Lesson/Unit Name: Faces of War
Content Area: English language arts
Grade Level: 11

Dimension I – Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS

The lesson/unit aligns with the letter and spirit of the CCSS:

✓ Targets a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards.
✓ Includes a clear and explicit purpose for instruction.
✓ Selects text(s) that measure within the grade-level text complexity band and are of sufficient quality and scope for the stated purpose (e.g., presents vocabulary, syntax, text structures, levels of meaning/purpose, and other qualitative characteristics similar to CCSS grade-level exemplars in Appendices A & B).

A unit or longer lesson should:

✓ Integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening so that students apply and synthesize advancing literacy skills.
☐ (Grades 3-5) Build students’ content knowledge and their understanding of reading and writing in social studies, the arts, science or technical subjects through the coherent selection of texts.

Targets a set of grade-level CCSS ELA/Literacy standards
As noticed in the lesson plans, the unit specifically targets grade 11-12 CCSA ELA standards and does so in an integrated manner. Throughout the unit, students are asked to read, write, speak and listen in relation to the topic, theme, essential question, and texts being studied.

Includes a clear and explicit purpose for instruction
The unit and each lesson plan are guided by a single essential question: “How is the burden of responsibility to self, community, and country reflected in the faces of war?” Each lesson plan includes a learning outcome; that is aligned to a set of CCSS ELA/Literacy standards. Each lesson overview clearly outlines what learning activities students will engage in along with the suggested assessment item. There is a clear progression from lesson plan 1 to lesson plan 5 for that builds on student knowledge.

Selects text(s) that measure within the grade-level text complexity
The lesson plans include a variety of primary sources, print and digital texts, audio and video recordings, and informational and fictional texts. The anchor text, The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien has a Lexile score of 880 that falls within the CCSS 4-5 grade band. However, the purpose and use of the text, including the ideological discussion of what it means to “carry something” literally and psychologically; the analysis of themes, emotions and conflict; and the comparative element with other primary source texts such as speeches, the Declaration of Independence, the Declaration of Independence of Vietnam, as well as Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory on moral decision making provide sufficient user and task complexity for the grade band. Including qualitative analysis of the additional resources and qualitative analysis of the anchor text would strengthen alignment.

Integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening
Students are provided access to a variety of texts, essay writing prompts, and class discussion. Students cite textual evidence to complete worksheets and prepare for class discussions in most of the lesson plans. They compose multiple analytical essays. They finish the unit with a Socratic seminar that relies on text-based answers based on question stems from Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy. Through regular small group assignments and presentations to the class, students are given repeated opportunities to practice speaking and listening skills.

Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension
### Dimension II – Key Shifts the CCSS

**The lesson/unit addresses key shifts in the CCSS:**

- **Reading Text Closely:** Makes reading text(s) closely, examining textual evidence, and discerning deep meaning a central focus of instruction.
- **Text-Based Evidence:** Facilitates rich and rigorous evidence-based discussions and writing about common texts through a sequence of specific, thought-provoking, and text-dependent questions (including, when applicable, questions about illustrations, charts, diagrams, audio/video, and media).
- **Writing from Sources:** Routinely expects that students draw evidence from texts to produce clear and coherent writing that informs, explains, or makes an argument in various written forms (e.g., notes, summaries, short responses, or formal essays).
- **Academic Vocabulary:** Focuses on building students’ academic vocabulary in context throughout instruction.

#### A unit or longer lesson should:

- **Increasing Text Complexity:** Focus students on reading a progression of complex texts drawn from the grade-level band. Provide text-centered learning that is sequenced, scaffolded, and supported to advance students toward independent reading of complex texts at the CCR level.
- **Building Disciplinary Knowledge:** Provide opportunities for students to build knowledge about a topic or subject through analysis of a coherent selection of strategically sequenced, discipline-specific texts.
- **Balance of Texts:** Within a collection of grade-level units a balance of informational and literary texts is included according to guidelines in the CCSS (p. 5).
- **Balance of Writing:** Include a balance of on-demand and process writing (e.g., multiple drafts and revisions over time) and short, focused research projects, incorporating digital texts where appropriate.

