

GRADING WORKSHOP

TYPES OF GRADING (METHODS OF ASSIGNING GRADES)*

1) Holistic Grading

Assign a grade (based on subjective deliberation), and provide feedback to substantiate the grade (when needed).

2) Competitive Grading

Read all student papers, and place in rank from best to worst. Award higher grades to papers, which demonstrate higher student ability, and award lower grades to papers, which demonstrate lower student ability. Then, for all papers below the higher student ability, provide feedback on a separate sheet. For papers at the top of the grading spectrum, provide positive feedback with a quick comment such as "no changes required" or "no immediate concerns" Note: Providing feedback on a separate sheet is much more specific and asks the students to self-correct, rather than providing "proofreading/editing marks" on the paper itself, which students are simply inclined to change.

3) Rubric Grading

Provide students with a list of criteria for grading showing a range of scores (RUBRIC). Then, grade students according to the rubric.

4) Issue-Based Grading

Compose an entire list of student errors and mistakes. Consider a range (or number of student errors/mistakes allowable to attain a particular grade). For example, A range might allow 4 errors/mistakes, B range might allow 8, etc. As you find a consistent type of error, consider this one error/mistake. Then, add up the total of errors found. DO NOT consider individual errors one... look for patterns. Then provide the student with a list of the types of errors found...

5) Contract Grading

At the beginning of the semester, you may elect to offer "grade contracts" to students. In return for a particular work ethic, you may offer students a particular grade. You must stipulate the criteria for A's, B's, C's, etc, then allow students to choose the grade they want for the class. Students then sign a contract to agree to work towards those grades. For each paper, you may point out how students fail/succeed in meeting their goals (externally or terminally); however, you do not need to provide direct feedback to them on the paper.

6) Standards-Based Grading

You can provide a listing of standards/conditions which point towards a specific grade. For example, an A paper must be: Completely free of run-ons, comma splices, etc. The content must be well-presented. The sources must be correct. etc. B papers must be: somewhat free of run-ons, splices, etc. Content must be fairly well presented. Most of the sources must be correct.

7) Peer Response Grading

Allow the student to obtain feedback from a group of students. Once feedback has been obtained from peers, decide on a holistic grade for the paper.

8) Model-Based Grading

Provide students with models of ideal writing, then allow them to compose papers according to the model as the "Gold Standard." Subjectively grade according to how closely the paper resembles the "Gold Standard." The "Gold Standard" should not be perfect. You might consider using one of your best papers from a previous semester as a realistic standard for comparison. And, you should probably share this paper with your students (but only with the author's permission).

**Recommended Texts: The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing (Glenn, Goldthwaite, Connors); Assigning, Responding, Evaluating: A Writing Teacher's Guide (White)*

GRADING SITUATIONS (SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES FOR GRADING PAPERS)*

1) Teacher-Grading

Grade your own papers however you like.

2) Student-Grading

Allow the students to grade their own papers with the oversight of the instructor. You may choose to conference in order to grade the paper and oversee the student's justification.

3) Peer (Student) Grading

Photocopy the student's paper (removing their name). In another classroom, put students into small groups, Provide the students with a few papers per group, then allow students to decide based on set criteria what the grade will be. Note: The instructor decides the final grade. Furthermore, the student's grade cannot be shared with anyone but the original author.

4) Peer (Colleague) Grading/Norming/Staff Grading

Working with another instructor, allow the other instructor to grade your papers, while grading the other instructor's papers. In a sense, switch papers with a colleague.

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GRADING BY NUMBER (QUANTITATIVE PERSPECTIVES FOR GRADING)

1) Individual Paper Grading

Grade individual paper as they are provided.

2) Unit/Unit Portfolio Grading

Rather than grade papers individually, grade small groups of papers as they are provided.

3) Portfolio Grading

Do not grade single papers. Allow students to submit all of their papers together for one final grade (usually collected at the end of the course).

