Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live by the light that I have. I must stand with anybody that stands right, and stand with him while he is right, and part with him when he goes wrong. Abraham Lincoln

Upcoming Events:
Monday, January 14
Tuesday, January 15
Tuesday, January 15
Tuesday, January 15
Tuesday, January 15
Tuesday, January 15
Wednesday, January 16
Wednesday, January 16
Thursday, January 17
Thursday, January 17
Friday, January 18
Friday, January 18
Saturday, January 19
Saturday, January 19
Saturday, January 19
Monday, January 21
Monday, January 21
January 22 – January 25
Tuesday, January 22
Thursday, January 24
Friday, January 25
Friday, January 25
Friday, January 25
Saturday, January 26
Saturday, January 26
Saturday, January 26

Varsity Bowling vs. Brighton @ Spencerport Bowl, 3:45 p.m.

Department Meetings, 2:25 p.m.

Boys Varsity Swimming vs. Brighton, 4:30 p.m., SHS

Varsity Ice Hockey vs. Batavia @ Bill Gray’s Iceplex, 6:00 p.m.

Varsity Wrestling @ Canandaigua, 7:100 p.m.

Boys Varsity Basketball @ Churchville, 7:15 p.m.

Girls Varsity Basketball vs. Odyssey, 7:15 p.m., SHS

Varsity Bowling vs. Thomas @ AMF Empire Lanes, 3:45 p.m.

Varsity Wrestling vs. Wayne, 7:00 p.m., SHS

Teacher Leader Meeting, 1:00 p.m., Conference Room

Varsity Bowling vs. Hilton @ Pleasure Lanes, 3:45 p.m.

Boys Varsity Swimming @ Brockport, 4:30 p.m.

Girls Varsity Basketball Tournament, 7:15 p.m., SHS

Boys Varsity Basketball @ Thomas, 7:15 p.m.

Varsity Cheerleading Tournament @ Brockport, Time TBD

Varsity Ice Hockey @ Genesee Valley Park, 12:00 p.m.

Girls Varsity Basketball Tournament, Time TBD, SHS

Varsity Indoor Track @ RIT, 6:00 p.m.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, No School

Varsity Bowling @ Gates Bowl, 9:00 a.m.

Regents Exams

Board of Education Meeting, 7:00 p.m., District Office

Varsity Bowling vs. Churchville @ Spencerport Bowl, 3:45 p.m.

Regents Rating Day, No School for Grades 9 – 12

End of Quarter 2

Boys Varsity Basketball @ Irondequoit High School, 7:15 p.m.

Girls Varsity Basketball vs. Irondequoit, 7:15 p.m., SHS

Varsity Cheerleading Tournament @ Blue Cross Arena, Time TBD

Varsity Wrestling @ Onondaga Community College, Time TBD

Varsity Indoor Track @ RIT, 10:00 a.m.
Monday, January 28
BPT Meeting (STA Only), 2:25 p.m., Conference Room
Monday, January 28
Varsity Bowling vs. Canandaigua @ Roseland Bowl, 3:45 p.m.
Tuesday, January 29
Faculty Meeting, 2:25 p.m., PAC
Tuesday, January 29
Boys Varsity Basketball @ Honeoye Falls-Lima, 7:15 p.m.
Tuesday, January 29
Girls Varsity Basketball vs. East Irondequoit, 7:15 p.m., SHS
Tuesday, January 29
Varsity Wrestling @ Irondequoit, 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, January 30
Varsity Wrestling @ Gates, 5:00 p.m.
Friday, February 1
Boys Varsity Basketball/Cheerleading vs. School of the Arts, 6:30 p.m., SHS
Friday, February 1
Girls Varsity Basketball @ Churchville, 7:30 p.m.
Monday, February 4
BPT, 2:25 p.m., Conference Room
Monday, February 4
Faculty Meeting, 2:25 p.m., PAC
Tuesday, February 12
Student Updates
On Thursday, January 10, members of the high schools CHOICES program attended their second training session. The main lesson dealt with long-term and short-term goals and the roadblocks that can limit reaching those goals. They debated several topics and worked on team building and other activities. The students will be delivering the lesson to our 8th graders at Cosgrove on February 1.
Staff Reminders/Updates

First Block Teachers: Please note that on **Friday, January 18**, morning announcements will start 5 minutes earlier than normal. This is to accommodate a special announcement that celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Students from our DASH2Change club as well as other students from the high school will be reading a selection of quotes from Dr. King. As always, please make sure students are paying attention during these announcements and that instruction has stopped.

