How to Grade for Learning

15 Fixes to Make Grades More Accurate, Consistent, Meaningful and Supportive of Learning

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Pearson

Educational Research Newsletter & Webinars

How to Grade for Learning

K-12 Third Edition
Ken O’Connor, Rick Stiggins
How to Grade for Learning

Outcomes/Objectives

Participants will:

- recognize the need to critically examine established grading practices;
- appreciate the complexity of grading;
- know the meaning of key terms;
- identify the purposes of grading;
- know how to fix broken grades; and
- analyze the value of fixes for grading.

Terms (are) frequently used interchangeably, although they (should) have distinct meanings.

How to Grade for Learning

What Do These Terms Mean?

MARK(S)/SCORE(S) (marking/scoring)
the number (or letter) "score" given to any student test or performance

GRADE(S) (grading)
the number (or letter) reported at the end of a period of time as a summary statement of student performance

The Essential Question:
How confident are you that the grades students get in your school are:
■ consistent
■ accurate
■ meaningful, and
■ supportive of learning?

If grades do not meet these four conditions of quality they are “broken” i.e. ineffective.

Policy +
Principles +
Practicality =
Implementation


“The real voyage of discovery consists not of seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”

Marcel Proust

“. . . (grading) practices are not the result of careful thought or sound evidence, . . . rather, they are used because teachers experienced these practices as students and, having little training or experience with other options, continue their use.”


“The grading box is alive and well, and in some schools and classrooms, it is impenetrable. Fair does not mean equal; yet, when it comes to grading, we insist that it does.”

Patterson, William “Breaking Out of Our Boxes,” Kappan, April 2003, 572
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**What does FAIR mean?**

“All students are given an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do as part of the assessment process.

Adaptations to assessment materials and procedures are available for students including but not restricted to students with learning disabilities, to allow them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, provided that the adaptations do not jeopardize the integrity or content of the assessment.”

Adapted from Manitoba Education and Training at http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/shool/curricul/assess/aepolprod/purpos~2.html

**Purposes for Grading**

* Communicate the achievement status of students to parents, (students), and others
* Provide information that students can use for self-evaluation
* Select, identify, or group students for certain educational paths or programs
* Provide incentives to learn
* Evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs


“the primary purpose for grading . . . should be to communicate with students and parents about their achievement of learning goals. . . .

Brookhart, S., Grading, Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall, Columbus, OH, 2004
“the primary purpose of . . . grades . . . (is) to communicate student achievement to students, parents, school administrators, post-secondary institutions and employers.”

Grading Issues

- Achievement (only)
- Evidence (quality)
- Calculation
- Learning (support)

Grades are broken when they -
- include ingredients that distort achievement
- arise from low quality or poorly organized evidence
- are derived from inappropriate number crunching,
- do not support the learning process.
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Fixes for ingredients that distort achievement

1. Grade only on achievement. Don’t include student behaviors (effort, participation, adherence to class rules, etc) in grades.
2. Provide support for the learner who submits work late. Don’t reduce marks on ‘late work’.
3. Only look for evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement. Don’t give points for extra credit or use bonus points.

Fixes for ingredients that distort achievement

4. Don’t punish academic dishonesty with reduced grades. Apply other consequences and reassess to determine actual level of achievement.
6. Use only individual achievement evidence. Don’t include group scores in grades.

Fixes for low-quality or poorly organized evidence

7. Organize and report evidence against standards/learning goals. Don’t organize information in grading records by assessment methods or simply summarize into a single grade.
8. Provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations. Don’t assign grades using inappropriate or unclear performance standards.
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Fixes for low-quality or poorly organized evidence

9. Compare each student’s performance to standards. Don’t assign grades based on student’s achievement compared to other students.

10. Rely only on quality assessments. Don’t rely on evidence gathered from assessments that fail to meet standards of quality.

