

Rubric for Grading Practices

Table 10.5 presents a rubric showing each of the previous seven grading guidelines as a performance continuum that you can use to think about your own grading beliefs and practices.

Table 10.5 Rubric for Evaluating Grading Practices

Criterion	Beginning	Developing	Fluent
1. Organizing the gradebook	The evidence of learning (e.g., a gradebook) is entirely organized by sources of information (e.g., tests, quizzes, homework, labs, etc.).	The evidence of learning (e.g., a gradebook) is organized by sources of information mixed with specific content standards.	The evidence of learning (e.g., a gradebook) is completely organized by student learning outcomes (e.g., content standards, benchmarks, grade level indicators, curriculum expectations, etc.).
2. Including factors in the grade	<p>Overall summary grades are based on a mix of achievement and nonachievement factors (e.g., timeliness of work, attitude, effort, cheating). Non-achievement factors have a major impact on grades.</p> <p>Extra credit points are given for extra work completed, without connection to extra learning.</p> <p>Cheating, late work, and missing work result in a zero (or a radically lower score) in the gradebook. There is no opportunity to make up such work, except in a few cases.</p> <p>Borderline grade cases are handled by considering non-achievement factors.</p>	<p>Overall summary grades are based on a mix of achievement and nonachievement factors, but achievement counts a lot more.</p> <p>Some extra credit points are given for extra work completed; some extra credit work is used to provide extra evidence of student learning.</p> <p>Cheating, late work, and missing work result in a zero (or lower score) in the gradebook. But, there is an opportunity to make up work and replace the zero or raise the lower score.</p> <p>Borderline cases are handled by considering a combination of nonachievement factors and collecting additional evidence of student learning.</p>	<p>Overall summary grades are based on achievement only.</p> <p>Extra credit work is evaluated for quality and is only used to provide extra evidence of learning. Credit is not awarded merely for completion of work.</p> <p>Cheating, late work, and missing work is recorded as "incomplete" or "not enough information" rather than as zero. There is an opportunity to replace an "incomplete" with a score without penalty.</p> <p>Borderline grade cases are handled by collecting additional evidence of student achievement, not by counting non-achievement factors.</p>
3. Considering assessment purpose	Everything each student does is given a score and every score goes into the final grade. There is no distinction between "scores" on practice work (formative assessment or many types of homework) and scores on work to demonstrate level of achievement (summative assessment).	Some distinctions are made between formative (practice such as homework) and summative assessment, but practice work still constitutes a significant part of the grade.	Student work is assessed frequently (formative assessment) and graded occasionally (summative assessment). "Scores" on formative assessments and other practice work (e.g., homework) are used descriptively to inform teachers and students of what has been learned and the next steps in learning. Grades are based only on summative assessments.

Table 10.5 (Continued)

<p>4. Considering most recent information</p>	<p>All assessment data are cumulative and used in calculating a final summative grade. No consideration is given to identifying or using the most current information.</p>	<p>More current evidence is given consideration at times, but does not entirely replace out-of-date evidence.</p>	<p>Most recent evidence completely replaces out-of-date evidence when it is reasonable to do so.</p>
<p>5. Summarizing information and determining final grade</p>	<p>The gradebook has a mixture of ABC, percentages, + √ -, and/or rubric scores, etc., with no explanation of how they are to be combined into a final summary grade.</p> <p>Rubric scores are converted to percentages when averaged with other scores; or, there is no provision for combining rubric and percentage scores.</p> <p>Final summary grades are based on a curve—a student's place in the rank order of student achievement.</p> <p>Final grades for special needs students are not based on learning targets as specified in the IEP.</p> <p>Final summary grades are based on calculation of mean (average) only.</p>	<p>The gradebook may or may not have a mixture of symbols, but there is some attempt, even if incomplete, to explain how to combine them.</p> <p>Rubric scores are not directly converted to percentages; some type of decision rule is used, the final grade many times does not best depict level of student achievement.</p> <p>Final grades are criterion referenced, not norm referenced. They are based on preset standards such as A = 90–100% and B = 80–89%. But, there is no indication of the necessity to ensure shared meaning of symbols—i.e., there is no definition of each standard.</p> <p>There is an attempt to base final grades for special needs students on learning targets in the IEP, but the attempt is not always successful; or, it is not clear to all parties that modified learning targets are used to assign a grade.</p> <p>The teacher understands various measures of central tendency, but may not always choose the best one to accurately describe student achievement.</p>	<p>The gradebook may or may not have a mix of symbol types, but there is a sound explanation of how to combine them.</p> <p>Rubric scores are converted to a final grade using a decision rule that results in an accurate depiction of the level of student attainment of the learning targets.</p> <p>Final grades are criterion referenced, not norm referenced. They are based on preset standards with clear descriptions of what each symbol means. These descriptions go beyond A = 90–100% and B = 80–89%; they describe what A, B, etc. performance looks like.</p> <p>Final grades for special needs students are criterion referenced, and indicate level of attainment of the learning goals as specified in the IEP. The targets on which grades are based are clear to all parties.</p> <p>The teacher selects among measures of central tendency (average, median, mode) as appropriate.</p>

Table 10.5 (Continued)

<p>6. Verifying assessment quality</p>	<p>There is little evidence of consideration of the accuracy/quality of the individual assessments on which grades are based.</p> <p>Quality standards for classroom assessment are not considered and the teacher has trouble articulating standards for quality.</p> <p>Assessments are rarely modified for special needs students when such modifications would provide more accurate information about student learning.</p>	<p>The teacher tries to base grades on accurate assessment results only, but may not consciously understand all the features of a sound assessment.</p> <p>Some standards of quality are adhered to in judging the accuracy of the assessment results on which grades are based. The teacher can articulate some of these standards; or, uses standards for quality assessment intuitively, but has trouble articulating why an assessment is sound.</p> <p>Assessments are modified for special needs students, but the procedures used may not result in accurate information and/or match provisions in the IEP.</p>	<p>Grades are based only on accurate assessment results. Questionable results are not included.</p> <p>The teacher can articulate standards of quality, and can show evidence of consideration of these standards in classroom assessments.</p> <p>Assessments are modified for special needs students in ways that match instructional modifications described in IEPs. Such modifications result in generating accurate information on student achievement.</p>
<p>7. Involving students</p>	<p>Grades are a surprise to students because (1) students don't understand the bases on which they are determined, (2) students have not been involved in their own assessment (learning targets are not clear to them, and/or they do not self-assess and track progress toward the targets); or (3) teacher feedback is only evaluative (a judgment of level of quality) and includes no descriptive component.</p>	<p>Grades are somewhat of a surprise to students because student-involvement practices and descriptive feedback are too limited to give them insights into the nature of the learning targets being pursued and their own performance.</p>	<p>Grades are not a surprise to students because (1) students understand the basis for the grades received, (2) students have been involved in their own assessment (they understand the learning targets they are to hit, self-assess in relation to the targets, track their own progress toward the targets, and talk about their progress), and/or (3) teacher communication to students is frequent, descriptive, and focuses on what they have learned as well as the next steps in learning. Descriptive feedback is related directly to specific and clear learning targets.</p>

Summary

We may think at times that the pursuit of grades dominates the lives of far too many students, and that the focus on grades still adversely affects the environment of too many classrooms. However grades are used once they are given, we must be dedicated to ensuring that they communicate as clearly and accurately as possible when we create them. The issue is not whether something needs to be done about grades; the issue is what