Standards-based Assessment and Grading
Ethics, Pedagogy, and Practicalities

For further conversation about any of these topics:

Rick Wormeli
rwormeli@cox.net
703-620-2447
Herndon, Virginia, USA
(Eastern Standard Time Zone)
@RickWormeli (Twitter)
www.rickwormeli.net

The true grading scholars of our time…
Our future depends on this one here.

Video: When There is Only One Correct Answer
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TskeE43Q1M

Being good at taking standardized tests doesn't qualify students for creative contribution to society or successful citizenship.
It's not an answer chase.

It's a question journey.

Our job is not to make up anybody’s mind, but to open minds and to make the agony of decision-making so intense you can escape only by thinking.” - Fred Friendly, broadcaster

“All thinking begins with wonder.” -- Socrates
Identify the Principles Involved, THEN Gather the Solutions

Example: How do I grade English Language Learners?

Principles Involved:

• Teachers must be ethical. They cannot knowingly falsify a score or grade.
• To be useful, grades must be accurate reports of evidence of students’ performance against standards.
• Regular report cards report against regular, publicly declared standards/outcomes. They cannot report about irregular standards or anything not publicly declared.
• Any test format that does not create an accurate report of students’ degree of evidence of standards must be changed so that it does or replaced by one that does.

If teachers act upon these principles, what decisions/behaviors/policies should we see in their assessment and grading procedures?
Recommended First 10 Steps to Implementing Standards-Based Assessment and Grading

- Determine/Calibrate evidence of standards
- Separate effort/behavior from achievement  
  *(Discern between reports of compliance and reports of learning/standards)*
- Separate formative/summative
- Practice Descriptive Feedback
- Try re-do’s with one unit of study

- Discuss awkward, real grading hypotheticals with colleagues
- Design the ideal gradebook/report
- “Rubricize” a unit not normally rubricized
- Read at least three different books on SBG and discuss with colleagues
- Visit: www.stenhouse.com/fiae, rickwormeli.net, and Matt Townsley’s, www.sbgvideos.org,
“Most of the time I’m a leader, but sometimes I have to be the boss.”

-- quote from a highly accomplished middle level principal

As leaders, we all have our own philosophy/pedagogy that we believe. To what degree will we allow our teachers to hold beliefs and conduct practices different from our own?

What goes unachieved in students because we chose to be politically safe?
“Courage is not the absence of fear. It’s the judgment that something else is more important than that fear.”

-- Ambrose Redmoon, rock band manager in the 1960’s. Oh yeah, he was a quadriplegic as well.

_What do we judge as so important, it trumps our fear of rejection, failure, and questioning from colleagues, parents, administration?_

"Is my purpose to _select_ talent or _develop_ it?...If your purpose as an educator is to select talent, then you must work to maximize the differences among students. In other words, on any measure of learning, you must try to achieve the greatest possible variation in students’ scores...Unfortunately for students, the best means of maximizing differences in learning is poor teaching. Nothing does it better."

-- Thomas R. Guskey, _Education Leadership_, ASCD, November 2011, Pages 16-21

"If, on the other hand, your purpose as an educator is to develop talent, then you...clarify what you want students to learn and be able to do. Then you do everything possible to ensure that all students learn those things well. If you succeed, there should be little or no variation in measures of student learning. All students are likely to attain high scores on measures of achievement, and all might receive high grades."

-- Thomas R. Guskey, _Education Leadership_, ASCD, November 2011, Pages 16-21
It's assessing and grading only in reference to evidence of standard(s), nothing else. If it's listed in the course curriculum, it can be evaluated and included in the final grade. If not, it can be reported, but reported in a separate column on the report card.

It often requires the removal or changing of several conventional grading practices in order to maintain grade integrity.

What is standards-based assessment and grading?

[From Dr. Darin Jolly, Webinar for Genesee ISD]

Grades are short-hand reports of what you know and can do at the end of learning's journey, not the path you took to get there.

THE INTEGRITY OF THE GRADE: We must build knowledge so we can SHIFT practice.
Define Each Grade

A:

B:

C:

D:

E or F:

Time is a variable, not an absolute.