### Reading text closely

The unit requires students to read text closely. In Lesson Plan 1, Lesson 1 expects students to read speeches to identify rhetorical features (“Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam”), to close read and answer text-dependent questions (“Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam”), and to read for evident theme development and effective use of rhetoric (various speeches related to Vietnam). In Lesson 2, students read the anchor text, The Things They Carried, to discuss various themes and emotions, specifically looking at the chapter “On the Rainy River” to analyze the protagonist’s conflict. In addition, students read Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory on moral decision-making and then synthesize Kohlberg’s theory and O’Brien’s conflict by citing textual evidence to analyze the stages of moral reasoning for O’Brien. Lesson 3 asks students to delineate the reasoning behind the main arguments and to explain the overall purpose. Students are also challenged to evaluate both the use of rhetorical device in the speech and its overall structure for effectiveness. In addition, students must present their findings to the class in a 10 minute discussion. Lesson 4 has students “read” both informational and audio texts about the Vietnam War for themes of brotherhood, camaraderie and sacrifice; and Lesson Seed 1 juxtaposes Chapter 9 of the anchor text with the diary of Vietnamese doctor Dang Thuy to determine the development of central themes over the course of the journal and comparing themes to the final chapters of The Things They Carried. In Lesson Plan 2, students are asked to analyze the conflict of the protagonist and to synthesize independently Kohlberg’s theory and O’Brien’s internal conflict by citing text-based evidence to analyze the stages of moral reasoning. Lesson Plan 3 introduces students to the concept of meta-fiction and asks students to find textual evidence to identify The Things They Carried as meta-fiction. The increasing complexity of the student expectations and tasks indicate increasing rigor of instruction and justify the expectation that students are making meaning from the text over the course of the unit of study.

#### Text-based evidence

Students are provided various opportunities to answer questions about a text using textual evidence as well as to engage in written responses and small group discussions based on what they have read. The close reading guide in Lesson Plan 1 includes questions such as "Why does Ho mention the history of their struggle under different rulers?" and "How does Ho use legal reasoning in this section?" to guide students in their understanding of the content and structure of the speech. In Lesson Plan 2 students complete a graphic organizer that connects Kohlberg's theory of moral development to characters and events. Students are asked to "explain how that thought process fits the stage of moral decision making" and to provide text evidence for support. During the Socratic seminar in Lesson Plan 5 students are asked to support their discussion responses with evidence from the text.

#### Writing from sources

Students are given the opportunity to write through discussion questions, a graphic organizer, a class starter, exit tickets, and analytical/explanatory essays. The writing assignments directly or indirectly indicate that students need to cite evidence from a text to support the response. For example, in Lesson Seed 1, students are asked to "compose a written response to the question: How is the burden of responsibility to self, community and country reflected in Thuy's diary and Rat Kiley's story in chapter 9? (Make sure to have students cite textual evidence.)" Essay assignments in the unit also ask students to cite textual evidence and to write from sources. For example,
students are assigned different Vietnam era speeches to read and then write in response to those speeches. In addition to those informational texts, students are also reading the literary text The Things They Carried. This demonstrates the lesson creator's understanding of the need for a balance of texts within a longer unit.

Academic vocabulary
Lesson Plan 1 includes a multiple page collection of rhetorical devices that students are asked to reference as they analyze "Address to the Nation on the War in Vietnam" and "Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam." Students will have encountered few if any of these devices prior to English 11 as they are Tier III words (ie. conduplicatio, enumeratio). The Lesson Plan teacher notes address the need the use strategies for teaching academic vocabulary and two website links are provided as resources. Lesson Plan 1 provides a close reading guide with three text-dependent questions related to defining terms from the text (ie. What does the term "monopolized" mean? What is Ho's accusation?). Each lesson plan provides ELL modifications to support vocabulary instruction. For example in Lesson Plan 2 includes "differentiate the lesson for English Language Learners by chunking portions of the text and providing a vocabulary sheet." In Lesson Plan 3 the differentiation for gifted and talented students includes a focus on using word parts to define "verisimilitude" and "metafiction."

Increasing text complexity
Students are introduced to literary and informational texts as well as print and digital resources. Several lesson plans include group discussions about a text, and the lesson plans provide questions to support student participation. The Lesson Plan 3 includes questions such "In the chapter 'How to Tell a True War Story,' O'Brien shares various vignettes. How does O'Brien make each story he shares seem true, even though sometimes they contradict one another? Why?" and Lesson Plan 5 centers around a Socratic seminar with multiple guiding questions (ie. On page 90, O'Brien explains that this story was "not a war story. It was a love story." In what sense is this a "love story"? Why?). Two lesson plans include graphic organizers for recording evidence from the texts related to the content of the texts as well as characterization. Students are expected to read the anchor text independently as daily homework assignments. Additionally, they are expected to read informational texts within small groups for discussion and presentation. Among these reading assignments, support consists of the one close reading guide and the questions to support class discussions. ELL modifications are suggested that include chunking text and providing a less complex version of the text to support struggling readers. No lesson plan indicates teacher modeling for the reading process.