Fixes for inappropriate number crunching

11. Don’t rely on the mean. Consider other measures of central tendency and use professional judgment.

12. When evidence is missing, don’t use zeros in grade determination or as punishment. Use alternatives, such as reassessing to determine real achievement or use “I” for incomplete or insufficient evidence.

Fixes to support the learning process

13. Use only summative evidence in grading. Don’t use information from formative assessments and practice tasks.

14. When learning is developmental and will grow with time and repeated opportunities, don’t summarize accumulated evidence. In those instances, emphasize more recent achievement.

15. Involve students in the grading process. Students can and should play key roles in a process that is intended to promote achievement.
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For each fix…

- What do you think – PMI
- Where are you/school/district now?
- Where do you want to go – you/school/district?

Fixes for ingredients that distort achievement

1. Grade only on achievement. Don’t include student behaviors (effort, participation, adherence to class rules etc.)

2. Provide support for the learner who submits work late. Don’t reduce marks on late work.

3. Only look for evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement. Don’t give points for extra credit or use bonus points.

Fixes for ingredients that distort achievement

4. Don’t punish academic dishonesty with reduced grades. Apply other consequences and reassess to determine actual level of achievement.

5. Report absences separately. Don’t consider absences in grade determination.

6. Use only individual achievement evidence. Don’t include group scores in grades.
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Fix #1

1. Grade only on achievement.
   Don’t include student behaviors (effort, participation, adherence to class rules, etc) in grades.

Fix #1

“. . . grades often reflect a combination of achievement, progress, and other factors.

. . . this tendency to collapse several independent elements into a single grade may blur their meaning.”


Fix #1

“Reports on student progress and achievement should contain . . . information that indicates academic progress and achievement for each course or subject area separate from . . .

punctuality, attitude, behaviour, effort, attendance, and work habits;”

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Fix #1

Sum total of everything students do in school/classroom

- Select a representative sampling of what students do
  - Process: Assessment of students using observation over time
  - Product: Assessment based on performance

- Attitude, Learning Skills, and Effort

- Reporting Variables (Desirable Behaviors)

Grading Variables (Learning Outcomes, Standards, etc.)

Fix #2

- Provide support for the learner who submits work late. Don't reduce marks on late work.
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Fix #2

“Warm demanders first establish a caring relationship that convinces students that the teacher believes in them and has their best interests at heart. . . .

On the basis of this relationship, warm demanders relentlessly insist that all students perform required academic work and treat the teacher and their peers with respect.”


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Fix #2

Getting Work In On Time

1. Set clear and reasonable timelines with some student input.
2. Ensure that the expectations for the task/assignment are clearly established and understood.
3. Support the students who will predictably struggle with the task without intervention
4. Find out why other students’ work is late and assist them.


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Fix #2

Getting Work In On Time

5. Establish the consequences for late work, e.g.,
   - After school follow-up
   - Make-up responsibility within a supervised setting
   - Parent contact
   - Notation in the mark book for each assignment that is late
   - “Grades” on a learning skills/ work habits section of the report card
   - Comments on the report card that reflects chronic lateness

Fix #2
Getting Work In On Time

6. Provide the opportunity for students to extend timelines:
   • Student must communicate with the teacher in advance of the due date
   • Student must choose situations carefully as this extension may only be used once/twice per term/semester


Fix #2
Dealing with Late Work

1. Behaviour/Learning Skill
2. Communication/Clarity
3. Support
4. Consequences

According to Pink the keys to Motivation 3.0 are

Autonomy

Mastery

Purpose

Daniel Pink, 2009, Drive, Riverhead Books, New York
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“Don’t use grades punitively… Without exception, experts in the area of student grading recommend that grades not be used in a punitive sense. When a teacher uses grades as punishment for student behaviors, the teacher establishes an adversarial relationship in which grades are no longer meaningful to students as indicators of their accomplishments. The punitive use of grades only increases the likelihood that students will lose respect for the evaluation system; consequently the appeal to students of subverting such a system will be heightened.”