“For a fair selection everybody has to take the same exam: please climb that tree.”

[Artist Unknown]

“Nobody knows ahead of time how long it takes anyone to learn anything.”

Dr. Yung Tae Kim, “Dr. Tae,” Physics Professor, Skateboarding Champion
It’s what students carry forward, not what they demonstrated during the unit of learning, that is most indicative of true proficiency.

We are criterion-referenced, evidenced-based, not norm-referenced in classroom assessment and reporting.

The best assessment happens when subject-like colleagues have vetted what evidence of standards they will tolerate.
We cannot conflate reports of compliance with evidence of mastery. Grades are reports of learning, not doing.

Grades are:

• Subjective
• Inferential
• Relative

They are a fragile premise on which to base so much function and dysfunction in students' lives.

But we can do something to correct this.

'Time to Change the Metaphor:

Grades are NOT compensation.
Grades are communication:
They are an accurate report of what happened.
Fair Isn’t Always Equal

“Learning is fundamentally an act of creation, not consumption of information.”
- Sharon L. Bowman, Professional Trainer

“The Inner Net”
- David Bowden

Just because it’s mathematically easy to calculate doesn’t mean it’s pedagogically correct.
‘Time to Stop Averaging

1. Society’s definition of normal/“average” changes over time
2. Averaging tells us how a student is doing in relation to others, but we are criterion-referenced in standards-based classrooms.
3. Averaging was invented in statistics to get rid of the influence of any one sample error in experimental design, not how a student is doing in relation to learning goal.
4. Mode and in some cases, median, have higher correlation with outside the classroom testing.

Comment from Grading Expert, Tom Schimmer:

“Adults are rarely mean averaged and certainly, it is irrelevant to an adult that they used to not know how to do something. Yet for a student, these two factors are dominant in their school experience.”

-- From, “Accurate Grading with a Standards-based Mindset (Webinar, December 2013)
Disaggregate. The more curriculum we pool into one symbol, the less valid is the symbol for reporting on any one standard.

This quarter, you’ve taught:

- 4-quadrant graphing
- Slope and Y-intercept
- Multiplying binomials
- Ratios/Proportions
- 3-dimensional solids
- Area and Circumference of a circle.

The student’s grade: B

*What does this mark tell us about the student’s proficiency with each of the topics you’ve taught?*

**Unidimensionality** – A single score on a test represents a single dimension or trait that has been assessed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Dimension A</th>
<th>Dimension B</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Problem: Most tests use a single score to assess multiple dimensions and traits. The resulting score is often invalid and useless. – Marzano, CAGTW, page 13
Accuracy increases with sample size; use clear and consistent evidence over time.

We can learn without grades, we can’t learn without descriptive feedback.

What are you supposed to be learning...
...and where are you in relation to that goal?
What’s the difference between **proficient** in the standard/outcome and **mastery** of the standard/outcome?

What does **exceeding** the standard mean?

---

**What is Mastery?**

“Tim was so learned, that he could name a horse in nine languages; so ignorant, that he bought a cow to ride on.”

Ben Franklin, 1750, Poor Richard’s Almanac

---

The better question is not, “What is the standard?”

The better question is, “What evidence will we tolerate?”
“The student understands fact versus opinion.”

Identify
Create
Revise
Manipulate

Grade 8: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (From the Common Core Standards)

☐ What is the proper way to cite textual evidence in a written analysis?
☐ How much textual evidence is needed to support the student’s claims?
☐ What if the student cites enough evidence but it’s for an incorrect claim?
☐ What if the student is novel or stylistic in some way – will that be acceptable as long as he fulfills the general criteria?
☐ How specific does a student need to be in order to demonstrate being explicit?

