

Teacher Clarity

Ensuring Every Student Knows How to Succeed

Mary M. Knight Elementary & Secondary

Board Presentation | November 2025

What is Teacher Clarity? Why Does It Matter?

What Teacher Clarity Means

Students understand:

- **What** they're learning today
- **Why** it matters to them
- **How** they'll show they've learned it

Learning is transparent and purposeful.

Research Evidence

3x

Students are THREE TIMES more likely to learn when they understand learning goals

Hattie, 2012 | Visible Learning

0.72

Effect size for Teacher Clarity—one of the highest-impact teaching practices

Corwin's Research Framework

Student Outcomes

- Higher engagement
- Greater ownership
- Self-assessment ability
- Increased achievement

Teacher Clarity Aligns with Our OWLS with GRIT Values

Teacher Clarity helps students live out what MMK values most:

Ownership with Growth

Students take responsibility for their learning and grow toward mastery when they understand their goals.

Success with Tenacity

Clear criteria and feedback support students to persist through challenges and maintain effort.

Leadership with Intensity

Clear learning enables rigorous, focused instruction where students are fully engaged.

Willingness with Resilience

When learning is transparent and achievable, students willingly take on challenges and bounce back from setbacks.

Our Two-Year Journey: 2024-2025 & 2025-2026

2024-2025 YEAR: Where We Are

Foundation & Planning

Aug - Sept 2024

Unpacked standards. Created learning progressions. Wrote learning intentions and success criteria.

Communication & Clarity

Oct - Nov 2024

Identified entry points for teacher clarity. Refined our understanding of effective learning intentions. Crafted success criteria to focus on action verbs and add clear attainable goals.

Examples & Engagement

Dec 2024 - Jan 2025

Focus on adding Language Expectations (vocabulary, structure, and function) into our teacher clarity components for student engagement.

Evidence & Refinement

Jan - May 2025

Gathered evidence of how teacher clarity is implemented in our classrooms. Reviewed data in PLC to refine goals for year two of implementation. Staff reflection and goal setting.

2025-2026 YEAR: Our Plan

Deep Implementation

Aug - Oct 2025

Refresh foundational practices. Focus around creating the Learning Progressions for Lesson Design.

Clarity of Explanation

Oct - Dec 2025

Co-construct rubrics for self assessment on teacher clarity components. Focus on communication of teacher clarity with students. Identify entry points to learning and identify strategies to reduce blind spots.

Refinement and Data

Jan - Apr 2026

Focus on engagement strategies, intentional lesson design, making thinking visible in the classroom, and scaffolding practice for students that can be measured and quantified.

Reflection & Planning

Apr - Jun 2026

Focus PLC gathering and analysis of evidence to strengthen assessment opportunities and support feedback. Celebrate progress. Plan enhancements for Year 3.

Understanding Implementation Levels

We measure Teacher Clarity on a 4-level scale. Here's what that looks like in classrooms:

Level 1

Beginning

Learning goals are unclear or not posted. Students don't know what they're learning or why.

Level 2

Developing

Learning goals are posted but not consistently referenced. Some students understand what they're learning.

Level 3

Proficient

Clear goals posted and discussed. Most students can explain what they're learning and why.

Level 4

Exemplary

Students clearly understand goals and use them to guide their own learning and self-assess.

Our goal: 80%+ of teachers at Level 3 or Level 4 (Proficient or Exemplary)

Teacher Perspective: Mr. Richert

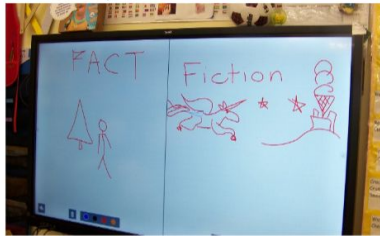
Hear from our teachers about their journey:

First Grade

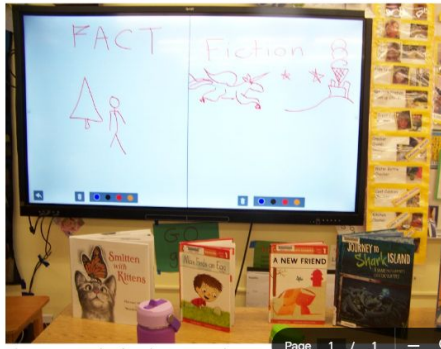
Mr. Richert will share his experience implementing Teacher Clarity practices in his first grade classroom.

Examples of Teacher Clarity in the Classrooms

Hear from our teachers about their journey:



Success Criteria: "I can determine if a book is Fact or Fiction by considering the characters and events in the book; could they occur only in real life?"