Fix #3

- Only look for evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement. Don’t give points for extra credit or use bonus points.

Fix #3 – Extra Credit

Letter to the Editor – Harrisburg, PA
Patriot News, November 21, 2003

Recently it was “Dress like an Egyptian Day” at my school. If we dressed like an Egyptian we got extra credit. When we didn’t (which the majority of kids didn’t) our teacher got disappointed at us because we just “didn’t make more effort.” …

One of the frustrating things in my mind is that we get graded on something that has no educational value. I would very much like to discontinue these childish dress-up days.

Jennifer Starsinic, Hummelstown
Fix #3 – Bonus Points
It is inappropriate to have bonus points on tests that simply make it appear that students’ achievement is higher than it really is.

It makes no sense for a student to be able to score 70 points on a test that has a maximum recorded value of 50 points.

Furthermore, the questions for bonus points are usually the questions that distinguish between competence and excellent, so all students should be expected to attempt these questions.

O’Connor, K., How to Grade for Learning, Third Edition, Corwin, 2009, 104

Fix #4

Don’t punish academic dishonesty with reduced grades. Apply other consequences and reassess to determine actual level of achievement.

Schools and districts need procedures to deal fairly and appropriately with academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism. This can be achieved by having a clear district or school policy on academic dishonesty.
Fix #4

“Effective policies first and foremost recognize that academic dishonesty is a very serious inappropriate behaviour (maybe) equivalent to theft, and as such requires primarily behavioral consequences. These policies also recognize that academic dishonesty deprives everyone of quality evidence of student achievement. This appropriate assessment consequence is to have students redo the work with honesty and integrity.”

O’Connor, K., A Repair Kit for Grading, Pearson/ATI, Portland, OR, 2007, 39

Fix #5

- Report absences separately. Don’t consider attendance in grade determination.

Fix #5

- Regular attendance is necessary and desirable for most students, but standards-based education is not about seat time; it is about what students know, understand and can do.
- Keep it simple – just record the number of days present for each student and the number of days in the grading period.
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Fix #5
Excused and unexcused absences are not relevant to an achievement grade.

There is no legitimate purpose for distinguishing between excused and unexcused absences.

For educational purposes, therefore, there need only to be recorded absences.


Fix #6

- Use only individual achievement evidence. Don’t include group scores in grades.

“Group (grades) are so blatantly unfair that on this basis alone they should never be used.”

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Fix #6

Kagan’s 7 reasons for opposing group grades
1. Not fair
2. Debase report cards
3. Undermine motivation
4. Convey the wrong message
5. Violate individual accountability
6. Are responsible for resistance to cooperative learning
7. May be challenged in court


Fix #6

“No student's grade should depend on the achievement (or behavior) of other students.”

Source: William Glasser

For the first set of fixes (1-6)...

- What do you think – PMI
- Where are you/school/district now?
- Where do you want to go – you/school/district?
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Fixes for low quality or poorly organized evidence

7. Organized and report evidence against standards/learning goals. Don't organize information in grading records by assessment methods or simply summarize into a single grade.

8. Provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations. Don't assign grades using inappropriate or unclear performance standards.

9. Compare each student’s performance to standards. Don't assign grades based on student's achievement compared to other students.

10. Rely only on quality assessments. Don't rely on evidence gathered from assessments that fail to meet standards of quality.