TYPES OF FEEDBACK (METHODS OF PROVIDING INSIGHT INTO WRITING)*

1) Marginal Comments

Give the students comments in the margins of the paper

2) Terminal Comments

Give students comments in the end of the their paper

3) External Comments

Compose a few paragraphs addressing the shortcomings of their paper on a separate page

4) Proofreading Marks/Cuts/Blood Stains

Grab your red pen, and make the paper bleed! Point directly to problems/concerns/ errors/mistakes with the paper.

5) Conferencing

You can meet with students individually for 5-10 minutes to discuss their performance on the paper.

6) Peer Response Groups

Allow the student to obtain feedback from a group of students.

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GRADING STRUCTURES (QUALITATIVE PERSPECTIVES FOR GRADING OR METHODS OF SUBJECTIVE DELIBERATIONS)

1) Unit-Based Evaluation

Diction/Word Choice

Sentences/Syntax

Paragraphs

Whole Document

Formatting

Source Documentation

2) 6-Trait Writing Evaluation

Ideas

Organization

Voice

Word Choice

Sentence Fluency

Conventions

Presentation

Note: Information for this sort of evaluation is available at numerous teaching sites online.

3) Create Your Own Common Error/Concern Listings

Note: Creating an error/concern list helps you to recognize what qualifies/quantifies good writing). Additionally, you can share this with students to judge more specifically their own work ethics.

GRADING BEHAVIOR (DETERMINING HOW TO DEAL WITH STUDENTS)

1) Positive Reinforcement

Offering mostly positive commentary to provide an incentive for excellence in writing is always good. Credo: Everyone deserves a reward for good work.

2) Negative Reinforcement

Offering critical commentary to make the student aware of their writing concerns is also good. Credo: A little constructive criticism never hurt anyone...

3) Balance Reinforcement

Offering a balance of positive and negative commentary is the most preferable method, where you reward good writing traits and point out not-so-good writing traits. Credo: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

4) Punishment

Being absolutely negative is another way to reach some particular students. We call this "putting the pressure on..." You can refuse to pass them on an initial assignment and reward the student as they show improvement. Credo: They have the right to fail... and, they have the right to pass with hard work.

5) Torture

Make the student rewrite the paper again and again and again, until they have finally resolved all of their issues within the paper. Although this method is not outside the realm of possibilities, we would characterize this method as medieval and somewhat time consuming (for the teacher). Credo: Practice makes perfect.

THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT

The current laws under the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act require that teachers abide by the following:

You may not disclose grades to anyone other than the student. In addition, you should:

- Never post grades publicly
- Never send grades through email (even to the student)
- Never discuss grades with a student's parents
- Never discuss a grade over the phone (even to the student)
- Never send facsimiles of grades
- Again, just to clarify: Never post grades publicly (even with a different identifier, such as a pin number or alternative identification number, code, or other identifier).

You may disclose the grade to the student by doing any of the following:

- +Give the grade to the student (face-to-face)
- +Give the student the grade on their paper (returned directly to the student)

- +Use some other confidential electronic form (such as Blackboard/WebCT My Grade's or My CompLab Grades)
- +Provide the student a slip of paper with their grade on it

You may disclose grades to the following individuals without consent of the student:

- +School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - +Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - +Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - +Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - +Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - +Accrediting organizations;
 - +To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - +Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - +State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.
- (Source: US Department of Education, Family Compliance Office Home)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

FINAL SUGGESTIONS (IN CASE YOU WANTED TO KNOW)

- 1) Keep a copy of all of your grades for as long as you can (paper copies or electronic copies or both).
- 2) Keep sample works and/or student portfolios for at least two years. Then, destroy these writing samples entirely (by shredding them, drowning them, burning them, etc).
- 3) Never use student work for research without the student's permission.
- 4) Return any student work in your possession to the student upon demand.
- 5) Do not sell/copy/distribute/alter any student work publicly without the specific and "exclusive" permission of the student.