Using Grading Strategies to Promote Student Learning

The Hour Ahead
- Grading Done Well
- Educative Assessment
- Grading Systems
- Meaning of a Grade
- Grading at NIU
- Tips and Recommendations

Student Learning and Success
- What does inspirational student learning and success look like to you?

Grading Done Well
- Two Experiences
  - Done Well
  - Done Poorly
- Describe
  - Characteristics
  - Consequences

Audit-ive vs. Educative Assessment
- Conceptualized and articulated by
  - Grant Wiggins, Barbara Walvoord, Virginia Johnson Anderson, and Dee Fink
- Purpose of Assessment
  - Audit-ive: Backward looking for grading
  - Educative: Forward looking for student learning

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Audit-ive vs. Educative Assessment

Educative Assessment Components
1. Forward-Looking Assessment Tasks
   • “What can you do as result of learning a, b, & c?” vs. “We covered topics a, b, & c, did you get it?”
   • Authentic assessments
   • Perform-Receive Feedback-Revise-New Performance
   • A note on homework (practice exercises)
   • Grading Implications

Psychology of Feedback and Assessment
• Assessment has multiple goals
  – Valid information for students and teachers
  – Support students’ ability and desire to learn

2. Appropriate Criteria and Standards
   • We want to see students “Do it Well”
   • What does “Doing it well” mean?
   • Few faculty can identify own criteria and standards
   • Develop rubrics ↔ clarify objectives
     – Criteria are the traits (link to course objectives)
     – Standards are the performance levels (construct a 2- to 5-point scale using descriptions of good and poor performance)
   • Grading Implications

Opportunities for Self-Assessment
• Must learn to self-assess to succeed as an adult
• Steps:
  1. Identify relevant criteria (either told or better yet discovered)
  2. Practice using criteria on other students’ work
  3. Practice using criteria on one’s own work
• Grading Implications

3. Provide FIDeLity Feedback
   • Feedback is inherently evaluative
   • Feedback does NOT become part of grade
   • Done in shared dialogue
   • Frequent
   • Immediate
   • Discriminating (based on criteria and standards)
   • Done Lovingly (or, supportively)

Types of Grading Systems
• All are based on comparisons
  – to people or standards
• Norm-referenced
  – Comparison relative to performance of others
  – Grading on a curve, relative grading
  – Most are C’s, a few are A’s and F’s
• Criterion-referenced
  – Comparison to a preset standard
  – Absolute grading
  – All could get an A
Meaning of a Grade

• What does an A mean?
   And +? or -?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Norm-Referenced</th>
<th>Criterion-Referenced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>Advanced, Mastery of All Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>Advanced, Mastery of All Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Average, Fair</td>
<td>Acceptable, Meets Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Average, Fair</td>
<td>Acceptable, Meets Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>No Mastery of Objectives</td>
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</table>

Grading at NIU

• Undergraduate Grading System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Satisfactory competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Above satisfactory competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Satisfactory competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>Satisfactory level of competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Deficient (will not earn credit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>Marginally satisfactory competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory level of competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tips and Recommendations

1. 3 C's
   – Clarity
   – Consistency
   – Communication
2. Support student success with timely, consistent, informative feedback
3. Graded items should be diverse
4. Reflect the full range of objectives and activities
5. Relative weight of individual items should reflect relative importance
6. Don’t include everything
7. Apply NIU and departmental policies and procedures

Revisiting Grading Done Well

• Revisit your Grading Done Well experience
  – What experiences were illustrated today?
  – Do you feel motivated to share this with your teacher? It would be a wonderful gift.
• What will you do? How will you support student success?
• Any questions, comments, or concerns?

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