



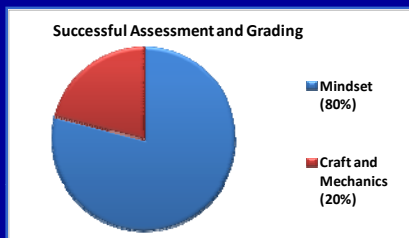
**Boulder Valley School District January 2009**



## **Grading and Reporting for Student Learning**

For further conversation about any of these topics:

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**Mindset:** What we teach is irrelevant. It's what students carry forward after their time with us that matters.

### **Are we successfully differentiating teachers?**






1. Are we willing to teach in whatever way is necessary for students to learn best, even if that approach doesn't match our own preferences?
2. Do we have the courage to do what works, not just what's easiest?
3. Do we actively seek to understand our students' knowledge, skills, and talents so we can provide an appropriate match for their learning needs? And once we discover their strengths and weaknesses, do we actually adapt our instruction to respond to their needs?
4. Do we continually build a large and diverse repertoire of instructional strategies so we have more than one way to teach?
5. Do we organize our classrooms for students' learning or for our teaching?

### **Are we successfully differentiating teachers?**

6. Do we keep up to date on the latest research about learning, students' developmental growth, and our content specialty areas?
7. Do we ceaselessly self-analyze and reflect on our lessons — including our assessments — searching for ways to improve?
8. Are we open to critique?
9. Do we push students to become their own education advocates and give them the tools to do so?
10. Do we regularly close the gap between knowing what to do and really doing it?

...isn't

Define Each Grade

- A:  :
- B:  :
- C:  :
- D:  :
- E or F:  :

*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 or IP or NTY
- I = Incomplete**  
**IP = In Progress**  
**NTY = “Not There Yet”**

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

Prompt:

Write a well-crafted essay that provides an accurate overview of what we’ve learned about DNA in our class so far. You may use any resources you wish, but make sure to explain each of the aspects of DNA we’ve discussed.

Student’s Response:

Deoxyribonucleic Acid, or DNA, is the blueprint for who we are. Its structure was discovered by Watson and Crick in 1961. Watson was an American studying in Great Britain. Crick was British (He died last year). DNA is shaped like a twisting ladder. It is made of two nucleotide chains bonded to each other. The poles of the ladder are made of sugar and phosphate but the rungs of the ladder are made of four bases. They are thymine, guanine, and cytosine, and adenine. The amount of adenine is equal to the amount of thymine (A=T). It’s the same with cytosine and guanine (C=G).

(Continued on the next slide)

The sequence of these bases makes us who we are. We now know how to rearrange the DNA sequences in human embryos to create whatever characteristics we want in new babies – like blue eyes, brown hair, and so on, or even how to remove hereditary diseases, but many people think it’s unethical (playing God) to do this, so we don’t do it. When DNA unzips to bond with other DNA when it reproduces, it sometimes misses the re-zipping order and this causes mutations. In humans, the DNA of one cell would equal 1.7 meters if you laid it out straight. If you laid out all the DNA in all the cells of one human, you could reach the moon 6,000 times!

**‘Interesting:**

“The score a student receives on a test is more dependent on who scores the test and how they score it than it is on what the student knows and understands.”

-- Marzano, *Classroom Assessment & Grading That Work* (CAGTW), p. 30

## Conclusions from Sample DNA Essay Grading

The fact that a range of grades occurs among teachers who grade the same product suggests that:

- Assessment can only be done against commonly accepted and clearly understood criteria.
- Grades are relative.
- Teachers have to be knowledgeable in their subject area in order to assess students properly.
- Grades are subjective and can vary from teacher to teacher.
- Grades are not always accurate indicators of mastery.

## ASSESSMENT

### Reminders and Principles

Avoid hunt-and-peck, call-on-just-a-sampling-of-students-to-indicate-the-whole-class's-understanding assumptions:

*"Does everyone understand?"*

*"Does anyone have any questions?"*

*"These two students have it right, so the rest of you must understand it as well."*

**Get evidence from every individual!**

## 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*

*"Understanding involves the appropriate application of concepts and principles to questions or problems posed."*

*-- Howard Gardner, 1991*

*"Real comprehension of a notion or a theory -- implies the reinvention of this theory by the student... True understanding manifests itself by spontaneous applications." -- Jean Piaget*

From the Center for Media Literacy in New Mexico –

"If we are literate in our subject, we can:

access (understand and find meaning in),  
analyze,  
evaluate,  
and create  
the subject or medium."