Fix #7

- Organize and report evidence against standards/learning goals. Don't organize information in grading records by assessment methods or simply summarize into a single grade.
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Fix #7

Common Core Math Grade 5

Student:

Strands

Assessments

Summary

Achievement Evidence

Strengths, Areas for Improvement/Observations

Operations and Algebraic Thinking (3)

3

10/1

Test

10/15

PA

11/7

PA

11/18

PA

12/8

PA

12/17

Test

17/20

3 3 3 3

Number and Operations in Base Ten (7)

1

Number and Operations – Fractions (7)

2

15/20

2 2 2 2

Measurement and Data (5)

4

19/20

4 4 1 4

Geometry (4)

1 2 3 4 4

(20/20)

4

Stiggins, et al., Classroom Assessment for Student Learning, Pearson/ATI, Portland, OR, 2004, 289

Fix #7

Stiggins, et al., Classroom Assessment for Student Learning, Pearson/ATI, Portland, OR, 2004, 289

Fix #7

Stiggins, et al., Classroom Assessment for Student Learning, Pearson/ATI, Portland, OR, 2004, 289
The use of columns in a grade book to represent standards, instead of assignments, tests, and activities, is a major shift in thinking. Under this system, when an assessment is designed, the teacher must think in terms of the standards it is intended to address. If a (test) is given that covers three standards, then the teacher makes three entries in the grade book for each student - one entry for each standard - as opposed to one overall entry for the entire (test).”

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Fix #7
“Systems that are aligned - curriculum, teaching, and assessment - have a greater chance of success for students.”


Fix #7
“The principal limitation of any grading system that requires the teacher to assign one number or letter to represent . . . learning is that one symbol can convey only one meaning. . . . One symbol cannot do justice to the different degrees of learning a student acquires across all learning outcomes.”

Tombari and Borich, Authentic Assessment in the Classroom, Prentice Hall, 1999, 213

Fix #7
Shorewood, WI. Standards-Based Expanded Format Report Card

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Fix #8

- Provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations. Don’t assign grades using inappropriate or unclear performance standards.

Fix #8

- “Performance standards specify ‘how good is good enough.’ They relate to issues of assessment that gauge the degree to which content standards have been attained. . . . They are indices of quality that specify how adept or competent a student demonstration should be.”


Fix #8

Performance Standards

How good is good enough?

Traditional School Approaches

- A 90 – 100% Outstanding Excellent
- B 80 – 89% Above Average Good
- C 70 – 79% Average Satisfactory
- D 60 – 69% Below Average Poor
- F < 60% Failing Unacceptable

Standard-based approaches

Should be described by levels and linked to a symbol

- Advanced Above standard
- Proficient Meets standard
- Developing Below but approaching standard
- Beginning Well below standard

O’Connor, K., How to Grade for Learning, Third Edition, Corwin, 2009, 72
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Fix #8

For classroom assessment
Performance Standards

OVERALL
- performance descriptors
  (school, district, state or provincial e.g., A B C D; 4 3 2 1; E M N U)

TASK/SUBJECT
GRADE LEVEL
SPECIFIC
- scoring tools (rubrics, etc)
- work samples (exemplars)
- commentaries on the work samples

Adapted from New Standards Sampler, National Center on Education and the Economy, www.ncee.org
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Achievement

“the act of achieving or performing; an obtaining by exertion; successful performance”

measured as an absolute, e.g., “he/she . . . is 4 feet 6 inches tall”

. . . “is reading proficiently at grade 2 level”

“achievement at . . .”

Sources: Dictionaries and the wisdom of Grant Wiggins

Growth

“the process of growing; increase in size, number, frequency, strength, etc.”

measured against where a child was, e.g., “he/she . . . grew three inches since last measurement”

. . . “has moved from grade 1 level in the last month”

“growth from . . .”

Sources: Dictionaries and the wisdom of Grant Wiggins

Progress

“movement, as toward a goal; advance.”

Relative achievement measured against a goal, standard, e.g., “he/she . . . to one inch above average height for age”

. . . to two grade levels below expected level for age”

“progress to . . .”

Invariably involves a professional judgment

Note - It is possible to make significant personal growth while making limited progress at a (relatively) low level of achievement.

Sources: Dictionaries and the wisdom of Grant Wiggins

73

74

75
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Fix #9

Compare each student’s performance to preset standards. Don’t assign grades based on student’s achievement compared to other students.

What If...

What do you think would happen if you did an outstanding job, all the students in your class did an outstanding job, and all the students received a grade of 90% or higher?

