



Inyo County Office of Education
Barry D. Simpson, Superintendent

The Inyo Insight

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Equitable Grading During a Pandemic By: Heather Carr



Grades have long been a sensitive topic between parents and their students and between teachers and parents for as long as most of us can remember. The traditional report card has been deemed as the ultimate translation of academic performance whether good or bad. While this may historically be the case, were the practices of the last school year reflective of academic performance or a survival method to get everyone through the first leg of a global pandemic? Last spring, most schools opted for pass/fail versus traditional letter grades and temporarily adopted hold harmless policies until the pandemic ended (and

we know it didn't) or until we had a better, more permanent solution to grading student learning. When school started this school year, most districts opted to go back to traditional grading practices which means students are now back to "normal" grading but with the complexities of non-traditional learning.

What we have learned through this pandemic (and in "normal" times) is that our grading practices must be both accurate (describe a level of course/content understanding) and equitable (so we aren't giving an advantage to students who have more resources). As the fall semester comes to (came to) a close, teachers across the state are reporting that they are currently giving out more Fs than ever before. So, what can we do in an effort to ensure that our grading practices are reflective of student learning and not the complications of a pandemic or inequitable grading practices?

Los Angeles Unified School District recently made the decision to not give Fs this semester and allow students the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned by accepting work well past their semester deadline. Other large school districts across the state have adopted policies that include no "zeros." Work will be marked as missing until it gets completed. Some districts are providing an alternative, "catch-up" assignment in which students can demonstrate what they have learned. For other districts, the independent work is being minimized and the larger projects are what is being graded. Finally, other districts are opting to only award As, Bs and Cs and anything lower is marked as incomplete and summer school is being assigned to remediate the lost learning.

In any situation or grading structure, teachers need to select what is most crucial to teach now. What do students need now in order to be successful in the next year or years to come? How do we demonstrate that our grading accurately reflects what they learned now versus what assignments they did or did not complete?

For additional resources on Equitable Grading, contact Heather Carr at hcarr@inyocoe.org

Inyo County Art Docent Program

Inyo Council for the Arts has adapted its Art Docent Program and continues to provide Inyo County elementary schools with virtual art docents lessons! Although things look slightly different this school year, students are still engaging with master artworks, having thoughtful discussions about art practices and artists, and making their own art! School Arts Coordinator Erin Renee and Programs Coordinator Rachael Gabriel are teaching all art docent lessons remotely over zoom to students at home and in the classroom. The program has been adapted to include online portfolios of artwork, adjustments to activities for easy access to materials, and a handout with the relevant artwork and instructions for the activity, so families can participate at home.

Despite these changes, the Inyo County Art Docent Program continues to provide a sequential, interactive K-5th grade education in art history and artistic skills, allowing teachers and docents to address a significant part of the California Arts Standards. Teachers and students alike have expressed their appreciation for the two completed fall lessons and are looking forward to the upcoming themes scheduled for January! If you would like to participate or learn more, please visit inyo.org/art-docent-program or contact Erin at schoolarts@inyo.org. This artwork was inspired by Matt Thomases at <http://www.matthomases.net/09> at [c.html](http://www.matthomases.net/09)



Timely & Relevant Curriculum Resources

As we continue to make sense of what happened in the Capitol last week, we know kids will be turning to their teachers for support and processing. Here are some resources to support you:
~[Age-appropriate \(K-12\) questions and conversation starters](#) (Common Sense Media)
~[MS/HS lesson on the Insurrection at the Capitol & Media Literacy](#) (PBS & Peardeck)
~[Facing History and Ourselves](#) resources for teaching with current events
~[Leading Conversations After Crisis](#) - Teaching Tolerance article



~youcubed has posted [4 new data talks](#): Social Media,

Seasons, Melting Ice & Polar Bears & Growth Mindset

~Browse [history lessons](#)

designed by the Content, Literacy, Inquiry, & Citizenship Project for hybrid and distance learning.



Share the wonders of Joshua Tree National Park with your students! Book a [free, live program](#) provided by a park ranger on the topic of geology, draw a Joshua tree or the plants and animals of the park.