Agenda for 1/25: Let me start by saying that I do apologize that our colleagues in the ELA department will not be able to join us on this day as they are grading the ELA regents. I truly wish there was a way we could avoid this. With that being said the tentative agenda for those teachers not taking part in the grading of the ELA regents is as follows:

- **Suicide Safety for Teachers (SST) (PAC): 7:30-9:30:** *A program for all school faculty and staff. It's a two hour training where you will learn to recognize the warning signs of suicide and understand your role in responding.*
- **Grading Activity (PAC): 9:45-11:15**
- **Lunch (on your own): 11:15-12:15**
- **Department Time: 12:15-1:25**
- **Health and Wellness Activity (TBD): 1:30-2:50**

**Tuesday 1/22:** As all of you are aware, on Tuesday, January 22, we will be giving our 11th grade students the ELA Common Core assessment. School will be in session. Jennifer Placito has already sent out a schedule for room usage to any teachers who rooms are impacted. Please note that in addition to classrooms in the 100 Hallways, the East Cafeteria and East Gym area will be closed until the conclusion of the exam (approximately 11:00 AM). After 7:25 a.m., the bells will be turned off and teachers are asked to use their classroom clocks to dismiss students. As 11th grade students begin to be dismissed from the exam (starting at approximately 10:00 AM), they will be sent back to class. I greatly appreciate everyone’s flexibility with this. Please direct any questions to Jennifer Placito and Steve Lysenko.

**Emergency Drills:** Please note that Tim O’Connor will be sending out an email a few days prior to our next scheduled lock down drill. Again, we are focusing on practicing with students and staff on being able to react to an emergency situation at an inopportune time. Please make sure to have all of your emergency plans in a readily accessible location for both yourself and for a substitute teacher if you absent. If a drill has not taken place during each of your classes, please find time to review with each class what your expectations are in an emergency situation and where the safest place in the room is that students should move to in the event of a lockdown.
Visitor/Main Entrance Procedures: Thank you to our greeters for doing such a wonderful job in implementing our new procedures for visitors during the day over the past year or so. The district is in the process of installing the RAPTOR system in each of our schools to be used at the greeter’s desks (for more information about the visitor management system please visit the following site: https://raptortech.com/protect-your-school/raptor-visitor-management-system/.) The goal is to have this system installed in each school in the next few months. Below are also a few “dos and don’ts” to support the work of Marlene and Joy:

Do: Contact both Marlene and Joy about classroom visitors ahead of time. Please arrange for a student (or you or another teacher) to be at the greeter’s desk to welcome your visitor after they sign in so they can be walked to your class.

Don’t: Invite former students to visit during the school day (until after 2:50). If a former student is going to be helping in your classroom for some type of presentation, please contact me (Sean) first and we will work out the details. If the opportunity presents itself, please also remind students they are not to order food to be dropped off at the front desk (unless of course they are ordering it as a thank you to staff ;-)).

Upcoming Faculty Meetings: Tuesday, January 29, will be another Digital Conversion Team (DCT) break out session. Our DCT members continue to do an amazing job in supporting our entire school in using instructional technology to enhance student learning in a meaningful and powerful way. More information will follow on signing up for a session for January 29. A special thank you to Rich Colosi and Cory Allen for their work with the DCT team. Please remember that Rich is an incredible resource for our staff and is more than happy to work with any staff member on instructional technology questions/projects, etc. Do not hesitate to contact him to set up a meeting!

