learning standards, but that she needs to work harder to achieve the last three before she can pass the course. Importantly, her parents will also know precisely what she’s learned and what she may be struggling to learn.

- **Common, consistent methods are used to evaluate student learning.** In many schools, different learning expectations are applied from course to course, and different methods and criteria are used to evaluate what students have learned. Consequently, one Algebra I course in a school may be very challenging, for example, while another Algebra I course may be comparatively easy—and a B earned in the “difficult” course might actually represent stronger learning achievement than an A in the “easy” course. Proficiency-based learning applies the same standards to all students, while teachers use consistent methods of evaluating and reporting on student learning—everyone knows precisely what grades stand for and what each student has learned. As a result, grades mean the same thing from course to course, and schools can certify that students are prepared when they move on.

- **While learning expectations are fixed, teachers and students have more flexibility.** Even though learning expectations and evaluation methods are common and consistent, teachers can be given more flexibility in how they teach and students can be given more choice in how they learn. For example, teachers don’t need to use the same textbooks, assignments, and tests—as long as their students learn what they need to learn, teachers can develop new and more creative ways to teach. Similarly, students can be given an assignment—research an American president, for example—but they can choose which president to study or how they want to show what they’ve learned (one student may write an essay, while others may create a short documentary using archival photos or an audio podcast in the style of a presidential address). As long as students meet the course expectations—demonstrate a strong understanding of the election system, the executive branch of the federal government, and the role of the American president—teachers can teach and students can learn in the ways that work best for them.
Great Schools Partnership Webinar Archive

This page features video recordings, presentation slides, and related materials from past webinars offered by the Great Schools Partnership.

Developing Effective Assessment Tasks in a Proficiency-Based Learning System

As educators have begun to implement proficiency-based learning systems, they have realized the need to develop assessments that accurately measure student learning, promote personalization, and deliver trustworthy data—not an easy set of deliverables.

Building upon the previous GSP webinar, this webinar will present a … Watch the Webinar →

Determining Proficiency Levels and Establishing Scoring Criteria

Once educators in districts have completed the important task of identifying graduation standards and performance indicators, the next step in our Proficiency-Based Simplified model is to establish scoring criteria. Informing and supporting the clear articulation of what student work looks like at each of the four distinct … Watch the Webinar →
QUESTIONS