Guidelines for Grading ELLs

The original Guidelines for Grading are published by the Language Learning Department and can be found in the ELL Frameworks on COLLAB. They have been edited by Jacqueline Downey and Lynn Herink for use at HHS.

When determining student grades, teachers of ELL students will likely need to take into account

- student growth
- performance based on standards
- procedures and expectations of their particular school

Assigning numerical and letter grades to each student is left to each teacher’s judgment. However, we offer the following suggestions to guide teachers as they determine how to allocate value to their student’s products and learning expectation.

Product:

ELL students are working toward continued growth regardless of the skills the student demonstrates when they entered the class. Therefore, teachers may assign value to their students’ products based on the growth demonstrated by the particular student.

Teachers may use the standards and benchmarks to assess a student’s current level of mastery for a particular standard, as demonstrated in their work. From an understanding of a student’s present skills, teachers can work with students to set individualized goals or objectives for students to work towards. Since grades are based on growth, a student’s growth as measured against a particular standard may not align to “mastery” of a particular skill.

Teachers may want to align their grading to standards-based grading scales used by their school or department. If this is the case, it is important to provide individualized attention and timely feedback so
that students have **sufficient support to meet rigorous standards**. It is also necessary to provide **multiple opportunities** for students to meet particular standards.

Assessed by:

- Unit Summative Assessment and Rubric
- Conferring - feedback
- Observation
- Student Reflection
- Goal tracking, tracking progress
- Writing samples (formal and informal)
- Presentation
- Learning Defense- reflect, provide evidence, describe the learning process, detail the learning, outline learning as a result of the activities
- Project
- Performance task
- Test or exam

Depending on the student’s language proficiency, it may be appropriate to modify the assessment in order to assess their learning of skills. This could include an oral exam, as opposed to written, or demonstrating a skill or understanding of a concept in their home language.

**Learning Expectations:**

Teachers will likely want to recognize and reward student *engagement in the learning process*. To judge engagement, students and teachers must have a clear set of indicators or criteria against which they can measure student participation. These criteria should be appropriate for students who are just beginning to learn English and those with more advanced English skills.

Teachers should be conscious to **reward active engagement** (making choices, asking questions, talking about learning, working hard to
solve problems, being persistent in a difficult task, etc.) rather than compliance (listening quietly, following directions, etc.). A teacher's classroom expectations or rules for students likely include respectful behavior, but the aim is to push students toward greater independence and ownership of learning.

Assessed by:

- Teacher-created (or co-created with the students) set of **indicators** describing student **engagement**
  - Examples:
    - Student started working right away.
    - Student discussed the question with her partner.
    - Student used strategies to get unstuck.
    - Student gave feedback to her partner.
- The teacher may assign numerical values based on a continuum or range of engagement. For example, 1 might indicate unengaged, 3 might be partially engaged, and 5 might be fully engaged in learning.
- The student may fill out a self-assessment, or a reflection or rationale, with examples based on his or her performance in a particular lesson, project, phase, or unit.
- The teacher and student may agree on a number through a short conference.
- The teacher can use the numerical value as an entry in a grade book.
- **Completion credit** for unit components
- Conferring