From *Understanding By Design*  
(Wiggins, McTighe)

The Six Facets of True Understanding:

Explanation  
Interpretation  
Application  
Perspective  
Empathy  
Self-knowledge

Working Definition of Mastery  
(Wormeli)

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.

Non-Mastery...

- The student can repeat the multiplication tables through the 12's

...and Mastery

- The student can hear or read about a situation that requires repeated addition and identifies it as a multiplication opportunity, then uses multiplication accurately to shorten the solution process.

Non-mastery...

- A student prepares an agar culture for bacterial growth by following a specific procedure given to her by her teacher. She calls the experiment a failure when unknown factors or substances contaminate the culture after several weeks of observation.

...and Mastery

- A student accounts for potentially contaminating variables by taking extra steps to prevent anything from affecting an agar culture on bacterial growth she's preparing, and if accidental contamination occurs, she adjusts the experiment's protocols when she repeats the experiment so that the sources of the contamination are no longer a factor.

### Non-mastery...

- The student uses primarily the bounce pass in the basketball game regardless of its potential effectiveness because that's all he knows how to do.

### ...and Mastery

- The student uses a variety of basketball passes during a game, depending on the most advantageous strategy at that moment in the game.

### Non-mastery...

- The students can match each of the following parts of speech to its definition accurately: noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition, conjunction, gerund, and interjection.

### ...and Mastery

- The student can point to any word in the sentence and explain its role (impact) in the sentence, and explain how the word may change its role, depending on where it's placed in the sentence.

#### 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.

- 
- Define vocabulary terms.
  - Compare vocabulary terms.
  - Use the vocabulary terms correctly.
  - Use the vocabulary terms strategically to obtain a particular result.

- Identify characteristics of Ancient Sumer
- Explore the interwoven nature between religion and government in Sumer
- Explain the rise and fall of city-states in Mesopotamia
- Trace modern structures/ideas back to their roots in the birthplace of civilization, the Fertile Crescent.

- 
- Identify parts of a cell.
  - Explain systems within a cell and what functions they perform.
  - Explain how a cell is part of a larger system of cells that form a tissue
  - Demonstrate how a cell replicates itself.
  - Identify what can go wrong in mitosis.
  - List what we know about how cells determine what kind of cell they will become.
  - Explain how knowledge of cells helps us understand other physiology.

1. Multiply fractions.
2. Multiply mixed numbers.
3. Multiply mixed numbers and whole numbers.
4. Critique the solutions of five students' work as they multiply mixed numbers.
5. Multiply mixed numbers and decimals.
6. Divide fractions.
7. Divide mixed numbers.
8. Divide mixed numbers and whole numbers.
9. Given similar problems completed by anonymous students, identify any errors they've made and how you would re-teach them how to do the problems correctly.

Choose the best assessment:

1. On the sphere provided, draw a latitude/longitude coordinate grid. Label all major components.
2. Given the listed latitude/longitude coordinates, identify the countries. Then, identify the latitude and longitude of the world capitols and bodies of water that are listed.
3. Write an essay about how the latitude/longitude system came to be.
4. In an audio-visual presentation, explain how our system of latitude and longitude would need to be adjusted if Earth was in the shape of a peanut? (narrow middle, wider edges)
5. Create a collage or mural that represents the importance of latitude and longitude in the modern world.

**“The student will compare the United States Constitution system in 1789 with forms of democracy that developed in ancient Greece and Rome, in England, and in the American colonies and states in the 18th century.”**

**--Virginia, Grade 12, United States and Virginia Government**

What will you and your colleagues accept as evidence of full mastery and of almost mastery?

- **Spelling test non-example**
- **No echoing or parroting**
- **Regular conversations with subject-like colleagues**
- **Other teachers grading your students' work**
- **Pacing Guides and Common Assessments?**

Quick Reference: Differentiated Lesson Planning Sequence

- A. Steps to take before designing the learning experiences:
  1. Identify your essential understandings, questions, benchmarks, objectives, skills, standards, and/or learner outcomes.
  2. Identify your students with unique needs, and get an early look at what they will need in order to learn and achieve.
  3. Design your formative and summative assessments.
  4. Design and deliver your pre-assessments based on the summative assessments and identified objectives.
  5. Adjust assessments or objectives based on your further thinking discovered while designing the assessments.