☐ Is the analysis complete if he just makes the claim and cites evidence without a line or two to tie it all back to the theme?
☐ And what does, “…as well as inferences drawn from the text,” mean? Does it mean students make inferences about the text and back them up with text references or outside-the-text references? Are students supposed to comment on quality of inferences within the text? Are they supposed to make inferences when analyzing the text?
☐ What if they can do it with one piece of text, but not another, or they can do it this week, but not another?
☐ What text formats will we require students to analyze in this manner?
☐ What will constitute, “Exceeds the Standard?”
Working Definition of Mastery
(Wormell)

Students have mastered content when they demonstrate a thorough understanding as evidenced by doing something substantive with the content beyond merely echoing it. Anyone can repeat information; it’s the masterful student who can break content into its component pieces, explain it and alternative perspectives regarding it cogently to others, and use it purposefully in new situations.

Consider Gradations of Understanding and Performance from Introductory to Sophisticated

Introductory Level Understanding:

Student walks through the classroom door while wearing a heavy coat. Snow is piled on his shoulders, and he exclaims, “Brrrr!” From depiction, we can infer that it is cold outside.

Sophisticated level of understanding:

Ask students to analyze more abstract inferences about government propaganda made by Remarque in his wonderful book, All Quiet on the Western Front.

• Determine the surface area of a cube.
• Determine the surface area of a rectangular prism (a rectangular box)
• Determine the amount of wrapping paper needed for another rectangular box, keeping in mind the need to have regular places of overlapping paper so you can tape down the corners neatly
• Determine the amount of paint needed to paint an entire Chicago skyscraper, if one can of paint covers 46 square feet, and without painting the windows, doorways, or external air vents.
What is the Role of Each One?

- Formative Assessment
- Summative Judgment
- Pre-assessment
- Common Formative Assessment
  [Focus on Common Evidence first!]
- Alternative Assessment

Formative vs Summative in Focus:

Lab Reports in a Science Class

Pre-Assessments: Three Purposes

**Teacher Focus**
- To make informed decisions about the next steps in students’ instruction

**Student Focus**
- To provide highly motivating Growth-Over-Time perspective
- To prime the brain, ‘putting important content on student’s “radar scope” for elevated attention during learning
“If we don’t count homework heavily, students won’t do it.”

Do you agree with this?

Does this sentiment cross a line?

---

Two Homework Extremes that Focus Our Thinking

- If a student does none of the homework assignments, yet earns an “A” (top grade) on every formal assessment we give, does he earn anything less than an “A” on his report card?

- If a student does all of the homework well yet bombs every formal assessment, isn’t that also a red flag that something is amiss, and we need to take corrective action?

---

Be clear: We mark and grade against standards/outcomes, not the routes students take or techniques teachers use to achieve those standards/outcomes.

Given this premise, marks/grades for these activities can no longer be used in the academic report of what students know and can do regarding learner standards: maintaining a neat notebook, group discussion, class participation, homework, class work, reading log minutes, band practice minutes, dressing out in p.e., showing up to perform in an evening concert, covering textbooks, service to the school, group projects, signed permission slips, canned foods for canned food drive...
Set up your gradebook into two sections:

**Formative**
- Assignments and assessments completed on the way to mastery or proficiency

**Summative**
- Final declaration of mastery or proficiency

---

Study Executive Function!

*Late, Lost, and Unprepared*
Joyce Cooper-Kohn, Laurie Dietzel

*Smart, but Scattered*
Peg Dawson, Richard Guare

Also, *Smart, but Scattered for Teens!*
Great differentiated assessment is never kept in the dark.

“Students can hit any target they can see and which stands still for them.”
-- Rick Stiggins, Educator and Assessment expert

If a child ever asks, “Will this be on the test?”.....we haven’t done our job.

From Assessment/Grading Researcher, Doug Reeves, The Chronicle of Higher Education, September 18, 2009:

“The Class of 2013 grew up playing video games and received feedback that was immediate, specific, and brutal – they won or else died at the end of each game. For them, the purpose of feedback is not to calculate an average or score a final exam, but to inform them about how they can improve on their next attempt to rule the universe.”