Building disciplinary knowledge
An overarching purpose of this unit is to help students understand the Vietnam War and its impact on American soldiers who served. Lesson Plan 1 includes whole group reading of Richard Nixon and Ho Chi Minh speeches as well as small group presentations based on a variety of other speeches from the time period. Lesson Plan 4 is designed to allow students to explore a soldier from the anchor text in depth to understand his motivations and the war's impact on him. Lesson 3 Seed provides resources and discussion around Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Beginning with Lesson Plan 2, instructional activities are designed to understand the content, themes, and characters of the anchor text - a fictional account of soldiers in the Vietnam War. In addition, the unit promotes the exploration of rhetorical devices as students are asked to identify and evaluate the rhetoric used in speeches.
Similarly, students are asked to trace the development of themes within and across readings.

**Balance of texts**
Within this unit there is a balance of texts that include primary source speeches and diary entries, academic theory in the Lawrence Kohlberg paper on moral theory, and the anchor text, "The Things They Carried", which is a collection of fictional short stories about a platoon of soldiers in Vietnam.

**Balance of writing**
Students have various opportunities for on-demand writing (class starter, exit ticket, in-class responses) that encourage reflection about themes and characters. Lesson Plan 1 includes a rubric for its explanatory essay assignment. Other than this, none of the writing assignments provides an exemplar or guidance for how to construct a response. For each formal writing assignment, the lesson plan notes include "At the teacher's discretion, this lesson can be extended to include opportunities for students to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, and trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience." The small group presentations in Lesson Plan 1 based on multiple speeches from the time period require students to reference digital resources. Lesson Plan 2's differentiation for gifted and talented students asks students to "conduct a brief research investigation into Kohlberg in order to create a White Paper, an informational brochure, a Prezi, etc. about Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning."

**Suggestions for Improvement**
The unit provides a variety of texts for students to explore; however, there is no consistent, explicit support for tackling complex texts for all students. Students are provided multiple opportunities to respond in writing, but, again, there are no forms of guidance in the writing process other than a rubric for one essay assignment.

**Rating:** 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension

### Dimension III – Instructional Supports

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The lesson/unit is responsive to varied student learning needs:</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Cultivates student interest and engagement in reading, writing and speaking about texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Addresses instructional expectations and is easy to understand and use.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Provides all students with multiple opportunities to engage with text of appropriate complexity for the grade level; includes appropriate scaffolding so that students directly experience the complexity of the text.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Focuses on challenging sections of text(s) and engages students in a productive struggle through discussion questions and other supports that build toward independence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Integrates appropriate supports in reading, writing, listening and speaking for students who are ELL, have disabilities, or read well below the grade level text band.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Cultivates student interest and engagement</th>
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<td>The unit contains a variety of activities designed to aid students in understanding the effects of war on soldiers. Students are provided opportunities to work collaboratively in small groups and then provide short presentations for their peers. Discussion questions are provided to assist students with participation in whole group settings. A variety of writing assignments allows for reflection and making personal connections with the texts. The Socratic seminar in the Lesson Plan 5 allows students to share their opinions and either agree or disagree with their classmates.</td>
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<th>Addresses instructional expectations</th>
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<td>The unit addresses instructional expectations and is easy to use, including links to various content and skill refining resources. Each lesson is mapped out with a narrative overview that provides context for instruction as well as the materials and instructional standards addressed in the lesson. In addition, each lesson provides a daily breakdown of learning outcomes and description of activities.</td>
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<th>Provides all students with multiple opportunities to engage with text</th>
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A unit or longer lesson should:

- Include a progression of learning where concepts and skills advance and deepen over time *(may be more applicable across the year or several units)*.
- Gradually remove supports, requiring students to demonstrate their independent capacities *(may be more applicable across the year or several units)*.
- Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills, student-directed inquiry, analysis, evaluation and/or reflection.
- Integrate targeted instruction in such areas as grammar and conventions, writing strategies, discussion rules and all aspects of foundational reading for grades 3-5.
- Indicate how students are accountable for independent reading based on student choice and interest to build stamina, confidence and motivation *(may be more applicable across the year or several units)*.
- Use technology and media to deepen learning and draw attention to evidence and texts as appropriate.

Provides extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above the grade level text band.

Each lesson plan instructs the teacher to apply extension or enrichment strategies to differentiate the lesson for advanced/gifted and talented students such as ______ (ie. additional speech analysis, more information on Kohlberg's Theory, allowing them to create their own questions for one another). In addition, each lesson plan includes recommended learning activities for gifted and talented students that are designed to encourage deeper analysis of the text. For example, in Lesson Plan 1 "students will individually and then collaboratively SOAPStone their assigned texts and identify rhetorical devices which help to craft the author's message and support his purpose."