B. Steps to take while designing the learning experiences:

1. Design the learning experiences for students based on pre-assessments, your knowledge of your students, and your expertise with the curriculum, cognitive theory, and students at this stage of human development.
2. Run a mental tape of each step in the lesson sequence to make sure things make sense for your diverse group of students and that the lesson will run smoothly.
3. Review your plans with a colleague.
4. Obtain/Create materials needed for the lesson.
5. Conduct the lesson.
6. Adjust formative and summative assessments and objectives as necessary based on observations and data collected while teaching.

C. Steps to take after providing the learning experiences:

1. Evaluate the lesson's success with students. What evidence do you have that the lesson was successful? What worked and what didn't, and why?
2. Record advice on lesson changes for yourself for when you do this lesson in future years.

## E.E.K. a.k.a. K.U.D.

Essential and Enduring Knowledge (E.E.K.), concepts, and skills, plus, "What's nice to know?" for enrichment students

Know, Understand, able to Do (K.U.D. or K.U.D.O.S.)

## E.E.K. in Question Form

Essential questions are larger questions that transcend subjects, are usually interesting to ponder, and have more than one answer. They are often broken down into component pieces for our lessons. There are usually one to five essential questions per unit of study. Here's an example for a unit on the Reconstruction era following the Civil War:

EQ: "How does a country rebuild itself after Civil War?"

Potential focus areas to teach students as they answer the question:

State versus Federal government rights and responsibilities, the economic state of the country at the time, the extent of resources left in the country after the war, the role of the military and industry, the effects of grassroots organizations established to help, the influence of the international scene at the time, public reaction to Lincoln's assassination, state secession, southern and northern resentment for one another, fallout from the Emancipation Proclamation

## K.U.D. (Samples)

**Know** -- A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition, modifiers, and the object of the preposition.

**Understand** -- Energy is transferred from the sun to higher order animals via photosynthesis in the plant (producer) and the first order consumers that eat those plants. These animals are then consumed by higher order animals. When those animals die, the energy is transferred to the soil and subsequent plant via scavengers and decomposers. It's cyclical in nature.

**Do** -- When determining a percentage discount for a market item, students first change the percentage into a decimal by dividing by one hundred, then multiply the decimal and the item price. This amount is subtracted from the list price to determine the new, discounted cost of the item."

## To Get Guidance on What is Essential and Enduring, Consult:

- standards of learning (*What skills and content within this standard will be necessary to teach students in order for them to demonstrate mastery of the standard?*)
- programs of study
- curriculum guides
- pacing guides
- other teacher's tests
- professional journals
- Mentor or colleague teachers
- textbook scope and sequence
- textbook end-of-chapter reviews and tests
- subject-specific on-line listservs
- professional organizations
- quiet reflection

Don't take time to assess,  
unless you are going to take action  
with what you discover.

## Consider:

- The Latin root of assessment is, "assidere," which means, "to sit beside."
- From Assessment expert, Doug Reeves:  
  
"Too often, educational tests, grades, and report cards are treated by teachers as autopsies when they should be viewed as physicals."

## Feedback vs Assessment

Feedback: Holding up a mirror to students, showing them what they did and comparing it 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

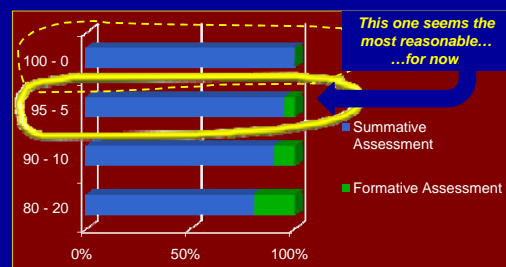
What does our understanding of feedback mean for our use of homework?

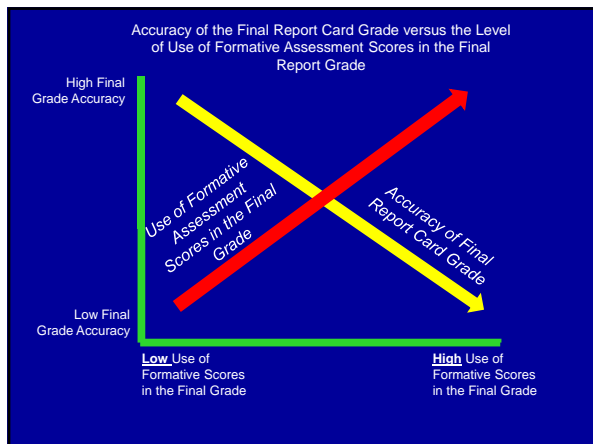
Is homework more formative or summative in nature? Whichever it is, its role in determining grades will be dramatically different.

