

# LEARNING RECORD MODERATION READINGS

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January 20, 2007

Moderation readings can serve many purposes for students, teachers, administrators, and public accountability. However the most central purpose is as a “reality check.” Students and teachers triangulate their view of the student’s development and achievement with another pair of readers examining the same evidence. No one has the privileged view in this model. Each perspective contributes something important to our understanding.

The fundamental principles of Learning Record moderation readings are the same regardless of medium, grade level, subject area, or scale of the readings (i.e. within one classroom or as large-scale assessment at the district, regional, or national level).

1. Students’ identities and the Learning Record placement information (or grades) are removed or masked. Learning Records are gathered together and organized.
2. Readers are paired. Learning Records are assigned to reading pairs. Readers do not review their own Learning Records.
3. Readers review the Learning Records with their work samples. They discuss the evidence of learning and development.
4. For K-12 moderations, readers also review the grade-level expectations and agree on a placement on the Learning Record developmental scales.
5. For college-level courses, readers review the course strands and grade criteria established for the course by the instructor.
6. Readers also provide overall comments on the Learning Record as feedback.
7. The placement of the readers is compared with the placement found in the original Learning Record. Where there is a discrepancy, the Learning Record is reviewed again by another pair of readers. Generally these second pairs of readers are experienced Learning Record teachers or coaches. *This step is not necessary for in-class moderation readings; it is usually only done as part of a large-scale assessment (beyond the classroom).*
8. Results are provided as needed for informing students, teachers, administrators or other agencies.
9. This entire process is public: students, teachers, parents, administrators, researchers, or any other interested persons may participate as observers. Readers are limited to those who have contributed Learning Records to the moderation, as well as Learning Record coaches and expert Learning Record teachers who are assisting the moderation.

As long as these fundamental principles are observed, the actual methods for accomplishing them may vary depending on circumstances and particular environments. These principles were developed by Myra Barrs and Mary Barr in collaboration with many teachers, students, and administrators.

It should be noted that where students are serving as readers in their own class moderations, it is impossible to preserve anonymity: most students will recognize their peers' work samples. For the purposes of in-class moderations, anonymity is not a requirement. However, where moderation readings are conducted externally to the class, it is extremely important to assure that students' identities are protected.

It is not necessary or desirable to mask teachers' identities; frequently they can supply important background information during the moderation process that casts some light on the LR being reviewed.

Below are details for one model of college-level in-class moderation reading, where both students and teachers have access to computers with a net connection. This is the situation in my class. Following the description of this model are details for conducting a moderation with print-based Learning Records.

Also attached here is the Learning Record comment form.

The first time you do a moderation reading it will seem complicated; however the benefits are enormous for students and for you as the teacher. By the time you have done this two or three times you will have a handle on it and it will be obvious how to set it up and prepare students.

## ONLINE MODERATION READINGS

### **Before the Moderation Reading:**

Teachers review the moderation process, the procedures for preparing the Learning Record for the moderation, and the comment forms. These instructions can be provided for students.

### **Students prepare Learning Records for the moderation:**

1. Make a copy of your entire Learning Record folder, with its work samples and teacher comments folder. Remove and discard the teacher comments folder.
2. Rename the Learning Record folder with your student ID only. Rename the Learning Record document file inside the folder as <your student ID-LR.doc> (for example: 98723437-LR.doc)
3. Remove personal identification from the Learning Record file. To remove your personal profile information, select the row by clicking in the margin to the left of your name and delete the row. Remove your name from the rest of the document using the global search and replace function in your word-processing program.
4. Remove Part C, the evaluation section, from your Learning Record
5. Remove personal identification from work samples in the same way.
6. Please note that for in-class moderation readings, it is not possible to completely assure anonymity, since your peers will probably recognize your projects and other work. This step just assures that your identity will not be available to anyone outside your class.

7. Zip your Learning Record folder. You should now have one file with the file name <your student ID.zip>. Turn this file in as instructed by your teacher.

### **Teachers set up the moderation:**

1. Determine where students will upload their Learning Records (for example, GoogleDocs, Blackboard, a file server, etc.) Make sure that there is a copy of the Learning Record comment form where students can access it.
2. Pair students. Where there is an odd number of students, the teacher usually reads with one student. Students sit together and read Learning Records on the same computer.
3. Remind students to give each Learning Record a careful, thoughtful reading, and to discuss the evidence in the Learning Record with their partner before coming to agreement about responding.