Feedback vs Assessment

Feedback: Holding up a mirror to students, showing them what they did and comparing it with what they should have done – There’s no evaluative component!
Assessment: Gathering data so we can make a decision

Greatest Impact on Student Success: Formative feedback
Two Ways to Begin Using Descriptive Feedback:

- “Point and Describe”
  (from *Teaching with Love & Logic*, Jim Fay, David Funk)

- “Goal, Status, and Plan for the Goal”
  1. Identify the objective/goal/standard/outcome
  2. Identify where the student is in relation to the goal (Status)
  3. Identify what needs to happen in order to close the gap

Effective Protocol for Data Analysis and Descriptive Feedback found in many Schools:
Here’s What, So What, Now What

1. Here’s What: *(data, factual statements, no commentary)*
2. So What: *(Interpretation of data, what patterns/insights do we perceive, what does the data say to us?)*
3. Now What: *(Plan of action, including new questions, next steps)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Topic or Proficiency</th>
<th>Right</th>
<th>Wrong</th>
<th>Simple Mistake?</th>
<th>Really Don’t Understand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dividing Fractions</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dividing Fractions</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Multiplying Fractions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Multiplying Fractions</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reducing to Simplest Terms</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reducing to Simplest Terms</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reciprocals</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Reciprocals</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Reciprocals</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Teacher Action vs. Result on Student Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Action</th>
<th>Result on Student Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just telling students # correct and incorrect</td>
<td>Negative influence on achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying the scoring criteria</td>
<td>Increase of 16 percentile points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing explanations as to why their responses are correct or incorrect</td>
<td>Increase of 20 percentile points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking students to continue responding to an assessment until they correctly answer the items</td>
<td>Increase of 20 percentile points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphically portraying student achievement</td>
<td>Increase of 26 percentile points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-- Marzano, CAGTW, pgs 5-6

### Processing Activity:

“I used to think..., but now I think...”

Students should be allowed to re-do assessments until they achieve acceptable mastery, and they should be given full credit for having achieved such.
A Perspective that Changes our Thinking:

“A ‘D’ is a coward’s ‘F.’ The student failed, but you didn’t have enough guts to tell him.”

-- Doug Reeves

- A
- B
- C
- I, IP, NE, or NTY

Once we cross over into D and F(E) zones, does it really matter? We’ll do the same two things: Personally investigate and take corrective action.

If we do not allow students to re-do work, we deny the growth mindset so vital to student maturation, and we are declaring to the student:

- This assignment had no legitimate educational value.
- It’s okay if you don’t do this work.
- It’s okay if you don’t learn this content or skill.

None of these is acceptable to the highly accomplished, professional educator.
If an “F” on a project really motivated students to work harder and achieve, retention rates would have dropped by now. They haven’t; they’ve increased. We need to do something more than repeatedly document failure.

Remember:
There is a big difference between what we hold people accountable for demonstrating during the learning cycle versus what we hold people accountable for demonstrating once they are fully certified, i.e. finished the learning cycle and received passing scores on valid assessments.

Recovering in full from a failure teaches more than being labeled for failure ever could teach.

It’s a false assumption that giving a student an “F” or wagging an admonishing finger from afar builds moral fiber, self-discipline, competence, and integrity.
Re-Do’s & Re-Takes: Are They Okay?

More than “okay!”, After 10,000 tries, here’s a working light bulb. “Any questions?”

Thomas Edison

Pilot training United States Air Force Training Manual

b. Minimum Academic Performance — The minimum acceptable score on any phase exam or End-of-Course exam is 85 percent. Should a student receive less than the minimum acceptable score, the instructor will re-assign the student to the second, different exam for that phase, if the student receives the minimum acceptable score on the second exam, the student will advance to the appropriate military authority.

c. Minimum Demonstration/Performance Test Standard — The minimum acceptable performance on any demonstration/performace test will be measured against the course standard and the required proficiency level for each phase and the proficiency level for the course as a whole.

d. Minimum Proficiency Requirement — The minimum acceptable performance on any demonstration/performace test will be measured against the course standard and the required proficiency level for each phase and the proficiency level for the course as a whole.

e. Instructor Responsibilities — Instructors are responsible for training accomplishment, however, students should monitor their own training and develop their own proficiency levels when appropriate.