Field Trips Over 50 Miles: I had asked for all of these to be submitted to me prior to winter break. I do not think I have all of them at this point 😊. Final reminder, please get these to me as soon as possible or your trip may not be approved for next year.

Ruby the Therapy Dog 😊: Ruby has made a wonderful transition to the high school. It is great seeing students and staff so excited to see her every day. Thank you to JoAnn for sharing Ruby with our school community. We have a few more dogs who are in the process of being certified as Therapy Dogs, so hopefully we will have a few more of our four legged friends joining us in the near future. As I shared prior to Ruby joining us, if there are any staff (or students) that are concerned about being around Ruby for whatever reason, please let me/JoAnn know. We have already spoken to two staff members who are allergic to dogs and have made sure that Ruby will not be interacting with them. Again, any concerns please let me know.

BPT Updates: Just a reminder to make sure to read the minutes that are sent out from each BPT meeting. Our BPT members do an excellent job in taking detailed minutes, so please make sure to read these as they contain a great deal of information on discussions taking place within the building amongst all stakeholders. They are also posted on the high school web page.
Distracted Driving for Juniors: On Wednesday, April 24, we will be starting a new program for our 11th grade students. Jennifer Placito and Kate Zobkiw have worked to bring “Arrive Alive” to SHS (http://www.arrivealivetour.org/). The focus of this program is reinforcing with young drivers the dangers of distracted driving. We felt this would go great with the work we already do with our seniors (distracted driving presentation during the first week of school and DWI assembly prior to the Senior Ball). This will require some flexibility on our part as each student will miss a portion of one of their classes during the school day to participate (there is a simulator involved).

Principal’s Message

I truly hope the 2019 school year is off to a great start for each of you. During Teacher Leader meetings, we continue to have a rich and vibrant discussion concerning our grading work. We will provide an update on this work on January 25 during our grading activity. I great appreciate everyone’s continued openness to engage in this discussion. During the last Board of Education Meeting, Ty presented for me a quick overview on some of my ideas for moving away for our traditional model of naming a Valedictorian and Salutatorian to speak at graduation (thank you Ty!). I will post this presentation in our faculty meeting Schoology page. I will be working with Teacher Leaders, BPT and students on getting their feedback on a proposal for how we can create a new process for recognizing students during graduation. I will also be forming a small committee to get feedback as well. Please note, this is only a proposal (ending Val and Sal over the next few years), and the board has simply given their permission for me to explore this with our school community and to develop a recommendation/proposal for them to consider. I have also included a short grading article below for your reading pleasure if you so choose to read it 😊.

I am looking forward to a great “second half” of the school year working with each of you. I truly feel blessed to be able to work in such a caring and vibrant learning community. Any questions, concerns, or comments please always feel free to see me. All the best. Sean

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Effective Grading Practices Pages 7275

How I Broke My Rule and Learned to Give Retests

Myron Dueck

Structured choices for retesting can motivate even the lowest achievers.

Six years ago, a conference on standards based grading and assessment left me with the distinct and slightly confounding sense that my assessment procedures needed to change. As it turned out, one of the assessment practices I had been most wedded to was one I eventually overturned. The conference, which my principal at the high school where I then taught urged me to attend, reinforced nagging questions I’d long had about traditional grading practices. During the first sessions, I agreed in whole or part with nearly everything presenters said. For years, I’d encouraged students to make practice tests, so the concept of formative assessment was familiar to me. Like the presenters, I’d faced the conundrum of how to equitably grade the bright student who did little homework but scored high on tests, and I’d felt uneasy with the practice of reducing grades for assignments that were handed in late. Then a speaker prompted me to question one of my most entrenched rules:

Never offer retests.