“grading on the curve makes learning a highly competitive activity in which students compete against one another for the few scarce rewards (high grades) distributed by the teacher. Under these conditions, students readily see that helping others become successful threatens their own chances for success. As a result, learning becomes a game of winners and losers; and because the number of rewards is kept arbitrarily small, most students are forced to be losers.”

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Fix #10

Rely only on quality assessments. Don't rely on evidence gathered from assessments that fail to meet standards of quality.

Fix #10 – Accurate Assessment

- Appropriate and clear targets (Fixes 7 & 8)
- Clear Purpose (Fix 13)
- Sound design: ✓ right method
  ✓ well written
  ✓ well sampled
  ✓ bias avoided

Adapted from Stiggins et al – Classroom Assessment FOR Student Learning, Pearson/Assessment Training Institute, 2004, 124

Fix #10 – Right Method

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<td>Y?</td>
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<td>Y?</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRODUCT</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fix #10 – Well Written

Five General Item Writing Commandments:
Thou shall not:
- provide opaque directions about how to respond
- employ ambiguous statements in your items
- unintentionally provide students with clues
- employ complex syntax in your items
- use vocabulary that is more advanced than required

Popham, J. Classroom Assessment: What Teachers Need to Know, Fix #1 Allyn and Bacon, Needham Heights, MA, 1995, 98

Fix #10 – Well Sampled

"Ask: Have we gathered enough information of the right kind so we can draw confident conclusions about student achievement. If the answer is yes, proceed. . . .

Our challenge is to know how to adjust our sampling strategies . . . to produce results of maximum quality for minimum effort."


Fix #10 – Well Sampled

“There are three general sources of assessment evidence gathered in classrooms: observations of learning, products students create, and conversations - discussing learning with students.

When evidence is collected from three different sources over time, trends and patterns become apparent. . . . This process is called triangulation.”

Davies, Anne, Making Classroom Assessment Work, Classroom Connections International, Merville, BC, 2000, 35
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Fix #10 – Bias Avoided
Problems that can occur with the student
Lack of reading skill
Emotional upset
Poor health
Lack of “testwiseness”
Evaluation anxiety

Problems that can occur with the setting
Physical conditions – light, heat, noise, etc.

Problems that can occur with the assessment itself
Directions lacking or unclear
Poorly worded questions/prompts
Insufficient time

Based on the ideas of Rick Stiggins

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Fix #10

“Nothing of consequence would be lost by getting rid of timed tests by the College Board or, indeed, by (schools) in general. Few tasks in life — and very few tasks in scholarship — actually depend on being able to read passages or solve math problems rapidly. As a teacher, I want my students to read, write and think well; I don’t care how much time they spend on their assignments. For those few jobs where speed is important, timed tests may be useful.”


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Fix #10

Consider what mathematics teaching expert Marilyn Burns wrote about timed tests. “What about using timed tests to help children learn their basic facts. This makes no instructional sense. Children who perform well under time pressure display their skills. Children who have difficulty with skills, or who work more slowly, run the risk of reinforcing wrong learning under pressure. In addition, children can become negative and fearful toward their math learning. Also, timed tests do not measure children’s understanding . . . It doesn’t ensure that students will be able to use the facts in problem-solving situations. Furthermore, it conveys to children that memorizing is the way to mathematical power, rather than learning to think and reason to figure out answers.”

Burns, M., About Teaching Mathematics, 2006, 157
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For the second set of fixes (7-10)...
- What do you think – PMI
- Where are you/school/district now?
- Where do you want to go – you/school/district?

Fixes for inappropriate crunching
11. Don’t rely on the mean. Consider other methods of central tendency and use professional judgment.

12. When evidence is missing, don’t use zeros in grade determination or as punishment. Use alternatives such as reassessing to determine real achievement or use “I” for incomplete or insufficient evidence.

