How to Grade Effectively Resource Bundle

I. How to Grade Effectively Resource

II. References

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## Grading Definition and Criteria

Grades are meant to be accurate representations of what students know and are able to do (Brookhart, 2013; Guskey & Bailey, 2001; Wormeli, 2006). To accomplish this, your grading practices need to be objective, mastery-based, and explainable (Hadayna, 1999; Popham, 2011; Reeves, 2011; Wormeli, 2006).

## Dos and Don’ts

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<tr>
<th>Do:</th>
<th>Don’t:</th>
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<td>Emphasize the importance of learning in your classroom rather than grades. Foster a classroom culture where students are recognized and celebrated for growth and skill mastery rather than letter grades.</td>
<td>Don’t use grades as a means to motivate or, inversely, punish students to do work. Rather, communicate the value of activities or assignments that won’t be graded (e.g. important practice, increasing understanding).</td>
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<td>Ensure that grades accurately reflect a student’s current ability and understanding of an academic topic or concept (the skill of multiplying multi-digit numbers vs. how nice their poster looked that explained multi-digit multiplication).</td>
<td>Don’t factor anything into your grading that is not directly connected to a student’s understanding or skill mastery (e.g. extra credit, participation, effort, assignment tardiness, or zeros for missing assignments).</td>
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<td>Use high quality evidence, like performance tasks or authentic assessments, to inform student grades.</td>
<td>Don’t grade homework unless it’s mandatory. Since most homework does not include live or filmed performance of a student skill, it is not high quality evidence.</td>
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<td>Regularly communicate grading criteria and student progress with students and families. Update grades frequently to best represent a student’s current level of mastery.</td>
<td>Don’t wait until the end of the quarter or semester to surprise students or families with grades.</td>
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<td>Use a mastery-based grading system because it accurately communicates a student’s ability and understanding.</td>
<td>Don’t grade based on a curve. Normative scoring doesn’t communicate what a student knows and fosters unnecessary competition.</td>
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## Alternatives to Giving Zeros

- Give students a grade of ‘incomplete’ for the assignment.
- Allow students more time to complete the original assignment.
- Provide students with an alternative assignment that would demonstrate mastery of the same learning objectives.

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2 Farias, Farias, & Fairfield, 2010
3 Giving a zero for a missing assignment would indicate that the student has no understanding of the content (Wormeli, 2006).
4 Evidence can come from work samples or live performances. To learn more about creating high quality assessments, check out the module Authentic Assessments.
5 To learn about why you shouldn’t grade homework, check out the module The Homework Dilemma.
References


