

First Attempts as Deliberate Practice

A first attempt is data, not a verdict. Effort counts twice in Duckworth's formula — so grade the revision, not just the rough draft.

TEACHING DECISION

How should I grade first attempts in science class?

DUCKWORTH'S FORMULA #1

$$\text{Talent} \times \text{Effort} = \text{Skill}$$

DUCKWORTH'S FORMULA #2

$$\text{Skill} \times \text{Effort} = \text{Achievement}$$

CONVENTIONAL APPROACH

- ✗ Grade first attempts as final products
- ✗ One shot — no revision opportunity
- ✗ Letter grade with no targeted feedback
- ✗ Rewards talent, ignores effort
- ✗ Creates "fragile perfects" who can't handle struggle

DELIBERATE PRACTICE APPROACH

- ✓ Treat first attempts as baseline data
- ✓ Structured revision is part of the grade
- ✓ Specific feedback on ONE weakness
- ✓ Effort counts twice — rewards the process
- ✓ Builds gritty learners who persist through difficulty

ATTACH TO EVERY FIRST ATTEMPT — WISE FEEDBACK (YEAGER & COHEN)

"I'm giving you these comments because I have very high expectations and I know you can reach them."

MONDAY MORNING ACTION — CREATE YOUR TRACKER

1

First Attempt Score

Baseline data — not the final grade

2

Specific Feedback

ONE weakness with a stretch goal

3

Revision Score

This goes in the gradebook

Based on **Grit** by Angela Duckworth — with research from Ericsson, Yeager & Cohen

My First Attempt Tracker

Your first try isn't your final grade. It's your starting line.

ASSIGNMENT	FIRST ATTEMPT	MY COACH SAYS (FEEDBACK)	MY REVISION SCORE

REMEMBER THIS

Every expert was once a beginner who refused to quit. Your first attempt shows where you are right now — your revision shows what you're capable of when you focus, listen to feedback, and try again. The score that matters most is the one that shows your growth.

"Enthusiasm is common. Endurance is rare." — Angela Duckworth