Quotes for the Classroom, Mindsets for Teaching:

“The fellow who never makes a mistake takes his orders from one who does.”
-- Herbert Prochnow

“I have learned throughout my life as a composer chiefly through my mistakes and pursuits of false assumptions, not my exposure to founts of wisdom and knowledge.”
-- Igor Stravinsky

“An expert is a man who has made all the mistakes which can be made, in a narrow field.”
-- Neils Bohr
I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career.
I've lost almost 300 games.
Twenty-six times I've been trusted to take the
game-winning shot, and missed.
I've failed over and over and
over again in my life.
And that is why... I succeed.

And what's a successful batting average in
baseball?

F.A.I.L.

First Attempt in Learning

From Youtube.com:

Dr. Tae Skateboarding
(Ted Talk)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHfo17ikSpY
Helpful Procedures and Policies for Re-Do's and Re-Takes

- Always, "...at teacher discretion."
- Don't hide behind the factory model of schooling that perpetuates curriculum by age, perfect mastery on everyone's part by a particular calendar date.
- As appropriate, students write letters explaining what was different between the first and subsequent attempts, and what they learned about themselves as learners.
- Re-do's and re-takes must be within reason, and teachers decide what's reasonable.

- Identify a day by which time this will be accomplished or the grade is permanent, which, of course, may be adjusted at any point by the teacher.
- With the student, create a calendar of completion that will help them accomplish the re-do. If student doesn't follow through on the learning plan, he writes letters of apology. There must be re-learning, or learning for the first time, before the re-assessing.
- Require the student to submit original version with the re-done version so you and he can keep track of his development.
- If a student is repeatedly asking for re-doing work, something's up. Investigate your approach and the child's situation.

- C, B, and B+ students get to re-do just as much as D and F students do. Do not stand in the way of a child seeking excellence.
- If report cards are due and there's not time to re-teach before re-assessing, record the lower grade, then work with the student in the next marking period, and if he presents new evidence of proficiency, submit a grade-change report form, changing the grade on the transcript from the previous marking period.
- Reserve the right to give alternative versions and ask follow-up questions to see if they've really mastered the material.
- Require parents to sign the original attempt.
• It’s okay to let students, “bank,” sections of the assessment/assignment that are done well.
• No-re-do’s the last week of the grading period.
• Replace the previous grade with the new one, do NOT average them together.
• Sometimes the greater gift is to deny the option.
• Choose your battles. Push for re-doing the material that is transformative, leveraging, fundamental.

Why Do We Grade?

• Provide feedback
• Document progress
• Guide instructional decisions
• Motivate
• Punish
• Sort students

What about incorporating attendance, effort, and behavior in the final grade?

Premise

A grade represents a valid and undiluted indicator of what a student knows and is able to do – mastery.

With grades we document progress in students and our teaching, we provide feedback to students and their parents, and we make instructional decisions.
10 Practices to Avoid in a Differentiated Classroom

[They Dilute a Grade’s Validity and Effectiveness]

- Penalizing students’ multiple attempts at mastery
- Grading practice (daily homework) as students come to know concepts [Feedback, not grading, is needed]
- Withholding assistance (not scaffolding or differentiating) in the learning when it’s needed
- Group grades
- Incorporating non-academic factors (behavior, attendance, and effort)

- Assessing students in ways that do not accurately indicate students’ mastery (student responses are hindered by the assessment format)
- Grading on a curve
- Allowing Extra Credit
- Defining supposedly criterion-based grades in terms of norm-referenced descriptions (“above average,” “average”, etc.)
- Recording zeroes on the 100.0 scale for work not done

0 or 50 (or 60)?

100-pt. Scale:
0, 100, 100, 100, 100, 100 -- 83% (C+)
60, 100, 100, 100, 100 -- 93% (B+)

When working with students, do we choose the most hurtful, unrecoverable end of the “F” range, or the most constructive, recoverable end of the “F” range?
Be clear: Students are not getting points for having done nothing. The student still gets an F. We’re simply equalizing the influence of the each grade in the overall grade and responding in a way that leads to learning.