Fix #11
- Don’t rely on the mean; consider other measures of central tendency and use professional judgment.
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Fix #11
“Averaging falls far short of providing an accurate description of what students have learned. ... If the purpose of grading and reporting is to provide an accurate description of what students have learned, then averaging must be considered inadequate and inappropriate”.


Fix #11
“Educators must abandon the average, or arithmetic mean, as the predominant measurement of student achievement.”


Fix #11
“Most fifth-grade students learn the difference between mean, median, and mode, and thus gain the insight that the arithmetic mean or average, may not be the best representation of a set of data. Yet the teachers of those students remain stubbornly allegiance to the average.”

Reeves, D., Ahead of the Curve, Solution Tree, 2007, 230
Fix #11 – Letter to the Editor

Toronto Globe and Mail, October 15, 2003

*Whenever I hear statistics being quoted I am reminded of the statistician who drowned while wading across a river with an average depth of three feet.*

GORDON McMANN
Campbell River, B.C.

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Fix #11

| 89 | 89 | Mean or Average = 75.2 |
| 89 | 20 |
| 89 | Median = 89 |
| 89 |
| 89 |
| 89 |
| 20 |
| 89 |
| 89 |

Total 752

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Fix #11

“Grading by the median provides more opportunities for success by diminishing the impact of a few stumbles and by rewarding hard work.”

Wright, Russell G., “Success for All: The Median is the Key”, *Kappan*, May 1994, 723-725

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Fix #11

"Data should be used to INFORM not determine decisions"

Management Consultant, The Hay Group, personal conversation, January, 2002
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Fix #12

When evidence is missing, don’t use zeros in grade determination or as punishment. Use alternatives, such as reassessing to determine real achievement or use “I” for Incomplete or Insufficient evidence.

Fix #12

Problems with zeros

- “Zeros give a numerical value to something that has never been assessed and that therefore has no basis in reality.
- They can have a counterproductive effects on student motivation.
- They involve inappropriate mathematics.
- . . . zeros in the record (thus) render grades ineffective as communication.”

O’Connor, K., A Repair Kit for Grading, Pearson/ATI, Portland, 2007, 86

Fix #12

“Most state standards in mathematics require that fifth-grade students understand the principles of ratios - for example, A is to B as 4 is to 3; D is to F as 1 is to zero. Yet the persistence of the zero on the 100-point scale indicates that many people with advanced degrees, . . . have not applied the ratio standard to their own professional practices.”

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Fix #12

A 90-100; B 80-89; C 70-79; D 60-69; F <60

“the interval between grades through A-D is 10 points, yet the potential interval from D to F is 60 points. The result is . . . the 0 grade has a disproportionate impact on the average grade. If educators must use a numerical scale then the lowest possible number on the scale should be one grade value lower than a D.”


Fix #12  The Effect of Zeros

<table>
<thead>
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<th>5 point scale</th>
<th>101 point scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>4 (A) 90-100</td>
<td>11 95 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (B) 80-89</td>
<td>10 85 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (C) 70-79</td>
<td>10 75 75</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 (D) 60-69</td>
<td>10 65 65</td>
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<td>60 0 50</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 (C)</td>
<td>64 (D) 74 (C)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

O’Connor, K. A Repair Kit for Grading, Pearson/ATI, Portland.2007, 88

Fix #12

“The use of an “I” or “Incomplete” grade is an alternative to assigning zeros that is both educationally sound and potentially quite effective.”

Guskey and Bailey, Developing Grading and Reporting Systems for Student Learning, Corwin Press, 2001, 144
Fix #12  The Last Words on Zeros

“A zero has an undeserved and devastating influence, so much so that no matter what the student does, the grade distorts the final grade as a true indicator of mastery. Mathematically and ethically this is unacceptable.”