"If we don't count homework heavily, students won't do it."

Do you agree with this?  
Does this sentiment cross a line?

Which ratio of summative to formative assessment scores yields the most accurate report of what students know and are able to do?





## 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 grade against standards, not routes students take or techniques teachers use to achieve those standards.**

**What does this mean we should do with class participation or discussion grades?**

## Assessment OF Learning

- Still very important
- Summative, final declaration of proficiency, literacy, mastery
- Grades used
- Little impact on learning from feedback

## Assessment FOR Learning

- Grades rarely used, if ever
- Marks and feedback are used
- Share learning goals with students from the beginning
- Make adjustments in teaching a result of formative assessment data
- Provide descriptive feedback to students
- Provide opportunities for student for self- and peer assessment

-- O'Connor, p. 98

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

-- Marzano, CAGTW, pgs 5-6

Item	Topic or Proficiency	Right	Wrong	Simple Mistake?	Really Don't Understand
1	Dividing fractions		✓		✓
2	Dividing Fractions		✓		✓
3	Multiplying Fractions		✓	✓	
4	Multiplying fractions	✓			
5	Reducing to Smp1st trms	✓			
6	Reducing to Smp1st trms	✓			
7	Reciprocals	✓			
8	Reciprocals		✓	✓	
9	Reciprocals		✓	✓	

The chart on the previous slide is based on an idea found in the article below:

Stiggins, Rick. "Assessment Through the Student's Eyes," *Educational Leadership*, May 2007, Vol. 64, No. 8, pages 22 – 26, ASCD

### Pre-Assessments

Used to indicate students' readiness for content and skill development.  
Used to guide instructional decisions.

### Formative Assessments

These are in-route checkpoints, frequently done. They provide ongoing and clear feedback to students and the teacher, informing instruction and reflecting subsets of the essential and enduring knowledge. They are where successful differentiating teachers spend most of their energy – assessing formatively and providing timely feedback to students and practice.

### Summative Assessments

These are given to students at the end of the learning to document growth and mastery. They match the learning objectives and experiences, and they are negotiable if the product is not the literal standard. They reflect most, if not all, of the essential and enduring knowledge. They are not very helpful forms of feedback.

### Tips for Planning Assessments

- Correlate all formal assessments with objectives.
- While summative assessments may be large and complex, pre-assessments usually are not.
- Get ideas for pre- and formative assessments from summative assessments.
- Spend the majority of your time designing/emphasizing formative assessments and the feedback they provide.

### Tips for Planning Assessments – Planning Sequence

- Design summative assessments first, then design your pre- and formative assessments.
- Give pre-assessments several days or a week PRIOR to starting the unit.
- Design your lesson plans AFTER reviewing pre-assessment data.

### Evaluating the Usefulness of Assessments

- What are your essential and enduring skills and content you're trying to assess?
- How does this assessment allow students to demonstrate their mastery?
- Is every component of that objective accounted for in the assessment?
- Can students respond another way and still satisfy the requirements of the assessment task? Would this alternative way reveal a student's mastery more truthfully?
- Is this assessment more a test of process or content? Is that what you're after?

### Clear and Consistent Evidence

We want an accurate portrayal of a student's mastery, not something clouded by a useless format or distorted by only one opportunity to reveal understanding.

Differentiating teachers require accurate assessments in order to differentiate successfully.

### Be Substantive – Avoid Fluff

#### Fluff Assignment:

Make an acrostic poem about chromatography using each of its letters.

#### Substantive Assignment:

Explain how chromatography paper separates colors into their component colors, and identify one use of chromatography in a profession of your choosing.

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.

Successful Assessments are Varied  
and They are Done Over Time

- Assessments are often snapshot-in-time, inferences of mastery, not absolute declarations of exact mastery
- When we assess students through more than one format, we see different sides to their understanding. Some students' mindmaps of their analyses of Renaissance art rivals the most cogent, written versions of their classmates.

## Potential distractions on assessment day:

growing stomach, thirst, exhaustion, illness, emotional angst over:  
parents/friends/identity/tests/college/politics/  
birthday/sex/blogs/parties/sports/projects/  
homework/self-esteem/acne/holiday/report  
cards/future career/money/disease

It's reasonable to allow students every opportunity to show their best side, not just one opportunity.