Check for Understanding:

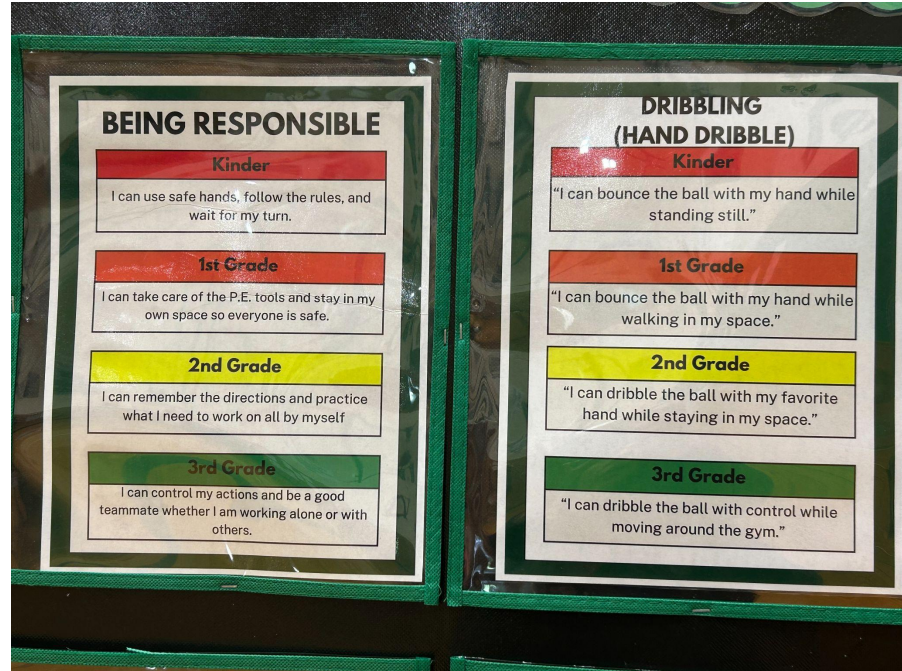
I used 'pick sticks' to randomly select a student to answer, "Was this book Fact or Fiction and why do you think that?"

Reflection: Student Quote that shows uptake:

"There are photos of the sharks...and those are real sharks."

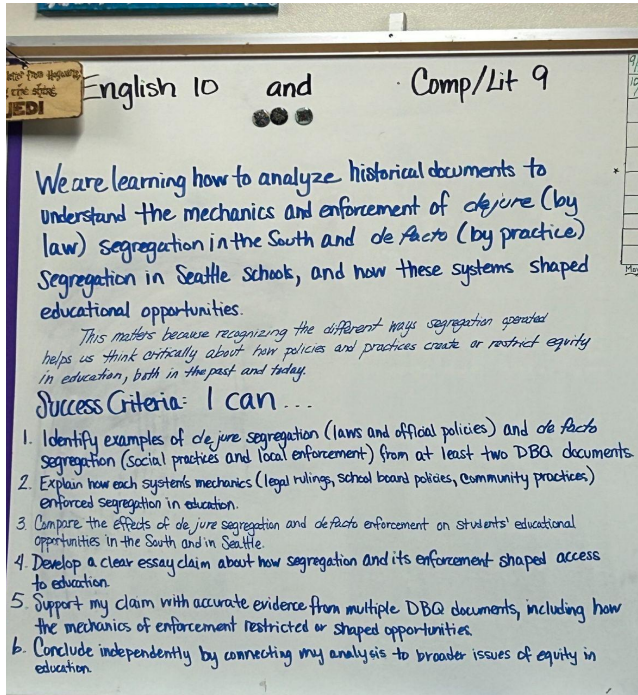
"Dogs and cats don't talk in speech bubbles."

"Cats really do play with toilet paper."



Examples of Teacher Clarity in the Classrooms

Hear from our teachers about their journey:



Learning Intention:

- We are learning to compare energy sources to see which offer a reliable supply of energy.

Relevancy:

A dependable mix of energy sources keeps power flowing during disruptions

Success Criteria:

- I can quickly identify and summarize important pieces of information from a data card
- I can explain a diagram of an energy source system.
- I can compare reliability of sources (solar, gas, wind, etc.).
- I can explain what makes a source reliable

Agenda:

- Class Discussion about Energy Sources
- Analyze Energy Source Cards
- Small Group Rankings
- Energy Reliability
- Exit Ticket

How We Support Teacher Clarity

Teacher Clarity isn't one-and-done. It's supported through integrated, ongoing systems:

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Teachers collaborate monthly in grade-level/subject teams to analyze student work and refine clarity practices.

Administrative Walkthroughs

Focused classroom observations to see clarity practices in action and provide timely feedback.

Individual Coaching

Personalized support for teachers to strengthen specific clarity practices in their classrooms.

Professional Development

Strategic training on writing clear learning goals, creating success criteria, and using student feedback.

Looking Forward: Next Steps

What's Coming (January - May 2026)

- Deepening work on evidence gathering and assessment practices
- Exploring standards-based grading approaches aligned with clarity
- Continuous refinement based on student feedback and data
- Sharing best practices across grade levels and departments

Our Goal: 80% of teachers at Proficient or Exemplary levels in Teacher Clarity implementation by end of school year, with measurable improvements in student engagement and achievement.

Key Takeaways

1

Teacher Clarity means students always know what they're learning, why it matters, and how they'll demonstrate success.

2

Research shows students are 3X more likely to learn when they understand learning goals. This is evidence-based practice.

3

Teacher Clarity directly supports MMK's OWLS with GRIT values—ownership, growth, resilience, and intensity.

4

Sustainable change happens through systematic support: PLCs, walkthroughs, coaching, and ongoing professional development.

When students know what they're learning and why, they take ownership of their growth and achieve at higher levels.