Rick Wormeli quoted in O’Connor, K., A Repair Kit for Grading, Pearson/ATI, Portland, 2007, 92

Fixes to support the learning process

13. Use only summative evidence in grading. Don’t use information from summative assessments and practice tasks.

14. When learning is developmental and will grow with time and repeated opportunities, don’t summarize accumulated evidence. In those instances, emphasize more recent achievement.

15. Include students in the grading process. Students can—and should—play key roles in a process that is intended to promote achievement.
Fix #13

Use only summative evidence in grading. Don't use information from formative assessments and practice tasks.

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Fix #13

Diagnostic - assessment which takes place prior to instruction; designed to determine a student’s attitude, skills or knowledge in order to identify student needs.

Formative - Assessment designed to provide direction for improvement and/or adjustment to a program for individual students or for a whole class, e.g. observation, quizzes, homework, instructional questions, initial drafts/Attempts.

Summative - Assessment/evaluation designed to provide information to be used in making judgment about a student’s achievement at the end of a sequence of instruction, e.g. final drafts/Attempts, tests, exams, assignments, projects, performances.

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Fix #13

“The ongoing interplay between assessment and instruction, so common in the arts and athletics, is also evident in classrooms using practices such as nongraded quizzes and practice tests, the writing process, formative performance tasks, review of drafts and peer response groups. The teachers in such classrooms recognize that ongoing assessments provide feedback that enhances instruction and guides student revision.”

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Fix #13

“The thrust of formative assessment is toward improving learning and instruction. Therefore, the information should not be used for assigning “marks” as the assessment often occurs before students have had full opportunities to learn content or develop skills.”


Fix #13

Students should be assessed or checked on everything (or almost everything) they do

BUT

everything that is assessed and/or checked does not need a score

AND

every score should not be included in the grade.

Fix #13

Firm evidence shows that formative assessment is an essential component of classroom work and that its development can raise standards of achievement, Mr. Black and Mr. Wiliam point out. Indeed, they know of no other way of raising standards for which such a strong prima facie case can be made.

Black, P. and D. Wiliam, “Inside the Black Box,” Kappan, October 1998, 139
Fix #13

“The research indicates that improving learning through assessment depends on five, deceptively simple, key factors:

- The provision of effective feedback to students
- The active involvement of students in their own learning
- Adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment
- A recognition of the profound influence assessment has on the motivation and self-esteem of students, both of which are crucial influences on learning
- The need for students to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve”

Source: Black and William, 1998, summarized by Ruth Sutton

Fix #13

From a presentation by Dylan Wiliam – “Inside the Black Box”

KINDS OF FEEDBACK

- 264 low and high ability year 7 pupils in 12 classes in 4 schools; analysis of 132 students at top and bottom of each class
- Same teaching, same aims, same teachers, same class work
- Three kinds of feedback: marks, comments, marks + comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Gain</th>
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<tr>
<td>marks</td>
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<tr>
<td>comments</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both</td>
<td>none</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Fix #13

PURPOSES OF HOMEWORK

- PREPARATION – introduces material presented in future lessons. These assignments aim to help students learn new material when it is covered in class.
- PRACTICE – to reinforce learning and help students master specific skills.
- EXTENSION – asks students to apply skills they already have in new situations.
- INTEGRATION – requires students to apply many different skills to a large task, such as book reports, projects, creative writing.

Source: NCLB website – Homework Tips for Parents
Fix #13 – Sample Assessment Plan

Formative Assessment for Unit 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>METHOD</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>SCORING</th>
<th>ASSESSOR</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROLE PLAY</td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Set/Free</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>QUIZES</td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Set/Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BROCHURE</td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Set/Free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BROCHURE</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Set/Free</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Summative Assessment for Unit 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>METHOD</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>SCORING</th>
<th>ASSESSOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROLE PLAY</td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEST(S)</td>
<td>Paper &amp; Pencil</td>
<td>Selected Items</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BROCHURE</td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BROCHURE</td>
<td>Product</td>
<td>Rubric</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Fix #14

- When learning is developmental and will grow with time and repeated opportunities, don’t summarize accumulated evidence. In those instances, emphasize more recent achievement.
How to Grade for Learning

Fix #14

Who do you want to pack your parachute?