## Guiding Questions for Rubric Design:

- Does the rubric account for everything we want to assess?
- Is a rubric the best way to assess this product?
- Is the rubric tiered for this student group's readiness level?
- Is the rubric clearly written so anyone doing a "cold" reading of it will understand what is expected of the student?
- Can a student understand the content yet score poorly on the rubric? If so, why, and how can we change the rubric to make sure it doesn't happen?

## Guiding Questions for Rubric Design:

- Can a student understand very little content yet score well on the rubric? If so, how can we change that so it doesn't happen?
- What are the benefits to us as teachers of this topic to create a rubric for our students?
- How do the elements of this rubric support differentiated instruction?
- What should we do differently the next time we create this rubric?

## "Metarubric Summary"

To determine the quality of a rubric, examine the:

- **Content** -- Does it assess the important material and leave out the unimportant material?
- **Clarity** -- Can the student understand what's being asked of him, is everything clearly defined, including examples and non-examples?
- **Practicality** -- Is it easy to use by both teachers and students?
- **Technical quality/fairness** -- Is it reliable and valid?
- **Sampling** -- How well does the task represent the breadth and depth of the target being assessed?

(p. 220). Rick Stiggins and his co-authors of *Classroom Assessment for Student Learning* (2005)

## Holistic or Analytic?

Task: Write an expository paragraph.

- **Holistic**: One descriptor for the highest score lists all the elements and attributes that are required.
- **Analytic**: Create separate rubrics (levels of accomplishment with descriptors) within the larger one for each subset of skills, all outlined in one chart. Examples for the paragraph prompt: Content, Punctuation and Usage, Supportive Details, Organization, Accuracy, and Use of Relevant Information.

## Holistic or Analytic?

Task: Create a drawing and explanation of atoms.

- **Holistic**: One descriptor for the highest score lists all the features we want them to identify accurately.
- **Analytic**: Create separate rubrics for each subset of features –
  - Anatomical Features: protons, neutrons, electrons and their ceaseless motion, ions, valence
  - Periodic Chart Identifiers: atomic number, mass number, period
  - Relationships and Bonds with other Atoms: isotopes, molecules, shielding, metal/non-metal/metalloid families, bonds – covalent, ionic, and metallic.

Rubric for the Historical Fiction Book Project – Holistic-style

5.0 Standard of Excellence:

- All material relating to the novel was accurate
- Demonstrated full understanding of the story and its characters
- Demonstrated attention to quality and craftsmanship in the product
- Product is a realistic portrayal of media used (examples: postcards look like postcards, calendar looks like a real calendar, placemats can function as real placemats)
- Writing is free of errors in punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and grammar
- Had all components listed for the project as described in the task

4.5, 4.0, 3.5, 3.0, 2.5, 2.0, 1.5, 1.0, .5, and 0 are awarded in cases in which students' projects do not fully achieve all criteria described for excellence. Circled items are areas for improvement.

Keep the important ideas in sight and in mind.

Two Rubric Ideas to Consider:

- Only give the fully written description for the standard of excellence. This way students won't set their sights on something lower.
- 4.0 rubrics carry so much automatic, emotional baggage, parents and students rarely read and internalize the descriptors. Make it easier for them: Use anything except the 4.0 rubric – 2.0, 3.0, 5.0, 6.0.

GRADING

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?

A great example of a Report Card that Reports Academics and Work Habits Separately:

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/forms/report/sec/not1e.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/forms/report/sec/not1e.pdf)

-- from Ken O'Connor's book, *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*, ETS, 2007, p. 21

**“We err gravely when we call compliance and politeness, ‘algebra’ and ‘English,’ or any other label that conflates proficiency with behavior.”**

-- Doug Reeves, 2006 as quoted in the forthcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Ken O'Connor's *How to Grade for Learning*, Corwin Press, 2008)

*Time to Change the Metaphor:*

Grades are NOT compensation.  
Grades are communication: They are an accurate report of what happened.

## Consider...

- Teaching and learning can and do occur without grades.
- We do not give students grades in order to teach them.
- Grades reference summative experiences **only** – cumulative tests, projects, demonstrations, NOT formative experiences.
- Students can learn without grades, but they must have feedback.
- Grades are inferences based upon a sampling of student's work in one snapshot moment in time. As such they are highly subjective and relative.