Imagine the Reverse...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What if we reversed the proportional influences of the grades? That “A” would have a huge, yet undue, inflationary effect on the overall grade. Just as we wouldn’t want an “A” to have an inaccurate effect, we don’t want an “F” grade to have such an undue, deflationary, and inaccurate effect. Keeping zeroes on a 100-pt. scale is just as absurd as the scale seen here.

Consider the Correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A (0) on a 100-pt. scale is a (-6) on a 4-pt. scale. If a student does no work, he should get nothing, not something worse than nothing. How instructive is it to tell a student that he earned six times less than absolute failure? Choose to be instructive, not punitive.

[Based on an idea by Doug Reeves, The Learning Leader, ASCD, 2006]
Temperature Readings for Norfolk, VA:
85, 87, 88, 84, 0 (Forgot to take the reading)
Average: 68.8 degrees

This is inaccurate for what really happened, and therefore, unusable.

Clarification:
When we’re talking about converting zeroes to 50’s or higher, we’re referring to zeroes earned on major projects and assessments, not homework, as well as anything graded on a 100-point scale. It’s okay to give zeroes on homework or on small scales, such as a 4.0 scale. Zeros recorded for homework assignments do not refer to final, accurate declarations of mastery, and those zeroes don’t have the undue influence on small grading scales.

Grading Late Work
- One whole letter grade down for each day late is punitive. It does not teach students, and it removes hope.
- A few points off for each day late is instructive; there’s hope.
- Yes, the world beyond school is like this.
Helpful Consideration for Dealing with Student’s Late Work:

Is it chronic....
...or is it occasional?

We respond differently, depending on which one it is.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative Assessments</th>
<th>Student: ______________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards/Outcomes</td>
<td>XYZ Test, part 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 [Descriptor]</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 [Descriptor]</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 [Descriptor]</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 [Descriptor]</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 [Descriptor]</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gradebooks and Report Cards in the Differentiated Classroom: Ten Important Attributes

1. Everything is clearly communicated, easily understood
2. Use an entire page per student
3. Set up according to Standards/Outcomes
4. Disaggregate!
5. No averaging – Determine grades based on central tendency, trend, mode
Gradesbooks and Report Cards in the Differentiated Classroom: Ten Important Attributes

6. Behavior/Effort/Attendance separated from Academic Performance
7. Grades/Marks are as accurate as possible
8. Some students may have more marks/grades than others
9. Scales/Rubric Descriptors readily available, even summarized as possible
10. Grades/marks revisable

Responsive Report Formats

Adjusted Curriculum Approach:
Grade the student against his own progression, but indicate that the grade reflects an adjusted curriculum. Place an asterisk next to the grade or check a box on the report card indicating such, and include a narrative comment in the cumulative folder that explains the adjustments.

Responsive Report Formats

Progression and Standards Approach:
Grade the student with two grades, one indicating his performance with the standards and another indicating his own progression. A, B, C, D, or F indicates the student’s progress against state standards, while 3, 2, or 1 indicates his personal progression.
Responsive Report Formats

Multiple Categories Within Subjects Approach:

Divide the grade into its component pieces. For example, a “B” in Science class can be subdivided into specific standards or benchmarks such as, “Demonstrates proper lab procedure,” “Successfully employs the scientific method,” or “Uses proper nomenclature and/or taxonomic references.”

The more we try to aggregate into a single symbol, the less reliable that symbol is as a true expression of what a student knows and is able to do.

Report Cards without Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course: English 9</th>
<th>Standard Descriptor</th>
<th>Standards Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard 1 Usage/Punct/Spelling</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 2 Analysis of Literature</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 3 Six + 1 Traits of Writing</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 4 Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 5 Listening/Speaking</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 6 Research Skills</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments from Teachers:

Health and Maturity Records for the Grading Period:

100 point scale or 4.0 Scale?

- A 4.0 scale has a high inter-rater reliability. Students’ work is connected to a detailed descriptor and growth and achievement rally around listed benchmarks.