Focuses on challenging sections of text(s)

The unit does focus on challenging sections of texts and engages student in productive struggle through discussion questions. In Lesson Plan 1, students follow a close reading protocol with text-dependent questions to analyze Ho Chi Minh's "Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam" specifically. Also, students re-read chapters 4 and 9 in The Things They Carried. In general, students are asked to work together in small groups before moving to larger class discussions; then students are asked to complete tasks independently based on what they learned in class.

Integrates appropriate supports . . . for students who are ELL, have disabilities, or read below grade level

Each lesson plan instructs the teacher to: (1) "Plan with UDL in mind by using the audio version of speech to address different student needs and learning styles . . . Consider the need for Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) and/or for captioned/described video when selecting texts, novels, video and/or other media for this unit" and (2) "Differentiate the lesson for English Language Learners by chunking portions of the text and providing a vocabulary sheet." Reviewers note embedded unit supports for students such as guided reading, multiple readings, small group and whole group discussion. The unit also offers a “chunking” strategy supplemented with vocabulary and extension opportunities for advanced students based on AP English protocols. Moreover, the graphic organizers provide directions and questions that can help struggling students to enter academic conversations and writing.

Provides extensions . . . for students who read above grade level

Each lesson plan provides opportunities for students to engage in written and verbal analysis of the anchor text as well as the introductory speeches from Lesson Plan 1. The progression of class activities adequately prepares students to participate in the Socratic seminar in Lesson Plan 5.

Gradually removes supports

The lesson plans provide regular support for ELL students that would also...
support other struggling readers. These modifications allow students to engage with their peers in classroom activities as active participants. However, students are expected to engage in reading assignments without teacher modeling and writing activities without exemplars to guide them.

Provide for authentic learning, application of literacy skills . . . The Socratic seminar provides the opportunity for students to engage in an analysis of the anchor text. The core questions are: (1) How effective is O’Brien’s writing style and use of literary devices in telling a “true” story? and (2) How does he force the reader to experience the effects of war on the individual? A series of 9 questions are provided prior to the seminar to help prepare students to participate. Students are expected to provide textual evidence during the seminar. The writing assignments throughout the unit ask students to consider theme and character and, to some extent, author’s craft. However, in the absence of detailed directions or expectations with the assignments, it would seem the teacher is the audience. Students are not asked to share their writing with peers or any adults outside the classroom.

Indicate how students are accountable for independent reading All reading assignments are given to either the whole class or to small groups without input from students about their preference for what to read. Students are given the same pacing guide for reading the entire anchor texts. Aside from the close reading guide for the Minh speech in Lesson Plan 1, there are no other supports for building reading ability. Students are provided no opportunities to demonstrate stamina, confidence, and motivation.

Use technology and media to deepen learning Lesson Plan 1, Day 3 consists of a small group activity that utilizes technology to access the assigned speeches for each group as well as for the group presentations. The assignment asks students to answer a series of questions about their assigned speech and prepare a 10 minute presentation. The presentation must include a visual or audio aid. Most lesson plans reference additional web-based resources to support the lesson content. Lesson Plan 1 references an audio and video recording of Nixon’s speech to support student understanding. Lesson Seed 3 suggests that the teacher “may choose to show a portion of the PBS video about PTSD and Iraq veterans.” There are recommendations in various lesson plans to allow students to use technology tools to create an infographic as well as to share their learning for the whole group.

Suggestions for Improvement Students would benefit from having the opportunity to self-select texts and to demonstrate their confidence and stamina with independent reading.

Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension

Dimension IV – Assessment

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<th>The lesson/unit regularly assesses whether students are mastering standards-based content and skills:</th>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Elicits direct, observable evidence of the degree to which a student can independently demonstrate the major targeted grade-level CCSS standards with appropriately complex text(s).</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Assesses student proficiency using methods that</td>
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<td>Students are provided multiple opportunities to explore theme and character throughout the unit. This is connected to RL.11-12.2 (Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text). With</td>
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are unbiased and accessible to all students.

- Includes aligned rubrics or assessment guidelines that provide sufficient guidance for interpreting student performance.
- Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative, and self-assessment measures.