## 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, 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?

Do we need gradations of failure?

## F or an F?

100-pt. Scale:

0, 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?

Do we need gradations of failure?

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...

A = 100 - 40

B = 39 - 30

C = 29 - 20

D = 19 - 10

F = 9 - 0

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

100	4
90	3
80	2
70	1
60	0
50	-1
40	-2
30	-3
20	-4
10	-5
0	-6

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. Zeroes 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.

“Teachers who accept late work tell me that students are more likely to complete their assignments if they know it will not be graded down. It also communicates to students that all class assignments have a legitimate educational purpose that must be fulfilled.”

-- Forest Gathercoal, *Judicious Discipline* (2004), as quoted in forthcoming Ken O'Connor 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of *How to Grade for Learning*, Corwin Press, 2008)

“We are faced with the irony that a policy that may be grounded in the belief of holding students accountable (giving zeroes) actually allows some students to escape accountability for learning.” -- O'Connor, p. 86

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.*

Are we interested more in holding students accountable  
or making sure they learn?

Avoid, “**learn or I will hurt you**” measures.  
(Nancy Doda)

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

Student	Dimension A	Dimension B	Total Score
1	2	10	12
2	10	2	12
3	6	6	12

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

## Setting Up Gradebooks in a Differentiated Classroom

- Avoid setting up gradebooks according to formats or media used to demonstrate mastery: *tests, quizzes, homework, projects, writings, performances*
- Instead, set up gradebooks according to mastery: *objectives, benchmarks, standards, learner outcomes*

Set up your gradebook into two sections:

<u>Formative</u>	<u>Summative</u>
Assignments and assessments completed on the way to mastery or proficiency	Final declaration of mastery or proficiency

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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

Course: English 9	Standard Descriptor	Standards Rating			
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Standard 1	Usage/Punct/Spelling	-----	-----	-----	-----2.5
Standard 2	Analysis of Literature	-----	-----	-----	-----1.75
Standard 3	Six + 1 Traits of Writing	-----	-----	-----	-----3.25
Standard 4	Reading Comprehension	-----	-----	-----	-----3.25
Standard 5	Listening/Speaking	-----	-----	-----	-----2.0
Standard 6	Research Skills	-----	-----	-----	-----4.0

Additional Comments from Teachers:

Health and Maturity Records for the Grading Period:

For this kind of electronic gradebook and reporting, Robert Marzano and ASCD recommend The Pinnacle Plus system by Excelsior Software.

### Teachers/Parents: Mixed Priorities

- Teachers want to show how students perform against the standards and objectives
- Parents want to know, "Is my child normal, below normal, or above normal?"

*(Based on comments by Grant Wiggins)*

*Design report cards to communicate both.*

Choose the student comment to his parents we hope he will use:

1. "If I could just understand the Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, I could do better on that test."
- (or)
2. "If I could just get four more problems right, I could do better on that test."

### 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. It's also easier for teachers to "hide" behind the grade instead of providing clear evidence of mastery.

### 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)*

Office of Educational Research and Improvement Study (1994):

**Students in impoverished communities that receive high grades in English earn the same scores as C and D students in affluent communities.**

**Math was the same: High grades in impoverished schools equaled only the D students' performance in affluent schools.**

**Accurate grades are based on the most consistent evidence. We look at the pattern of achievement, including central tendency and 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.

### **Allowing Students to Re-do Assignments and Tests for Full Credit:**

- Always, "...at teacher discretion."
- It must be within reason.
- Require parents to sign the original assignment or test, requesting the re-do.
- Require students to submit a plan of study that will enable them to improve their performance the second time around.
- After two attempts, consider postponing future attempts until the student is ready to receive learning or we get a lot more creative.

### **Allow Students to Re-do Assignments and Tests for Full Credit:**

- Identify a day by which time this will be accomplished or the grade is permanent, but be careful with this: If you say the unsatisfactory grade is permanent, you're declaring that the student does not have to learn the material.
- With the student, create a calendar of completion that will help them achieve it.
- Require students to submit original with the re-done version so you can keep track of their development, and occasionally ask students to do an analysis of former and current attempts.
- Reserve the right to give alternative versions
- No-re-do's the last week of the grading period
- Sometimes the greater gift is to deny the option.

### **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.

## Your Own Grading Philosophy Statement

Write a one- to three-page document that describes your grading policies. Write it as if parents, administrators, colleagues, and the School Board would be reading it with a critical eye. Share this document with others.