- In 100-point or larger scales, the grades are more subjective. In classes in which teachers use percentages or points, students, teachers, and parents more often rally around grade point averages, not learning.
Consider:

• Pure mathematical averages of grades for a grading period are inaccurate indicators of students’ true mastery.
• A teacher’s professional judgment via clear descriptors on a rubric actually increases the accuracy of a student’s final grade as an indicator of what he learned.
• A teacher’s judgment via rubrics has a stronger correlation with outside standardized tests than point or average calculations do.

(Marzano)

Accurate grades are based on the most consistent evidence. We look at the pattern of achievement, including trends, not the average of the data. This means we focus on the median and mode, not mean, and the most recent scores are weighed heavier than earlier scores.

Median: The middle test score of a distribution, above and below which lie an equal number of test scores
Mode: The score occurring most frequently in a series of observations or test data

Suggested Language to Use in Parents’ Handbook:

Parents, as we are basing students' grades on standards for each discipline, final grades are first and foremost determined by our teachers' professional opinion of your child's work against those standards, not by mathematical calculations. Teachers have been trained in analyzing student products against standards and in finding evidence of that learning using a variety of methods. Please don’t hesitate to inquire how grades for your child were determined if you are unsure.
Grading Inclusion Students

Question #1:
"Are the standards set for the whole class also developmentally appropriate for this student?"

- If they are appropriate, proceed to Question #2.
- If they are not appropriate, identify which standards are appropriate, making sure they are as close as possible to the original standards. Then go to question #2.

Grading Inclusion Students

Question #2:
"Will these learning experiences (processes) we're using with the general class work with the inclusion student as well?"

- If they will work, then proceed to Question #3.
- If they will not work, identify alternative pathways to learning that will work. Then go to Question #3.

Grading Inclusion Students

Question #3:
"Will this assessment instrument we're using to get an accurate rendering of what general education students know and are able to do regarding the standard also provide an accurate rendering of what this inclusion student knows and is able to do regarding the same standard?"

- If the instrument will provide an accurate rendering of the inclusion student's mastery, then use it just as you do with the rest of the class.
- If it will not provide an accurate rendering of the inclusion student's mastery, then identify a product that will provide that accuracy, and make sure it holds the student accountable for the same universal factors as you are asking of the other students.
Grading Gifted Students

• Insure grade-level material is learned.
• If it’s enrichment material only, the grade still represents mastery of on-grade-level material. An addendum report card or the comment section provides feedback on advanced material.
• If the course name indicates advanced material (Algebra I Honors, Biology II), then we grade against those advanced standards.
• If the student has accelerated a grade level or more, he is graded against the same standards as his older classmates.

Check out the FREE Website for Perspective and Practicality on Assessment and Grading Issues!

www.stenhouse.com/fiae

1. Two new, substantial study guides for Fair Isn’t Always Equal
2. Q&A’s - abbreviated versions of correspondence with teachers and administrators
3. Video and audio podcasts on assessment and grading issues
4. Testimonials from educators
5. Articles that support the book’s main themes

Also, check out
ASCD’s Education Leadership
November 2011 issue
Vol. 69, Number 3
Theme: Effective Grading Practices
Single Issue: $7.00, 1-800-933-2723
www.ascd.org

Among the articles:

- Susan M. Brookhart on starting the conversation about the purpose of grades
- Rick Wormell on how to make redos and retakes work
- Thomas R. Guskey on overcoming obstacles to grading reform
- Robert Marzano on making the most of standards-based grading
- Ken O’Connor and Rick Wormell on characteristics of effective grading
- Cathy Vatterott on breaking the homework grading addiction
- Alfie Kohn on why we should end grading instead of trying to improve it
New Resource on Grading:
“The Grading System We Need to Have”
http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_larry_ferlazzo/2014/05/response_the_grading_system_we_need_to_have.html

Creativity and Critical Thinking involve patience, resilience, and interaction -- “Dan Meyer: Math Needs a Makeover”
http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_meyer_math_curriculum_makeover.html
Great New Books on Feedback, Assessment, and Grading:

- *Elements of Grading*, Doug Reeves, Solution Tree, 2010
- *How to Give Feedback to Your Students*, Susan M. Brookhart, ASCD, 2008
- *Developing Performance-Based Assessments, Grades 6-12*, Nancy P. Gallavan, Corwin Press, 2009
- *Balanced Assessment, From Formative to Summative*, Kay Burke, Solution Tree, 2010