On my flight home, as I reflected on what I’d learned, I realized how much retests would collide with the grading procedures I used as a high school history teacher. I saw two obvious stumbling blocks to offering retests: (1) My courses were very content heavy, and I had little time to spend on retests; and (2) I didn’t know how to maintain an
authentic measure of learning if I allowed everyone to take retests. Pondering how to make it work, I thought of the model of assessment Rick Stiggins had presented. His model made sense to me, especially the three key questions he said students must know how to answer. At the beginning of a unit, all students should be able to answer the question, Where are we going? After an assessment, they should be able to answer the question, Where am I? and after answering both of these questions, the student should be able to answer, How do I close the gap? I used these questions as touchstones as I transformed my testing policy.

Smooth Sailing on "Where Are We Going"?

With a little help from my vice principal at the time, Tom Schimmer, this was a relatively easy question to address. In his previous school, Tom had been using student friendly unit plans that clearly delineated learning targets—what a student needed to be able to do during each unit. I began using learning targets in my senior history courses. I laid out all unit requirements under one of the following headings: Knowledge Targets: What do I need to know? Reasoning Targets: What can I do with what I know? Skill Targets: What can I demonstrate? Product Targets: What can I make to show my learning? I presented each target as an "I can" statement, which made it easier for students to understand the target and take ownership of reaching it. Both my students and I found these unit plans incredibly helpful. In the knowledge targets section, students could find all the "Trivial Pursuit" objectives—definitions, dates, names, and other specific information they needed to know. I explained to students that these knowledge pieces were essential to success in the course; any discussion or activity we did in the unit would require them to know these core facts. For example, one knowledge target for our pre–World War II unit was "I can list four conditions in 1930s Germany that resulted in Hitler gaining power." Reasoning targets reflect what students can do with what they know. In my courses, these are often the most interesting targets, as students are required to bring knowledge pieces together to form an argument or make a judgment. Terms such as justify, determine, compare, and evaluate are commonly found in this section. An example of a reasoning target from the pre–World War II unit might be "I can explain to what extent the United States followed a policy of isolationism in the 1930s." Skill and product targets are relatively easy to determine. Skill targets focus on what students can do to demonstrate understanding, such as make a speech or complete a hands on map activity. One student's skill target for the pre–World War II history unit was "I can research a member of the Jewish community living in 1930s Germany and give a two minute speech on his or her specific concerns or challenges." Product targets refer to what students make to show learning; for example, a short written description, PowerPoint presentation, or collage of images that represent the social conditions of the 1930s.

My students reacted very positively to these structures. At the end of each unit, we went over the unit's plan as a class. (In one case, we discovered that we'd missed covering a knowledge target because a fire drill took us out of class!) Students used the targets as study guides by checking off the "I can" statements and determining what they still needed to learn. As one student noted, "I'm able to discover what I know and don't know before I take the test."

Hitting Bumps at "Where Am I?"

I thought students could answer this question as they always had—by seeing their graded tests and my feedback. The new element would be that students could close the gap by further study followed by a retest. I believed I could administer retests using my existing test structure and rely on my comments to guide students toward improvement. It turned out to be more complicated. With some trepidation, on returning a set of tests, I announced to my History 12 students that students who were unhappy with their results could see me after class to schedule a retest. Allie was one student who requested a retest, and we arranged a lunch meeting for the following day.

Before her appointment, I looked over Allie's test, and I knew I had a problem. The test consisted of a few sections. Allie requested to focus only on the first section of 40 multiple choice questions, in which she had 12 errors. Given the complexity of the question format and the integration of different learning objectives into different sections, I couldn't ascertain specifically where her weaknesses lay. Consequently, I couldn't determine an efficient and accurate way to retest Allie. Even if I asked a complete second set of random questions and Allie rewrote the whole test, I still couldn't guarantee that her second assessment would be a clear replacement of the first.