A unit or longer lesson should:

- Use varied modes of assessment, including a range of pre-, formative, summative, and self-assessment measures. Each assignment, students are asked to cite textual evidence as support (RL.11-12.1/RI.11-12.1). This type of connection between activity and standards exists throughout the unit. Through class activities students are provided the opportunity to explore author’s craft, characterization, and structural elements of texts and then asked to work independently and collaboratively to organize their knowledge and share it with their classmates. The formal and informal writing activities allow another opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning and understanding of the standards. For example, in Lesson Plan 3 students are asked to respond to a writing prompt that links the content of Lesson Plan 2 and 3. Students must “defend, qualify, or refute the statement (from the prompt) above based on the content of the preceding two lessons.”

Assesses student proficiency using methods that are unbiased

All students are provided with the same reading assignments, in-class activities, and writing tasks with modifications outlined for ELL and GT students. Students are provided opportunities for verbal and non-verbal participation as they demonstrate their learning. Question stems are provided as a part of the Socratic seminar to assist all students as they prepare for and participate in this culminating activity.

- Includes aligned rubrics or assessment

In Lesson Plan 1, a rubric from the PARCC resources is provided for the explanatory essay. The Lesson Plan 5 includes a rubric for student participation in the Socratic seminar. A separate scoring guide is provided to evaluate the overall experience. For each classroom activity, students are provided with clear directions for how to complete the assignment with some activities including a scoring guide (Lesson Plan 2 Task 1). The unit provides rubrics to assess student performance, however the absence of exemplars, checklists or requirements makes it difficult for students to assess their own progress.

- Use varied modes of assessment

The ongoing class discussions provide the opportunity to formatively assess student knowledge during the reading of the anchor text. Since the Socratic seminar resides in Lesson Plan 5, it is most likely a summative assessment. The accompanying rubrics allow students to judge their strengths as a participant. There is a lack of pre-assessment activities.

Suggestions for Improvement

The inclusion of pre-assessment activities and acknowledgment of potential student misconceptions would assist teachers with planning adjustments to the lesson plan content as needed.

Rating: 3 – Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension

Summary Comments

Overall the Unit is designed to engage students in reading, writing, speaking and listening about the stories of war using a variety of text types and writing assignments. Students are expected to read, re-read and discuss text for meaning, as well as use textual evidence to support their thinking, speaking and writing. Greater attention to differentiation strategies allows for greater student engagement across ability levels, and the inclusion of guidelines and rubrics clarifies the grading process. A contemporary hook to engage student interest and student-facing guidelines and self-regulating checklists are recommended.
Students are provided with numerous opportunities for collaboration and student talk through whole class discussions. Almost every lesson plan includes a writing task in support of regular and consistent writing practice. The unit plan provides multiple supporting texts for the anchor text, and students are encouraged to make connections among the texts.

This is a strong unit clearly aligned to the CCSS with attention to the required instructional shifts. The unit integrates the reading, writing, speaking, and listening standards for a balanced literacy experience for students. Additionally, the unit incorporates both literary and informational texts and asks students to write to those texts often citing evidence from what they read. The unit provides appropriate scaffolds for students who struggle but still requires critical thinking of all students. The essential question is meaningful and provides an engagement opportunity to enhance learning for grade 11 students.

**Rating Scales**

**Rating Scale for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:**

3: Meets most to all of the criteria in the dimension  
2: Meets many of the criteria in the dimension  
1: Meets some of the criteria in the dimension  
0: Does not meet the criteria in the dimension

**Overall Rating for the Lesson/Unit:**

E: Exemplar – Aligned and meets most to all of the criteria in dimensions II, III, IV (total 11 – 12)  
E/I: Exemplar if Improved – Aligned and needs some improvement in one or more dimensions (total 8 – 10)  
R: Revision Needed – Aligned partially and needs significant revision in one or more dimensions (total 3 – 7)  
N: Not Ready to Review – Not aligned and does not meet criteria (total 0 – 2)

**Rating Descriptors**

**Descriptors for Dimensions I, II, III, IV:**

3: Exemplifies CCSS Quality - meets the standard described by criteria in the dimension, as explained in criterion-based observations.  
2: Approaching CCSS Quality - meets many criteria but will benefit from revision in others, as suggested in criterion-based observations.  
1: Developing toward CCSS Quality - needs significant revision, as suggested in criterion-based observations.  
0: Not representing CCSS Quality - does not address the criteria in the dimension.

**Descriptor for Overall Ratings:**

E: Exemplifies CCSS Quality – Aligned and exemplifies the quality standard and exemplifies most of the criteria across Dimensions II, III, IV of the rubric.  
E/I: Approaching CCSS Quality – Aligned and exemplifies the quality standard in some dimensions but will benefit from some revision in others.  
R: Developing toward CCSS Quality – Aligned partially and approaches the quality standard in some dimensions and needs significant revision in others.  
N: Not representing CCSS Quality – Not aligned and does not address criteria.