Since March of 2019 students of Inyo County have participated in distance learning and more recently some have returned to in-seat, on-campus learning. An on-going challenge I have heard and witnessed in my position as an MSW Trainee, providing both academic support and Triple P to parents and caregivers, is the poor attendance rate and lack of participation in academic work since the school shutdowns began as a result of COVID-19. My hope is to provide you with some student feedback on how to keep our classrooms engaged and to send a positive message to both teachers and students during this time to advocate for in-seat learning (permitting our COVID rates decrease).

Daniela Napoles is a junior at Lone Pine High School who, like many students were participating in distance learning and more recently returned to in-seat, on-campus learning. She allowed me to interview her about her experience.

Q1: How can teachers keep students engaged? What would you like to see happen?

A1: "I would like to see more collaboration, us being able to work in a group while also keeping our distance, kahoot games are always a plus. I would like my teachers to ask questions like 'what did we just learn?' 'what did you like or dislike about this lesson?' 'Are there any questions?'"

Q2: What went well during distance learning? What is going well now that you are on-campus?

A2: "During distance what went well is we were able to really protect our health, but when you're on-campus, at school, you are able to actually see your teachers and you can have more one-on-one support with school work-all while maintaining social distance guidelines."

Q3: Anything you want to tell your teachers?

A3: "I have a question-How is it for you, teachers, zooming and doing in-class lessons? --Do not stress, try to relax. It's much easier for teachers if students come to school--because you can have more one-on-one support, teachers can check your school work/assignments more easily, and you can complete more school work because you are doing it in class, where there are less distractions."

Daniela has one compliment and one improvement to give to her teachers. She appreciates her teachers taking their own personal time to help her with her schoolwork, she believes they are dedicated to her success as a student. An improvement she feels is to "Make It Fun! -Ask Questions".

Here are three tips that may help teachers keep class a bit more interesting or to keep students engaged: 1) Increase student-to-student interactions, 2) Encourage critical and reflective discussions, & 3) Check-in with students, show support. For more information visit the [Iowa State University](https://www.iastate.edu/) site or ICOE's website at <https://learn.inyocoe.org/content>

Wishing you all health, safety, and wellness!

New Year, New Learning!

Check out the ICOE PD Calendar at <https://learn.inyocoe.org/teachers/professional-learning>. Once it's open, use CtrlF to search for content you might be interested in. Some highlights of what's coming up:

January 21 - Engaging Student is Digital Learning (see this [flyer](#) for more details)

January 25 - Equitable Math Instruction (first of four sessions, see this [link](#) for more details)

January 26 - Exploratorium TK-2 Science Workshop ([Registration Link](#))

January 28 - Exploratorium 3-5 Science Workshop ([Registration Link](#))

February 5 - Math Mini Conference (units are available, see this [flyer](#) for more details)

February 10 - MS/HS Science Teacher Community of Practice (see this [flyer](#) for details)

Not finding what you are looking for?

Contact Ilissa @ itwomey@inyocoe.org or ext. 2197 and we might be able to provide or point you in the right direction.

Explore PBS: Resources for Teachers and Families

As we enter the 10th month of COVID-19 and the beginning of 2021, we are all continuing with the struggle of adapting to the many changes and restrictions that are part of our new normal. No one has had to adjust more or change faster than the teachers of our children. Here in Inyo county, we have all tackled total distance learning, synchronous and asynchronous teaching, last minute schedule and teaching changes, quarantines, and of course, new methods of grading and assessing students.

On a brighter note, for schools and teachers, there is currently no better time to access effective and free educational support from the California Public Media Education Service (PBS). The Public media stations across our state have banded together to package a comprehensive set of broadcast and digital resources for teachers, students, and families for at home learning. These stations drew on the most popular offerings for teachers and families that were rolled out in the spring, when the epidemic started, to create more resources. These newly rolled out resources are built for meaningful teaching and learning in distance and digital

environments. Included in these new offerings are standards-aligned lesson plans, educational media that keep students engaged and learning and professional development to help teachers pivot to distance learning. All of these resources are free and available to everyone, and sharable to your Google Classroom.

Please click the links below to begin to explore these opportunities.

Resources including schedule for early learners can be found at [Grades PreK-5 Classroom Resources | California Public Media Education Service | PBS LearningMedia](#)

Resources including schedule for middle and high school learners can be found at [Grades 6-12 Classroom Resources | California Public Media Education Service | PBS LearningMedia](#)