I ended up interviewing Allie on the individual questions she had missed, trying to see whether she now understood them better. It was a painful, inefficient process that lasted 30 minutes and didn't give either of us much insight. I was left with the clear understanding that I'd better revamp this process. As a first step, I reorganized my tests. Rather than sticking with my usual formula of separating each test into sections by type of question—multiple choice, short answer, long answer—I rethought my structure. I settled on separating sections by learning outcomes/major topics and varying the type of questions within each of these sections. For example, my test on Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) resulted in the following sections and values:

The United States in the 1920s: 11 points
Causes of the Depression: 4 points
FDR's efforts to end the Depression: 5 points
Reactions to FDR's New Deal: 7 points
The End of the Depression: 6 points

Section 1, for instance, included eight multiple choice questions and a paragraph worth 3 points that students wrote to a prompt, for a total of 11 points. Section 3 consisted only of definitions. As I constructed each section, it dawned on me to simultaneously write the corresponding section to the "sister" test. While I had my head wrapped around causes of the Depression, for instance, it was easy to make another section on the same topic, also worth 4 points. By the time I was finished, I had two tests with the same sections and values, but different questions.

After my students took the first FDR test, I graded it as usual. When I handed it back, however, the routine changed. I gave each student a tracking sheet (see fig. 1) on which I had listed the different sections and values of the test. I had students write in the points they scored on each section and tabulate their percentage score. The last box beside each section was where students indicated whether they intended to retake that section. Within a few minutes, students had a graphic representation of their strengths and weaknesses on each learning outcome. Because students actively tabulated their own section scores, the classroom atmosphere was a far cry from the disengaged atmosphere so common when teachers return tests.

Progressing Toward Closing the Gap

While I had my students' attention, I included on each tracking sheet questions about their test preparation, study skills, and goal setting, and then collected the completed sheets. I found that some students admittedly struggled to study effectively. Looking over the sheets, I could determine which students were—and weren't—using my suggested study routines. If students were not doing assigned homework or not taking time to study, when appropriate I made these actions prerequisites for a retest. I returned a copy of their tracking sheet to all students who requested a retest. Each student went home with a copy of his or her section scores, a list of which sections to study for the retest, and a summary of suggested study routines.

We scheduled students' retests during class or at lunchtime. Some students selected to retest only one section, others chose to retackle multiple sections, and some left their test score as it was. I offered topic specific tutorials on areas students missed, at lunch or after school. At first, struggling learners often chose to retest only one section. I took this opportunity to converse with each struggler about preparation and study techniques and to urge him or her to put in an extra study session independently or schedule a session with me. Because extra studying focused on only one section or topic, the at risk learner usually perceived it as easier and shorter and was willing. As low scoring students began to see dramatic improvement on their retested sections, many displayed heightened levels of confidence and tackled multiple sections on subsequent retests.

This procedure was also a good tool to assess my teaching. If I noticed that most students scored low on a particular section, I took that as a sign that my instruction on that section might need adjustment. As a class, we have revisited and relearned particular sections and I've scheduled whole class retests.

A Few Observations

Since I started revamping my testing procedures, I've seen more examples of how the change benefits students and gathered more insights than I could share in one short article. But here are a few of my observations: The ability to retest on specific learning outcomes benefits both low and high achieving students. When a struggling learner sees a score of 80–100 percent on one section after a retake, I've observed considerable improvements in his or her overall disposition and confidence. On the other hand, high achieving students living under pressure to keep performing well report less temptation to cheat when they know they'll have a second chance. By examining test items and students' performance on retakes, I can often determine whether a student's low test scores are a knowledge issue or related to the question format. For instance, if a student scores low on multiple choice responses in all sections but high on other question types, that learner likely needs help in strategizing how to answer multiple choice items.

You may need to convince peers—and students—of the wisdom of retests. Academically elite students sometimes object to a retesting system because they have become protective of systems that only value those who score well on an initial test. In terms of convincing colleagues, I've found that educators who object to retests have considerable difficulty coming up with any examples of assessments in the "real world" that don't have a retesting component. Since I reshaped my testing procedures, I've looked into the assessment literature and realized that many researchers conclude that the kind of changes I've made increase students' involvement, achievement, and motivation. I'm glad I've seen it with my own eyes.