Recommended Reading on Assessment and Grading


Recommended Reading on Assessment and Grading

- *www.exemplars.com*
Recommended Reading

- Stiggins, Richard J. Student-Involved Classroom Assessment (3rd Edition), Prentice Hall, 2000

  Grant Wiggins Web site and organization:
  Center on Learning, Assessment, and School Structure (CLASS)
  info@classnj.org   www.classnj.org
  gpw@classnj.org

Three particularly helpful books I just read and I highly recommend:

- Brookhart, Susan. How to Assess Higher-Order Thinking Skills in your Classroom, ASCD, 2010
- Alternatives to Grading Student Writing, Stephen Tchudi, Editor, NCTE, 1997
Where Do You Stand?

• If a student gets a 100% on a pre-test, he should NOT have to do any assignments in the unit of study, and instead, he should do a personal research project related to the general topic of the unit while other students learn the original material. He gets an automatic “A” on the final unit test.

• Danika is borderline between a C and a B grade. In order to choose one or the other for the final report card grade, it’s appropriate for her teacher to consider Danika’s outstanding attitude, behavior, and high homework completion rate when determining whether to record the C or the B on the report card.

Where Do You Stand?

• On the 100-point scale, any student who turns in nothing, should get a 50 instead of a zero.

• After two weeks, all incompletes in a student’s grade report should become F’s (or zeroes).

• The 100-point scale is an effective grading scale for the standards-based grading classroom.

Where Do You Stand?

• An “A” or “4.0” means students have gone above and beyond the standard, not just met the standard.

• “C” refers to average performance in our school.

• Teachers in our school are consistent in their student expectations for each standard.
**Common Grading Concerns When Teachers Differentiate Instruction**

- What do I do if a student is in my class, but is studying curriculum below this grade level and he’s doing well with that material? Do I grade him against his own progress or against the grade level standards?
- How do I grade English Language Learners?
- How do I grade gifted students who already know the curriculum?
- How do I grade students with learning challenges?
- If I don’t count homework, I will have too few grades in the gradebook on which to make a judgment.

**Common Grading Concerns When Teachers Differentiate Instruction**

- What if I give a student an alternative assessment, and the parent of another student complains about me treating students unequally?
- The working world does not allow re-do’s and do-over’s, so if I allow them in my class, students will NOT learn responsibility and be prepared for adulthood.
- What if a student can get 100’s only if he re-does his work several times. He should not be placed into an Honors or advanced course, then, even if he has an A in the class.

**Common Grading Concerns When Teachers Move to Differentiated Instruction**

- If I accept late work, students will think they can be late with everything. They won’t learn to respect deadlines.
- What if a student is working hard, but is not ready cognitively to take the test on test day?
- If I don’t count elements in the academic grade like work habits, meeting deadlines, courteous behavior, and effort, students won’t think it’s important, and they won’t do them.
GPS
Grading Philosophy Statement
(Your Personal navigation device)

GPS Format
1. 1-2 sentence statement of your philosophy. Ex: “Homework will count 10% in this class.”
2. 1-5 sentences of rationale as to why this is your policy. Ex: “Homework is meant to be practice as students learn a topic, not a declaration of summative mastery of that topic. Since grades are reserved only for summative declarations of mastery, homework should not be a major portion of the final grade for the grading period.”

Include in your statement your philosophy on the following:
- Differentiated and fair grading
- Rubrics
- Modified or adjusted curriculum
- Student self-assessment
- Extra credit
- What grades mean
- Definitions of individual grades
- Grading scales (100 vs 4.0)
- Formative vs summative assessments
- Averaging grades vs using median/mode
- Grading classroom
- Grading homework
- The purpose of homework
- How much curriculum should be on one test and tiering tests

The role of alternative assessments
- Weighting grades
- The percent influence of varied assessments
- Dealing with late work
- Setting up the gradebook according to categories, assessment formats or standards
- Re-doing work or tests for full credit

The purpose of grades and grading