### **The moderation process:**

1. From the file list of Learning Records submitted by the students (the .zip files), each student selects the LR directly below their own. The student whose LR is at the bottom of the list selects the top LR. (This is to manage the logistics and ensure that students don't end up with their own Learning Records.). Copy the selected LR to your pair's computer.
2. Copy the comment form to the desktop of your pair's computer.
3. Read and review each Learning Record, discuss the evidence, and come to agreement about the questions on the comment form. Select "save as" and save the comment form with the file name ID number of the Learning Record-read.
4. Upload the comment form as directed by the instructor. Repeat with the next Learning Record. Once you have reviewed a Learning Record, you may trash it.
5. Retrieve comments on your own LR at the end of the moderation from the same location you uploaded your comments to.

Instructors may want to review the comments and respond to readers about the quality of their feedback and evaluations. It is also helpful to debrief the moderation process. There are also many ways to can make use of the moderation readings explicitly as an exercise in the class.

## **PRINT-BASED MODERATION READINGS**

### **Before the Moderation Reading:**

Teachers review the moderation process, the procedures for preparing the Learning Record for the moderation, and the comment forms. These instructions can be provided for students.

### **Students prepare Learning Records for the moderation:**

1. Prepare a folder and label it with your student ID. Remove personal identification from the Learning Record document. To remove your personal profile information, select the row by clicking in the margin to the left of your name and delete the row. Remove your name

from the rest of the document using the global search and replace function in your word-processing program

2. Remove Part C, the evaluation section, from your Learning Record
3. Remove personal identification from work samples in the same way. Please note that for in-class moderation readings, it is not possible to completely assure anonymity, since your peers will probably recognize your projects and other work. This step just assures that your identity will not be available to anyone outside your class.
4. Print out your Learning Record and any printable work samples and place them into the folder labeled with your ID. Make sure readers will have some way to access work samples that can't be printed.
5. Turn this folder in as instructed by your teacher.

#### **Teachers set up the moderation:**

1. Gather the Student Learning Records and arrange them sequentially with the Student IDs displayed. They do not have to be in any particular order.
2. Give students copies of the Learning Record comment form, and keep extras handy.
3. Pair students. Where there is an odd number of students, the teacher usually reads with one student. Students sit together and read Learning Records on the same computer.
4. Remind students to give each Learning Record a careful, thoughtful reading, and to discuss the evidence in the Learning Record with their partner before coming to agreement about responding.

#### **The moderation process:**

1. From the set of Learning Records folders, each student selects the LR directly below their own. The student whose LR is at the bottom of the list selects the top LR. (This is to manage the logistics and ensure that students don't end up with their own Learning Records.).
2. Read and review each Learning Record, discuss the evidence, and come to agreement about the questions on the comment form. Fill out only one comment form for each Learning Record.
3. Return the comment form and the Learning Record folder to the teacher. Repeat with the next Learning Record.
4. Retrieve comments on your own LR at the end of the moderation or whenever your teacher returns them to you.

Instructors may want to review the comments and respond to readers about the quality of their feedback and evaluations. It is also helpful to debrief the moderation process.

There are also many ways to make use of the moderation readings explicitly as an exercise in the class.

## MODERATION READING COMMENT FORM COLLEGE-LEVEL COURSES

Learning Record ID:

Names of Readers:

1. Is the information in the Learning Record sufficient to make an evaluation? That is, is there both enough information, and an appropriate selection of information?

2. Are there clear signs of development across the five dimensions of learning? Dimensions of learning are:

- confidence and independence
- knowledge and understanding
- skills and strategies
- use of prior and emerging experience
- reflectiveness

3. Consider the grade criteria for this class. Based on the evidence from part A, the observations, and the work samples, as well as the writer's analysis in Part B, what letter grade would you attach to the Learning Record? Do not indicate a split grade (A-/B+); you must settle on a single determination.

Other comments:

## MODERATION READING COMMENT FORM K-12 CLASSES

Learning Record ID:

Names of Readers:

1. Is the information in the Learning Record sufficient to make an evaluation? That is, is there both enough information, and an appropriate selection of information?

2. Are there clear signs of development across the five dimensions of learning? Dimensions of learning are:

- confidence and independence
- knowledge and understanding
- skills and strategies
- use of prior and emerging experience
- reflectiveness

3. Consider the developmental scale descriptors. Based on the evidence from part A, the observations, and the work samples, as well as the analysis in Part B, where would you place this Learning Record on the Learning Record scales? Do not indicate a split placement; you must settle on a single determination.

Other comments: