


Assessments and Grading

A B C ±
D E F ✓
PASS ✓ ○
FAIL ✗ ○

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About the Supporting Organizations



Every Learner Everywhere is a network of twelve partner organizations with expertise in evaluating, implementing, scaling, and measuring the efficacy of education technologies, curriculum and course design strategies, teaching practices, and support services that personalize instruction for students in blended and online learning environments. Our mission is to help institutions use new technology to innovate teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of improving learning outcomes for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students. Our collaborative work aims to advance equity in higher education centers on the transformation of postsecondary teaching and learning. We build capacity in colleges and universities to improve student outcomes with digital learning through direct technical assistance, timely resources and toolkits, and ongoing analysis of institution practices and market trends. For more information about Every Learner Everywhere and its collaborative approach to equitize higher education through digital learning, visit www.everylearnereverywhere.org.



Intentional Futures is a Seattle-based design and strategy studio. We work closely with clients across the public and private sectors to solve hard problems that matter and make big, ambitious ideas come to life. Our core offerings include human-centered strategy, data-driven storytelling, intentional, collective learning, and product design and prototyping. To learn more about iF or see our past work, visit intentionalfutures.com.

Toolkit Overview and Grading Diagnostic



Overview of toolkit and grading diagnostic

Even before COVID-19, postsecondary education has had no shortage of perspectives, theories, and research on how to approach assessment and grading to maximize equity and best support student learning. The sudden, widespread shift to online courses has only accentuated the debates and complexity of how to create authentic and equitable grading and assessments. This kit is to help instructors navigate the myriad choices they will face in rapidly moving to online learning, and cover some best practices and opportunities offered by online adaptive learning in the long-run.

Questions We Hope to Address

- How should I adapt my learning outcomes and goals this semester, in light of the disruption caused by the pandemic? How can I best prepare if I have to teach online indefinitely?
- How can I ensure that my evaluation and assessment of students is as fair and empathetic as possible, given those adapted learning goals and desired outcomes?
- How can I ensure that I am getting my students quality feedback, and that their assessments are helping them learn?
- How can I use the online tools at my disposal to maximize the quality of the efforts described above?



These questions apply both in the immediate term and in the long-run, and we've focused the resources in this toolkit accordingly:

- For the immediate term, take our grading diagnostic below to figure out which grading system is best-suited to your particular situation. From there, you can read our grading assessment considerations when teaching online in a time of great disruption.
- For the long-run, you can then move onto our suggestions under Best Practices for Online Grading and Assessment (pg. 19).

Guiding Values

As you navigate this very challenging time, whatever your resources and whatever experience you may or may not have with online learning, these guiding values can help you orient and prioritize:

- **Know your students.** Now more than ever is the time to connect with your students and create opportunities for feedback from them. Many of your students may feel shy about addressing their access needs or emotional health. Use a diversity of channels to hold space for your students to offer their perspective so a full range of learning and communication styles are accommodated. Weekly surveys, 1:1 check-ins, learning journals, virtual office hours, email, and small group discussions with peers are all ways you can give your students ways to reach you, ask you questions, and tell you what they need.
- **Trust your students.** This is the time to trust your students: trust their evaluation of what they can do, trust them when they bring you limitations, and trust that they're still committed to learning, even if their capacity is reduced.
- **Seek the most equitable path.** When faced with choices for how to adapt your course online (whether it's how to offer feedback, accept assignments, or choosing between synchronous and asynchronous class sessions) ask yourself what option has the lowest barrier for entry (in terms of economic access and ability), the most student choice, and the most flexibility for varying circumstances. This may mean limiting the new tools you introduce, or providing multiple submission formats for one assignment (by mail, by email, by video chat, or text) to accommodate students with varying access to resources.
- **Create compassionate expectations for your students and yourself.** No one wants to be graded on a curve right now. Acknowledge the ways in which this semester isn't like any other, and accept limitations to yours and your students' ability to create continuity. This may mean using assessment forms you never considered before (a video instead of a paper, or open-book problem-based questions instead of multiple choice), removing time-limits on exams, and reducing the number of assignments so that students can complete the work and you can offer substantive, actionable feedback.

NOTE: All content in this toolkit is meant to complement and support guidelines and protocols required by your institution and any national accreditation boards your institution works with. Please set aside any suggestions that contradict recommended procedure from any governing boards you are responsible to.

Pandemic Grading Diagnostic & Key

Diagnostic:

For many, the first step for this term and perhaps future terms is to what extent students can and should be graded as usual. Generally, an instructor can:

- a) Continue with letter grades as usual
- b) Switch entirely to a Pass / No Pass grading system
- c) Switch to Pass / No Pass with letter grades as an option (or vice versa)

Take this diagnostic to determine which grading system you should use through the end of the semester. Each system will come with resources and recommendations.

= Points allotted for each answer

1. My school's policy on grading and assessment is:
 - a. Murky, leaning towards pass / no pass (continue) **1**
 - b. Murky, tending towards continuing as usual (continue) **2**
 - c. Murky, with no clear indication of recommended practices. **3**
 - d. Clear: We will grade as normal. (pgs. 9-12)
 - e. Clear: We are to grade all students pass / no pass. (pgs. 9-12)
 - f. Clear: We are to grade all students pass / no pass, with a letter grade option. (pgs. 9-12)
2. The following percentage of my students have access to the technology they need:
 - a. More than 80% **3**
 - b. Between 40-80% **2**
 - c. Less than 40% **1**

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3. I would characterize the overall economic disruption from coronavirus to my students as:
 - a. Low **3**
 - b. Moderate **2**
 - c. High **1**
4. From conversations with students, I would characterize the psychological impact of this pandemic on them as:
 - a. Low **3**
 - b. Moderate **2**
 - c. High **1**
5. Compared to last semester I would characterize the economic impact of this pandemic on my household as:
 - a. Low **3**
 - b. Moderate **2**
 - c. High **1**
6. Compared to last semester, I would characterize the psychological impact of this pandemic on myself as:
 - a. Low **3**
 - b. Moderate **2**
 - c. High **1**
7. I feel _____ in my ability to translate the content and quality of my course online:
 - a. Very confident **3**
 - b. Moderately confident **2**
 - c. A little insecure **1**
 - d. Doubtful **0**
8. Compared to a normal semester, I have:
 - a. Equal energy, time, and focus to give to my course **3**
 - b. Somewhat less time, energy, and focus to give to my course **2**
 - c. Significantly less time, energy, and focus to give to my course **1**

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9. Compared to a normal semester, my students have:
 - a. Equal energy, time, and focus to give to my course **3**
 - b. Somewhat less time, energy, and focus to give to my course **2**
 - c. Significantly less time, energy, and focus to give to my course **1**
10. Compared to “normal” I feel similarly able to measure student learning outcomes online:
 - a. Strongly Agree **3**
 - b. Moderately agree **2**
 - c. Moderately disagree **1**
 - d. Strongly disagree **0**
11. Compared to “normal” I feel similarly able to provide meaningful feedback to students:
 - a. Strongly Agree **3**
 - b. Moderately agree **2**
 - c. Moderately disagree **1**
 - d. Strongly disagree **0**
12. I feel I have the tools at my disposal to fairly track my students’ progress:
 - a. Strongly Agree **3**
 - b. Moderately agree **2**
 - c. Moderately disagree **1**
 - d. Strongly disagree **0**
13. I feel I have the tools and skills needed to stay connected with my students and support their learning journey:
 - a. Strongly Agree **3**
 - b. Moderately agree **2**
 - c. Moderately disagree **1**
 - d. Strongly disagree **0**

Diagnostic Results / Pros & Cons

Letter Grades

27-39 points

Of the three options, letter grades allow students, faculty and administrators the greatest degree of continuity. However, continuing with a letter grade system comes with huge concerns regarding equity. If you know the pandemic affects your ability to teach as well as you have in prior quarters, or if you know the pandemic is greatly affecting your students' ability to get their work done, make sure you review our Seven Grading Practices and Assessment in the Pandemic practices, to ensure that within this system students have equitable opportunities to learn and succeed. (pg 12)

Advantages:

- Continuity of expectations and evaluation, ease of transition
- Minimal GPA & transcript abnormalities

Challenges:

- Disproportionately disadvantages low-income students, students of color, and any student without adequate technological resources to continue to attend school under current pandemic circumstances.
- Does not account for faculty's limited ability to offer the same level of feedback, assessment, and pedagogical continuity to make a grade received during COVID equatable with a grade received in any other semester.

For more on concrete grading practices for the pandemic, see our Seven Grading Practices for Turbulent Times. (pg 12)

Pass / No Pass

0-12 points

Of the three options, pass / no pass generally introduces the most drastic change in grading practices. In this system, any other factors of student life based on GPA or transcripts need to be accounted for (probation, graduate school applications, scholarships, etc.). While that makes it a greater disruption in continuity, pass / no pass most thoroughly acknowledges the impossibility of continuing the same standards and practice in the midst of the pandemic, and provides the biggest buffer for students and faculty facing new challenges.

Assessments and Grading

Advantages:

- Most equity-minded by putting all students on more equal footing
- Largest margin of forgiveness and flexibility for faculty and students

Challenges:

- Wide variation in how and where the Pass / No pass threshold is set
- Largest possible disruption to GPAs, transcripts, etc.

For more on concrete grading practices for the pandemic, see our Seven Grading Practices for Turbulent Times. // (pg. 12)

Pass / No Pass with a letter grade option

13-26 points

Pass / no pass with a letter grade option is proving to be a popular path for many institutions who want to give students the choice to maintain continuity in their performance, while also offering a more flexible, generous grading system to accommodate students (and faculty) who have limited resources to complete the tasks set ahead of them for the rest of the term.

Advantages:

- Balances equity-minded approach with continuity
- Gives students a choice in how they are graded

Challenges:

- Onus is placed on the students to speak up if they need accommodations
- Wide variation in how and where the Pass / No pass threshold is set

For more on concrete grading practices for the pandemic, see our Seven Grading Practices for Turbulent Times. (pg. 12)

Grading Systems

Letter Grades

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Advantages

- Most equity-minded by putting all students on more equal footing
- Largest margin of forgiveness and flexibility for faculty and students

Challenges

- Wide variation in how and where the Pass / No pass threshold is set
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Pass / No Pass with a Letter Grade Option

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- Gives students a choice in how they are graded

Challenges

- Onus is placed on the students to speak up if they need accommodations
- Wide variation in how and where the Pass / No pass threshold is set

Seven Grading Practices in Turbulent Times



Comparisons of various grading styles

Whether you're still on a letter grade system, pass / no pass, or pass / no pass with a letter grade option, the significant disruption of student life makes it advisable to reconsider grading practices and explore different approaches to making them more accommodating, empathetic, and flexible. Below are a few that other institutions are using, many of which are not mutually exclusive. We've noted the practices that we can recommend across the board, as well as practices that may or may not be advisable depending on what your institution is recommending and what your students need.

*Note: If your school's policy is unclear or the decision has been left up to you, use our **Pandemic Grading Diagnostic** to determine which grading style to use in your school or classroom.*

Practice	Description	Letter	P / NP	P / NP & Letter
<p>Abandon Curves</p> <p><i>Recommended</i></p>	<p>There is already a significant body of scholarship around the drawbacks of grading on a curve. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissociation between grades and actual knowledge or content absorption¹ • Fostering competition between students thereby impeding learning² • Exacerbating underrepresentation of qualified and motivated students in fields like the sciences³ <p>We can imagine how these effects might only be magnified during a global crisis, in which the effects of the pandemic are being felt most acutely by low-income students and students of color, and disparities in accomplishments may reflect a student's access to resources more than their capacity to learn. Instead of using a curve, focus on criterion grading, anonymous grading, and other similar practices that help all students get equal consideration and evaluation.</p>	✓	✓	✓

Assessments and Grading

Practice	Description	Letter	P / NP	P / NP & Letter
<p>Introduce more effort-based grading</p> <p><i>Recommended</i></p>	<p>Redesign a portion of your assessments to be graded on effort, rather than accuracy. While the exact percentage of a grade you give to effort and participation may depend on your learning outcomes and how your assessments help you achieve them, any shift from accuracy-based grades to effort-based ones can help students in a few ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It makes it easier for them to maintain their grades under extraordinary circumstances. • Effort-based grading has been shown to motivate students and energize their interest in learning.⁴ <p>At a time of great precarity, that boost to motivation and self-esteem will help keep students connected. Examples of effort-based assignments include in-class minute-papers or take-home exercises like concept-maps and case studies.⁵ Rather than being graded on accuracy, they're graded on word-count, timely completion, and minimum numbers of references or questions posed.</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>Everything above a D- is P.</p> <p><i>Depends on Institution</i></p>	<p>In this system, student assignments are graded normally, with all grades above 60% or higher designated a Pass, and anything below as No Pass (Williams College). Note an institution could choose to set that threshold at another percentage point.</p>		✓	✓
<p>Universal pass</p> <p><i>Depends on Institution</i></p>	<p>In this system, the lowest possible letter grade is a C. To systematize this, instructors stretch the percentage of the letters so that 80-100 is an A, 60-79 is a B, and any percentage lower than 60 is a C. (Wiley College)</p>	✓	✓	✓

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Practice	Description	Letter	P / NP	P / NP & Letter
A to Z <i>Depends on Institution</i>	In this system, adopted by the New School, everyone receives an A or A-, unless you get an I (more time to complete) or Z (which doesn't show up on your GPA or transcript). Anything above 69% is considered an A / A-, and anything below is considered a Z. (The New School)			✓
The point system <i>Depends on Institution</i>	In this method created by Professor Laura Gibbs (University of Oklahoma), who has been teaching online for several years, each student assignment is accompanied by a rubric in which students allot themselves points for various learning outcomes. (Laura Gibbs: Teaching Without Grading)	✓	✓	✓
Let the students grade themselves <i>Depends on Institution</i>	This method definitely falls under practices considered highly alternative, but they have some advocates from a vocal portion of educators interested in alternative grading methods who are forced to grade but are opposed to it for a variety of reasons. In this system, students are provided with evaluative considerations, and based on that are asked to grade themselves. According to educator Jesse Stommel (University of Mary Washington), in all his years teaching he has seen the full gamut of self-grades, from F all the way to A. (Jesse Stommel: How to Ungrade)	✓	✓	✓

References & notes

¹ Bloom BS. Learning for Mastery. Instruction and Curriculum. Regional Education Laboratory for the Carolinas and Virginia, Topical Papers and Reprints, Number 1. Eval Comment 1(2), 1–11. 1968.

² Seymour E, Hewitt N. Talking about Leaving: Why Undergraduates Leave the Sciences. Boulder, CO: Westview; 1997.

³ Tobias S. They're Not Dumb, They're Different: Stalking the Second Tier. Tucson, AZ: Research Corporation; 1990.

⁴ Schinske, Jeffrey, and Kimberly Tanner. "Teaching More by Grading Less (or Differently)." CBE life sciences education vol. 13,2 (2014): 159-66. doi:10.1187/cbe.cbe-14-03-0054

⁵ Schinske, Jeffrey, and Kimberly Tanner. "Teaching More by Grading Less (or Differently)." CBE life sciences education vol. 13,2 (2014): 159-66. doi:10.1187/cbe.cbe-14-03-0054

Assessment in the Pandemic



Adapting assessment practices during disruption

Below are adjustments to your assessment practices that can help you adapt your assessments in light of current disruption in order to: set compassionate expectations for your students and yourself; learn more about them and how they learn best; and make your assessment practices as equitable as possible for students of varying ability and access needs.

Refine, prioritize, or pare down learning outcomes.

Both you and your students are likely operating at a limited capacity, so ask yourself both what outcomes are absolutely essential, and which assessments are absolutely essential to achieve and measure those outcomes. Be sure to take into account what you feel you have the capacity to adapt to digital learning platforms, and the time and energy you have to continue teaching given whatever stressors may be present in your life because of this crisis.

Communicate your expectations clearly and frequently with your students. Explain to students how completing assignments and assessments help them achieve their learning outcomes.

A lot of your students may be new to adaptive or online assessments. So, as you make changes to your outcomes, assessments, and grading practices or criteria, make sure to clearly communicate with your students, providing them with rubrics and criteria for what is required to pass the class. If you've altered your grading practices and/or criteria, make sure to communicate new thresholds and expectations around those as well. Additionally, because of the wide range of technological access within your class, communicate these expectations across many different channels.

Know your students, and encourage teacher and peer dialogue around learning.

Communicating effectively with your students also means listening to their questions, concerns, and confusion. This is what we call "knowing your students." Students are facing any number of stressors and challenges in continuing their education right now. As you refine and re-examine your learning outcomes, use the wide variety of online tools at your disposal (forums, online questionnaires, email, video chat) to hear from them on their unique learning challenges, what kinds of assessment and feedback work best for them, what they're getting from the course, and where they might be struggling. Formative assessments can be very helpful in opening that dialogue.

Provide them with assessment options, and whenever possible, let them choose which forms of assessment they can manage.

Students will have a wide diversity of access and resource barriers this term, and this is only exaggerated for students who had economic or access barriers before the crisis. By offering multiple channels and forms assignments can take, you help pave wider avenues to success. Some students may not have access to a computer, but they can record a video for a summative assignment on their phone. Maybe others can't email you, but they are able to mail materials in. If you're strapped for time customizing every assignment for every student, consider offering five different assignments that address similar learning outcomes, and ask students to choose three of them over the course of a week or a term. You can also create one assignment that has different submission forums, requirements, and guidelines to accommodate for different technological and access concerns.

Give students detailed, actionable feedback.

Along with communicating whatever modified or continued expectations you may have for your students online, make sure to continue giving detailed, actionable feedback on their work. Instructors are encouraged to consistently provide specific feedback tied to predefined criteria, with opportunities to revise or apply feedback before final submission. Feedback may be corrective and forward-looking, rather than just evaluative. Examples include comments on multiple paper drafts, criterion discussions during 1-on-1 check-ins and regular online quizzes graded on effort only.

Remove time-constraints for online examination, and implement structures that allow for redos, revisions, and flexible deadlines.

Given the widely variable circumstances under which students are completing their work, this is a great moment to alter your assessment practices to have more compassionate, flexible parameters. Timed exams are not recommended given the various access issues students are facing with the pandemic. But untimed exams, open-book problem-sets, and increased opportunities to revise work all help your students develop their understanding of the material while giving them a greater chance at succeeding this quarter.

Balance formative assessment with summative assessment.

Formative assessments are one of the best ways you can boost effort-based grading, know your students, and monitor learning outcomes. Consider which assignments or assessments you currently have scheduled that could serve just as well as a formative, effort-graded assignment. For your summative assessments, think about how you can adapt their form or their constraints to make them more manageable for students at this time.

- **Formative:** To give you ample opportunity to see if your students are learning what they need to be, and to give your students opportunities to develop meta-cognition, you can offer formative assessments like one-minute papers (that ask students to summarize the most important parts of that week's lesson), muddiest point, or one-sentence summaries of the day or week's lesson.

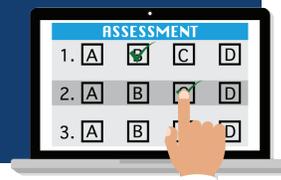
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- **Summative:** Within summative assessment, consider how you might create compassionate expectations for your students, and use the online forum to give them multiple options for completing the assignments. Multiple-choice exams can become open-book, problem-based examinations, and final “papers” can expand to include formative assessments in assignments like portfolios.

Promote positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem.

This is a time of global trauma and uncertainty. If there ever was a time when students needed reassurance (about their learning abilities, their potential, their future) it is now. While you may already prioritize motivational feedback, make sure the feedback you’re providing to students includes motivational, constructive feedback on their work.

Best Practices for Online Grading and Assessment



Strategies for equitable and adaptive learning beyond the crisis

While not one of us would have chosen to immerse ourselves in online and adaptive learning this way, there are nonetheless tremendous opportunities for online learning catalyzing more equitable and authentic assessment practices. Beyond this term and this crisis, there are a few helpful strategies that can make you more effective in your use of online tools, and make your curriculum as a whole more equitable and adaptive through adaptive learning:

Derive assessments from your learning outcomes.

Not all assessments will offer the same value online as they might have in person. As you choose how to structure your assessments, consider how it does or doesn't contribute to your learning outcomes. If you're new to online teaching, this can be a powerful litmus test for determining what kinds of assessments will help you and your students monitor their progress, receive the kind of feedback they need, and practice the skills and knowledge application to grow. It can also help you focus on the best tools and techniques for your syllabus, as you explore new possibilities for assessment that weren't available to you before.

Communicate often with your students. Explain to students how completing assignments and assessments help them achieve their learning outcomes.

Online learning is not the same as face-to-face, so instructors need to ensure that their desired outcomes and assignment expectations are clear. In addition to going over them in class or sending emails, think of how your online tools and assessments can help you reinforce your learning outcomes with your students. Formative assessments are especially useful in this regard, as they encourage students to take ownership of their learning process and develop meta-cognition about what they need to reach their goals.

Know your students, and encourage teacher and peer dialogue around learning.

Students are facing any number of stressors and challenges in continuing their education right now. As you refine and re-examine your learning outcomes, use the wide variety of online tools at your disposal (forums, online questionnaires, email, video chat) to hear from them on their unique learning

challenges, what kinds of assessment and feedback work best for them, and what they're getting from the course. Formative assessments can be very helpful in opening that dialogue.

Prioritize real-world issues and topics (authentic assessments).

Authentic assessment doesn't just help foster student enthusiasm for their projects, it motivates them to engage because they can see the direct relevance of what they're being asked to do. This helps especially with online learning, where you're overcoming geographical distance and other barriers in connecting with your students or getting them excited. But online learning also offers your students the chance to connect with resources, communities, and institutions around the world. Think about how real-world examples and online access can help them apply their thinking to problems that matter most to them, and broaden their understanding of the world they live in.

Encourage research and original thinking instead of memorization.

Online, the world is at students' fingertips. In designing both formative and summative assignments, consider how you can create opportunities for students to develop their critical thinking and research skills over accurate recall of a given set of facts.

Balance formative assessment with summative assessment.

Formative assessments are one of the best ways you can emphasize effort-based grading, know your students, and monitor learning outcomes. Adaptive learning offers great possibilities in this arena because you can tailor the material presented to students based on their performance on formative assessments. Consider which assignments or assessments you currently have scheduled that could serve just as well as a formative, effort-graded assignment, and explore how adaptive learning tools might help you customize materials for students to support them in the areas they need it most.

[Check out this webinar](#) excerpt from Achieve the Dream on effective ways of combining formative and summative assessment online.

Formative assessment best practices:

- Clearly communicate criteria for what defines good performance. Give students the opportunity to ask questions.
- Encourage students' self-reflection, original thinking through short regular check-ins. There are many different forms this could take, but generally these are effort-graded, formative assignments used with students to help them develop meta-cognition about their learning process, and help you learn how they're doing in the course. Students can be assigned daily, weekly, or section-specific entries that the instructor can then review to make sure key outcomes and any lingering questions are getting addressed.
 - Learning journals
 - One-minute papers

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- Muddiest point questionnaire
- One-sentence summary
- Peer-discussions on which kinds of feedback are most helpful for each student.
- Provide detailed, actionable feedback, focusing on corrective and forward-looking rather than evaluative.
- Collect information which can be used to help shape your teaching.
- Administer different types of formative assessment to enable students of different learning styles, access needs, and abilities to assess their own learning progress and needs.

Summative assessment best practices:

Within summative assessment, consider how you might create compassionate expectations for your students, and use the online forum to give them multiple options for completing the assignments. Multiple-choice exams can become open-book, problem-based examinations, and final “papers” can expand to include formative assessments in assignments like portfolios.

Abandon the curve.

There is already a significant body of scholarship around the drawbacks of grading on a curve. They include:

- Dissociation between grades and actual knowledge or content absorption¹
- Fostering competition between students thereby impeding learning²
- Exacerbating underrepresentation of qualified and motivated students in fields like the sciences³

We can imagine how these effects might only be magnified during a global crisis, in which the effects of the pandemic are being felt most acutely by low-income students and students of color, and disparities in accomplishments may reflect a student’s access to resources more than their capacity to learn. Instead of using a curve, focus on criterion grading, anonymous grading, and other similar practices that help all students get equal consideration and evaluation.

Introduce more effort-based grading.

Redesign a portion of your assessments to be graded on effort, rather than accuracy. While the exact percentage of each may depend on your learning outcomes and how your assessments help you achieve them, any shift from accuracy-based assessment to effort-based can help motivate your students. At a time of great precarity, that boost to motivation and self-esteem will help keep students connected. Examples of effort-based assignments include in-class minute-papers or take-home exercises like concept-maps and case studies. Rather than being graded on accuracy, they’re graded on word-count, timely completion, and minimum numbers of references or questions posed.

References & notes

¹ Bloom BS. Learning for Mastery. Instruction and Curriculum. Regional Education Laboratory for the Carolinas and Virginia, Topical Papers and Reprints, Number 1. Eval Comment 1(2), 1–11. 1968.

² Seymour E, Hewitt N. Talking about Leaving: Why Undergraduates Leave the Sciences. Boulder, CO: Westview; 1997.

³ Tobias S. They're Not Dumb, They're Different: Stalking the Second Tier. Tucson, AZ: Research Corporation; 1990.

Links to Resources for Grading and Assessment



Toolkit resource links

Much of the content of this toolkit is derived from the wisdom of some fantastic researchers and educators who have long been thinking about and researching the merits of various approaches to grading and assessment, and how those could be translated or imagined anew online. While a longer list of our resources is available at the end of this toolkit, if you're looking at the next two months (or next six, or eight) wondering how to approach grading, we'd recommend the following five go-to sources:

- **[Rebecca Koenig: "To Grade or Not to Grade"](#)**
Published on EdSurge, this brief article offers an even-handed account of what educators are currently doing and thinking, and offers an overview of how schools are responding and some of the most salient reasons to change grading practices during the pandemic.
- **[Achieving the Dream: Teaching & Learning Through Disruption: Innovative Approaches to Content Delivery and Assessment of Student Learning \(12:58-31:28\)](#)**
While this webinar covers a number of useful topics for teaching online, the 18 minutes highlighted here are specifically for how to approach authentic, online assessment during a time of disruption. The focus here (as we think it should be for most instructors) is on getting fair assessments of student progress and learning outcomes, and doesn't cover grading.
- **[Laura Gibbs: Ungrading in the Pandemic](#)**
Gibbs is a professor who has been teaching online for a number of years, and she has two great resources for teachers and administrators facing a slew of decisions on continuity, grading, and assessment:
 - **[Library of School Responses](#)**: Gibbs has compiled a list of school responses to the pandemic, particularly any changes they are making to grading and assessment.
 - **[Video Series – Ungrading in the pandemic \(Videos 1-4\)](#)**: This series has two useful takeaways: 1) it offers an overview of what different schools are doing, and the implications of nuanced differences in grading policies right now. 2) She takes educators through her own approach to upgrading, which she has been using for several years as a way to submit grades without the trappings of grading.

Assessments and Grading

- [Teaching More by Grading Less](#)

If you're looking for a strong evidence base, this article is a great place to start. It also offers guidelines that can be adapted whatever kind of grading or assessment policy your institution is towing.

Additional External Sources

- [EdSurge](#)
- [Teaching more by Grading Less](#)
- [Petition: Berkeley students ask for Pass/Fail](#)
- [Achieving the Dream Webinar: Teaching & Learning Through Disruption](#)
- Laura Gibbs: Ungrading in the pandemic
 - [Videos](#)
 - [Transcript](#)
 - [Diigo library](#)
- [Jesse Stommel: How to Ungrade](#)
- [Dave Perry Opinion CNN](#)
- [Peter Elbow: Grading Student Writing](#)
- [Peter Elbow: Ranking, Evaluating, Liking](#)
- [Jesse Stommel: How to create an assignment](#)
- [Black Students were hurt most when Wellesley tried to control grade inflation](#)
- [Cathy Davidson: How do we measure what really counts?](#)
- [Canvas: How to grade anonymously](#)