A - Student 1,
B - Student 2,
C - Student 3.

Remember the parachutes were packed after the course was over.

Fix #14

If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you!
How to Grade for Learning

Fix #14

Key question, “What information provides the most accurate depiction of students' learning at this time?”

In nearly all cases, the answer is "the most current information."

If students demonstrate that past assessment information no longer accurately reflects their learning, that information must be dropped and replaced by the new information. Continuing to rely on past assessment data miscommunicates students' learning.


Fix #14

“We know that students will rarely perform at high levels on challenging learning tasks at their first attempt. Deep understanding or high levels of proficiency are achieved only as a result of trial, practice, adjustments based on feedback and more practice.”


Fix #14

“...final grades should (almost) never be determined by simply averaging the grades from several grading periods (e.g., adding the grades from terms one through three and dividing by three).”

Exception - discrete standards/content

Fix #15

Involve students in the grading process. Students can - and should - play key roles in a process that is intended to promote achievement.

Fix #15

Motivating Students Towards Excellence

Rick Stiggins believes student-involved assessment is the route to follow.

It includes:
1. student involvement in the construction of assessments and in the development of criteria for success;
2. students keeping records of their own achievement and growth through such strategies as portfolios; and
3. students communicating their achievement through such vehicles as student-involved parent conferences.
1. Engage students in reviewing weak and strong samples in order to determine the attributes of a good performance or product.

2. Students practice using criteria to evaluate anonymous strong and weak work.

3. Students work in pairs to revise an anonymous weak sample they have just evaluated.


**Summary of Fixes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades that are:</th>
<th>Fix(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive of Learning</td>
<td>13, 14, 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Given:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>quality assessment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standards base</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance standards</td>
<td>8, 9</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Musts:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>achievement separated from behaviors</td>
<td>1, 2, 4, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>summative only</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more recent emphasized</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number crunching</td>
<td>11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student involvement</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Grade for Learning

Grading “Top Ten” Reference List

Brookhart, S. Grading, Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall, 2004
Canady, R. and P. R. Hotchkiss, “It’s a Good Score: Just a Bad Grade,” Kappan, September 1989, 68-71
Cooper, D. Talk About Assessment, Thomson Nelson, 2007

Grading “Top Ten” (cont.)

Stiggins, R. et al, Classroom Assessment for Student Learning, Pearson/ATI, Portland, 2004
Wormeli, R. Fair Isn’t Equal, Stenhouse/NMSA, 2006

McTighe, Jay and Ferrara, Steven state,

“. . . the primary purpose of classroom assessment is to inform teaching and improve learning, not to sort and select students or to justify a grade.”

McTighe, Jay and Ferrara, Steven, “Performance-Based Assessment in the Classroom”, Pennsylvania ASCD
How to Grade for Learning

Grades should come from

Professional Judgment
NOT
just number crunching

To evaluate or judge is to...

“reach a sensible conclusion that is consistent with both evidence and common sense”

Robert Linn, CRESST

Enduring Understandings

1. There are no right grades only justifiable grades.

2. Nothing really changes till the grade book and the report card both change.
How to Grade for Learning

What is Insanity?

*Doing the same thing over and over and expecting things to improve.*

Attributed to Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

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REFLECTION

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Continuums for Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Achievement/ non-achievement factors noted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summative only</td>
<td>Everything 'counts'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one opportunity</td>
<td>One opportunity only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>No evidence related to teacher performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality assessment</td>
<td>Teacher's performance standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student understanding and involvement</td>
<td>Teacher outlined with unclear targets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grading/Reporting Reflections

Reflect on what you have learned and apply it to the grading and reporting practices in your school and/or district.

- Practices reinforced
- Possible revisions in grading/reporting practices
- Actions
- Any other comments

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How to Grade for Learning