

INAPPROPRIATE GRADE CALCULATION

Fix #11 Don't rely only on the mean; consider other measures of central tendency and use professional judgment.

Using the mean actually works against students since extreme outliers distort the result of the calculation. Grading should be an exercise in professional judgment supported by other measures of central tendency if necessary.

Fix #12 Don't include zeros in grade determination when evidence is missing or as punishment; use alternatives, such as reassessing to determine real achievement, or use "I" for Incomplete or Insufficient Evidence.

Using a zero when calculating a series of grades skews the resulting grade and gives an inaccurate picture of the student's progress or achievement.

Alternatives to the use of zeros;

- Utilize a minimum F (50 pts)
- Implement equal difference scales (5-4-3-2-1)
- Use an "I" (Incomplete or Insufficient Evidence). If an "I" is used, a policy needs to be set for what length of time is given to students for completion of the work.



SUPPORTING LEARNING

Fix #13 Don't use information from formative assessments and practice to determine grades; use only summative evidence.

Formative assessment should be used to supply information about the progress of the learning process. This information is important for the development of learning to meet student instructional needs.

Fix #14 Don't summarize evidence accumulated over time when learning is developmental and will grow with time and repeated opportunities; in those instances, emphasize more recent achievement.

When grading over a period of time, determine the performance level desired at the end.

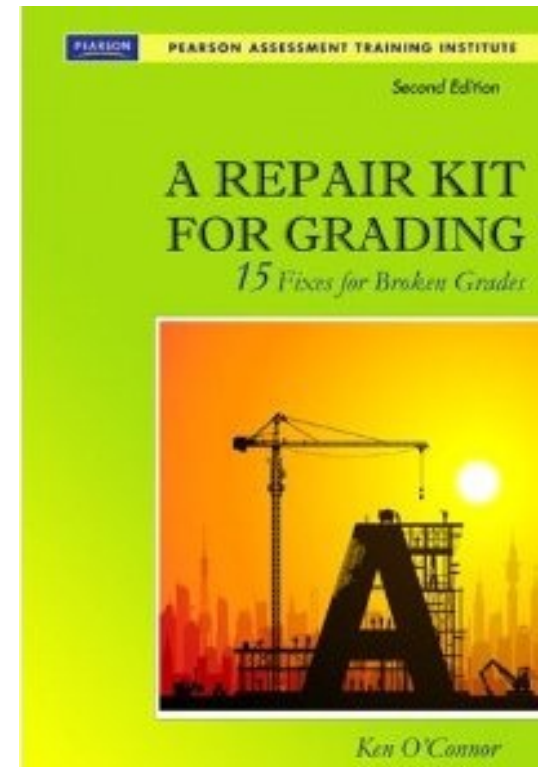
Fix #15 Don't leave students out of the grading process. Involve students; they can—and should—play key roles in assessment and grading that promote achievement.

The more involved the students are, their achievement reaches higher levels and they develop a more positive attitude about school.

There are three ways to involve students. They can assist in the construction of the assessment, they can keep their own records of progress and achievement, and they can participate in student led conferences to communicate their progress.

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15 Fixes for Broken Grades

The goal of each and every school is proficiency for ALL students. Evaluation of student achievement using similar criteria that is applied consistently will help us reach this goal. The following "fixes" will help a school develop a shared vision to support learning with grading practices that are accurate, meaningful, and consistent.



PRACTICES THAT DISTORT ACHIEVEMENT

Fix #1 Don't include student behaviors (effort, participation, adherence to class rules, etc.) in grades; include only achievement.

Grades should be as pure a measure of achievement as possible. Including behaviors does not give students a clear picture of their achievement and/or progress. Behaviors can be reporting variables, but should be reported separately.

Fix #2 Don't reduce marks on "work" submitted late, provide support for the learner.

Penalizing for the behavior of lateness skews the accuracy of the representation of achievement. Develop a supportive approach that directly affects the undesirable behavior and enables the grade to remain a pure measure of achievement.

Fix #3 Don't give points for extra credit or use bonus points; seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement.

Inflating grades using extra points is just about points, not about demonstrating higher levels of performance.

Fix #4 Don't punish academic dishonesty with reduced grades; apply other consequences and reassess to determine actual level of achievement.

Dishonesty is a behavior and should have a behavior consequence. Assessing the student again and recording the actual grade earned would be an academic consequence.

Fix #5 Don't consider attendance in grade determination; report absences separately.

Standards-based systems are based on determining and reporting proficiency, not seat time. Deal with attendance as a behavior variable that can be reported separately.

Fix #6 Don't include group scores in grades; use only individual achievement evidence.

No student's grade should depend on the achievement (or behavior) of other students. Cooperative learning is not an assessment tool, it is a learning activity.



LOW-QUALITY OR POORLY ORGANIZED EVIDENCE

Fix #7 Don't organize information in grading records by assessment methods or simply summarize into a single grade; organize and report evidence by standards/learning goals.

Grades should be based on clear standards and are collected and reported individually to create an accurate picture of a student's strengths and weaknesses.

Fix #8 Don't assign grades using inappropriate or unclear performance standards; provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations.

Identify your expectations for students and establish clearly defined levels of performance. Determine your level of proficiency and establish levels above and below; then define them clearly for the students.

Fix #9 Don't assign grades based on a student's achievement compared to other students. Grade student performance based on clear pre-set criteria that is shared in advance.

Make sure you are using clear and preset criteria to grade students' performance.

Fix #10 Don't rely on evidence gathered using assessments that fail to meet standards of quality; rely only on quality assessments.

Remember the criteria for quality assessments:

- Appropriate and clear targets (Fixes 7 & 8)
- Clear purpose (Fix 13)
- Sound design - right method, well written, well sampled, bias avoided.