Your pedagogy becomes real and has impact only after it has been defended and criticized publicly. Otherwise, it's just an opinion or assumption. Our teaching core values are revealed and potentially transformed in the negotiation of these points with others, not in the recording of our thoughts individually.

## GPS Format

1. 1-2 sentence statement of your philosophy. Ex: *"Homework will count 5% 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	The role of alternative assessments
Rubrics	Weighting grades
Modified or adjusted curriculum	The percent influence of varied assessments
Student self-assessment	Dealing with late work
Extra credit	Setting up the gradebook according to categories, assessment formats or standards
What grades mean	Re-doing work or tests for full credit
Definitions of individual grades	The purpose of grades and grading
Grading scales (100 vs 4.0)	
Formative vs summative assessments	
Averaging grades vs using median/mode	
Grading classwork	
Grading homework	
The purpose of homework	
How much curriculum should be on one test and tiering tests	

## Useful New Book:

### ***Assessment Essentials for Standards-Based Education, Second Edition***

By James H. McMillan  
Corwin Press, 2008

## Great New Book on Feedback:

### ***How to Give Feedback to Your Students***

By Susan M. Brookhart  
ASCD 2008

#### Recommended Reading on Assessment and Grading

- Arter, Judith A.; McTighe, Jay. *Scoring Rubrics in the Classroom : Using Performance Criteria for Assessing and Improving Student Performance*, Corwin Press, 2000
- Benjamin, Amy. *Differentiating Instruction: A Guide for Middle and High School Teachers*, Eye on Education, 2002
- Black, Paul; William, Dylan. 1998. "Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 80(2): 139-148
- Borich, Gary D.; Tombari, Martin L. *Educational Assessment for the Elementary and Middle School Classroom (2nd Edition)*, Prentice Hall, 2003
- Brookhart, Susan. 2004. *Grading*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall

#### Recommended Reading on Assessment and Grading

- Fisher, Douglas; Frey, Nancy. *Checking for Understanding: Formative Assessment Techniques for your Classroom*, ASCD, 2007
- [www.exemplars.com](http://www.exemplars.com)
- Heacox, Diane, Ed.D. *Differentiated Instruction in the Regular Classroom, Grades 3 – 12*, Free Spirit Publishing, 2000
- Lewin, Larry; Shoemaker, Betty Jean. *Great Performances: Creating Classroom-Based Assessment Tasks*, John Wiley & Sons, 1998
- Marzano, Robert. *Transforming Classroom Grading*, ASCD 2001
- Marzano, Robert. *Classroom Assessment and Grading that Work*, ASCD 2006
- Marzano, Robert; McTighe, Jay; and Pickering, Debra. *Assessing Student Outcomes: Performance Assessment Using the Dimensions of Learning Model*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1993

#### Recommended Reading

- Millan, James H. *Classroom Assessment: Principles and Practice for Effective Instruction (2nd Edition)*, Allyn & Bacon, 2000
- O'Connor, Ken; *How to Grade for Learning, 2nd Edition*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin Press (3rd edition coming in 2009)
- O'Connor, Ken; A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades, ETS publishers, 2007
- Popham, W. James; *Test Better, Teach Better: The Instructional Role of Assessment*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2003
- Popham, W. James; *Classroom Assessment : What Teachers Need to Know (4th Edition)*, Pearson Education, 2004
- Rutherford, Paula. *Instruction for All Students*, Just ASK Publications, Inc (703) 535-5432, 1998
- Stiggins, Richard J. *Student-Involved Classroom Assessment (3rd Edition)*, Prentice Hall, 2000

- Wiggins, Grant; *Educative assessment: Assessment to Inform and Improve Performance*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997
- Grant Wiggins Web site and organization:  
Center on Learning, Assessment, and School Structure (CLASS)  
[info@classni.org](mailto:info@classni.org) [www.classni.org](http://www.classni.org)  
[gpw@classni.org](mailto:gpw@classni.org)
- Wormeli, Rick. *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessment and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*. Stenhouse Publishers, 2006

**“I was put on earth by God  
in order to accomplish a certain  
number of things...  
right now I am so far behind...  
I will never die!”**

**With all this information,  
you are now immortal 😊**

-Calvin and Hobbes

**“Even a man on the right  
track will get run over if he  
just stands there.”**

-- Will Rogers

**“Don’t let anything hit you in the rear end.”**

-- Rick Wormeli