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How Grading for Equity Changed the Way I Teach

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Grading for Equity: What, Why and How

Andrew Berns (adberns@cs.uni.edu)
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Welcome!

- We are here because we:
  - Found "Grading for Equity"
  - It made sense; we tried it
  - Liked the results
  - Wanted to share

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- We think/hope you will find it useful

Grading for Equity: *What?*
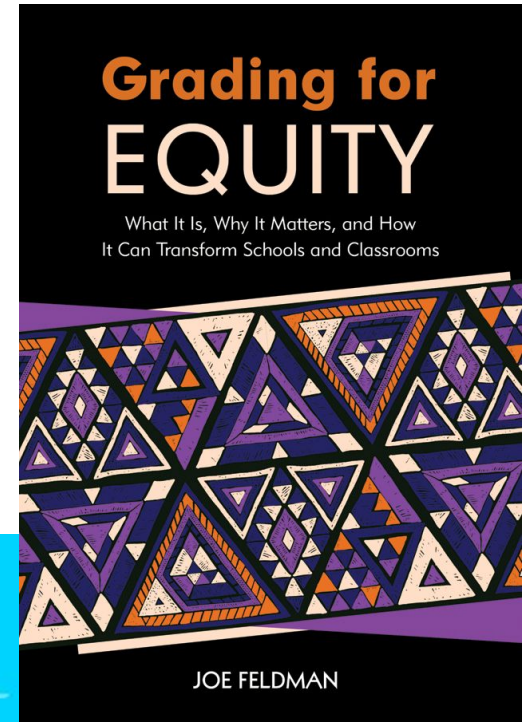
- A book by Joe Feldman (https://gradingforequity.org/)

Grading for EQUITY

What It Is, Why It Matters, and How It Can Transform Schools and Classrooms

JOE FELDMAN

Grading for Equity: *What?*

- A book by Joe Feldman (https://gradingforequity.org/)
- Grading practice that is
  - accurate
  - bias-resistant
  - motivating

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Grading for Equity: _What?_

- A book by Joe Feldman (https://gradingforequity.org/)
- Grading practice that is
  - accurate
  - bias-resistant
  - motivating
  - Outcomes-based (similar to standards-based)
- Addresses both instructional planning and overall grading scheme

Grading for Equity: *__What?__*

- Simply put, it is a grading practice that:
  - Emphasizes capabilities
    - And does so with the understanding that they are learners who are still LEARNING those capabilities
  - De-emphasizes behavior
  - Meets students where they are while attempting to move them forward

Grading for Equity: _**What**_

- Create assessments for each identified outcome set
- Use a small grading scale on assessments
- Allow retakes and/or count later inclusive assessments
- Don't count/grade behavior, homework, extra credit, etc.
- Don't use grade punishments
- Don't average (weight) scores

Grading for Equity: **_Why_**

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- Focus instruction (and grading) on desired outcomes/capability

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Grading for Equity: ***Why***

- Discontinue biased, inaccurate, unmotivating practices
- Focus instruction (and grading) on desired outcomes/capability
- Allow better instructional improvement
- The right thing to do!

Unbiased, Accurate, Motivating

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- Students differ in content background, academic background, culture, personality, life circumstances, …
- Student behavior versus capability, e.g., attendance, participation, penalties (lateness & cheating)
- What is "counted", e.g., homework, attendance & participation, extra credit, …
- Traditional grading advantages some & disadvantages others

Unbiased, _**Accurate**_, Motivating

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  - Averaging/weighting course elements (see examples)

Unbiased, _**Accurate**_, Motivating

Suppose I told you that a student had earned 4 Bs and an F in my class. What do you think is an **accurate** representation of their learning?

	Letter Grade
HW #1	B
HW #2	B
HW #3	F
HW #4	B
HW #5	B
Grade	???

Unbiased, ***Accurate***, Motivating

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Traditional scoring would likely mark this as a D/D+. My guess is almost none of you said that.

	Letter Grade	Score
HW #1	B	85
HW #2	B	85
HW #3	F	0 [missing]
HW #4	B	85
HW #5	B	85
Grade	???	340/5 = 68%

Unbiased, _**Accurate**_, Motivating

The table to the right shows scores for two students that result in similar averages and, thus, the same grades. Do they demonstrate the same capability?

Category	Category Weight	Student 1		Student 2	
		Score	Weighted	Score	Weighted
Homework	30%	80	24	60	18
Exams	50%	60	30	96	48
Participation	20%	100	20	60	12
Extra Credit	5%	100	5	0	0
Weighted Percentage			79		78

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The table to the right shows scores for two students that are identical but with different weightings (different teacher or different semester or …) Should the grades be different?

Category	Student Score	Class X Weight	Class X Score	Class Y Weight	Class Y Score
Homework	80	40%	32	5	4
Exams	60	40%	24	90	54
Participation	90	20%	18	5	4.5
Extra Credit	100	10%	10	5	5
Weighted Percentage			76		67.5

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  - Unequal percentage grade ranges
  - Point/grade granularity
  - Averaging course elements (see example)
  - Using zeros for missing work

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  - Using zeros for missing work
  - Behavioral penalties (late work, cheating, absences)
  - One-and-done assessments

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  - Undermines intrinsic motivation (which is stronger, better for learning)
  - Lowers performance on creative or complex-thinking tasks
  - Increases unethical behavior
  - Low grades cause student withdrawal or low self-esteem (it's punishment)

Questions on the What and Why?

Grading for Equity: ***How?***

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  - Identify outcomes

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    - Identify outcomes
    - Develop assessments

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- Planning is critical
    - Identify outcomes
    - Develop assessments
    - Develop learning activities

Grading for Equity: *How?*

- Planning is critical
    - Identify outcomes
    - Develop assessments
    - Develop learning activities
    - Determine grading scheme

Sample Grading Scheme

One possible grading scheme if all items are scored 0-4 is:

    A: All scores are 3 or 4 with more 4s than 3s

    B: No more than one 2 but offset by at least two 4s

    C: No more than two 2s

    D: Every 1 or 2 is offset by a 3 or 4

    F: None of the above criteria is met

Grading for Equity: *How?*

- Planning is critical
  - Identify outcomes
  - Develop assessments
  - Develop learning activities
  - Determine grading scheme
- Implement & Adjust

Grading for Equity: *__How__*

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Grading for Equity: _**Our Experience**_

- Considerable up-front work
- Re-imagine providing feedback to students
- Less time spent grading
- No arguing over points
- Happier students (and teachers)

Questions/Discussion

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