Grading is currently in the news. Grade inflation, grading leniency, contract grading, mastery grading—all of these stimulate heated discussion and cries of dismay.* My own ideas of grading have become somewhat clearer as I have talked to my teaching assistants about grading policies, which may explain why I am less emotional about each of these issues.

First let's agree that grades are fundamentally a method of communication. The question then becomes: What does the professor intend to communicate to whom?

When one puts grading into this context, three things become apparent:

1. Evaluation is a great deal more than giving a grade. In teaching, the major part of evaluation should be in the form of comments on papers, responses to student statements, conversations, and other means of helping students understand where they are and how to do better. A professor giving a course grade is communicating to several groups—the student, professors teaching

* Some definitions:  *Grade inflation* The fact that the average grades in American colleges are now higher than they were 40 years ago.  *Grading leniency* Giving higher grades than are usually assigned for a given level of achievement.
advanced courses, graduate or professional school admissions committees, prospective employers, and so on.

2. What professors communicate by a grade depends on the meaning of the grade to the person reading it—the effect that it has on that person.

3. Professors cannot change the meaning of grades unilaterally. The users' interpretations will be colored by their previous experiences with grades, and they are likely to be disturbed, or to feel that they are being misled, when a professor uses grades in new ways. This explains the strong emotional reaction to so-called grade inflation, and to practices deviating from traditional meanings.

4. The meaning of A's, B's, and C's has changed over the 50 years I have taught. In 1946, C was the average grade. Today, B is more typical.* But this is not a problem as long as those who assign and interpret grades understand the current meaning.

What are grades used for? I suggest that the person reading a grade typically wants information with respect to some decision involving a judgment about the student's future performance. Mastery systems of grading, pass-fail grading, and other alternative systems are resisted because they may not be efficient conveyors of the information useful in predicting future performance. The box that begins below describes how three groups—students, professors, and employers—use grades.

What Do Students, Professors, and Employers Want from Grades?

Students

Students want to be able to use grades to assist them in decisions such as the following:

1. Will I do well if I take additional courses in this field?

Professors

Professors advising the student or determining admissions expect the grade to tell them:

1. Does this student have the motivation, skills, knowledge, and ability needed to do well in advanced courses (insofar as the type of problems dealt with in the earlier course are relevant to the demands of the advanced courses or program)?

2. What kind of person is this? What does the pattern of grades tell us about this student's ability and work habits?

Employers

Similarly, prospective employers want to use grades to assist in decisions about whether or not the student will do well on the job.

1. How well will the student be able to solve problems on jobs related to the area of his or her coursework?

2. Does the overall pattern of grades indicate that this is the sort of person who will do well in our organization?

From this analysis it seems evident that grades are used not just as a historical record of what has happened but rather as information about what the student can do in situations outside the class for which the grade was awarded. For users, the grade is not so much historical as potentially predictive.

DO GRADES PROVIDE INFORMATION USEFUL FOR DECISION MAKING?

One of the arguments against conventional grading is that grades do not provide useful information for the major purposes for which they are usually used.

* While average grades rose in the 1960s and 1970s, there has been no inflation in the past two decades (Adelman, 1999).
Teachers assume that grades have some informational and motivational value for students. Critics, however, argue that the threat of low grades is often a crutch used by poor teachers. Moreover, a heavy emphasis on grades is likely to reduce motivation for further learning and may even result in poorer achievement for those students who are most motivated by grades. In fact, those who achieve the most tend to have moderate grade motivation and high intrinsic motivation (Lin, McKeachie, & Kim, in preparation).

What about information for employers? Probably most human resources psychologists would agree that the best predictor of success on a job is successful performance on a similar job. For a young person entering the job market, the only previous employment has been in low-level part-time jobs. The employer's decision must then depend largely on other information, such as interviews, letters of recommendation, biographical data, family background, and test scores. Each source is only partially adequate. Insofar as the new job involves at least some expenditure for training, it seems likely that grades, representing the result of skills applied in study, learning, and problem solving, will add some useful information, albeit incomplete.

Since grades are commonly used in combination with other variables, however, one should not expect them to correlate with success for those selected. This is not simply a problem that only the top students were selected; it is a simple mathematical truism that, when one uses several selection criteria, each of which has some validity, one should expect low positive, zero, or even negative correlations between any one selection variable and the ultimate criterion of performance. This occurs because one will balance criteria against one another, selecting some people low in other important attributes because they have high grades and vice versa. Thus the common criticism that grades don't predict later performances is largely invalid since most of the studies cited have been carried out in situations where grades and other predictors have already been used in selection.

**COMPETENCY-BASED GRADING**

In competency-based grading, students and instructors develop a written contract about what the student will do to achieve given grade levels. Contracts typically specify papers to be written, books to be read, projects to be completed, and so forth. When linked to appropriate standards, contracts can be very useful. However, if students gain points not for achievement, but rather for carrying out activities that should be conducive to achievement, there may be wide differences in achievement among students who complete the contract. Some will do the minimum necessary, whereas others do excellent work. If contract grading is used, criteria for quality are needed. See Table 8.1.

Assigning grades on the basis of the quantity of work done rather than the degree of competence achieved is not a problem restricted to contract grading. Many instructors subtract points for absences, tardiness, or other things they dislike. In psychology classes, points are sometimes added for participation in research studies. This can be a very dubious grading practice unless it involves some assessment of what the students learned from research participation.

**COMPETENCY-BASED GRADING**

In competency-based, mastery, performance-based, or criterion-referenced systems, the students' grades are based on achievement of specified competencies. This focuses both teachers and students on course objectives and eliminates the negative effects of competition. In principle such systems should be an improvement over more conventional systems of assigning grades. However, there are two problems in implementing a competency-based system:

1. Developing appropriate and comprehensive definitions of the competencies desired
2. Developing adequate criteria for assessing achievement of each competency
ASSIGNING GRADES

Because grades represent to many students a fearsome, mysterious dragon, anxiety can sometimes be reduced by encouraging the students to participate in planning the methods by which grades will be assigned. Students usually can recognize the instructor’s need to conform to college policy in grade distribution, but the dragon seems less threatening if they have helped determine the system by which they are devoured (or rewarded).

Some instructors have gone so far as to let students determine their own grades or to have groups of students grade one another. I like the idea that students should develop the capacity for self-evaluation, but I recognize that many students resist this procedure, either through modesty or fear that they will underrate themselves. If you use it, I’d suggest thorough discussion of the plan with students and an agreed-upon, well-defined set of criteria that all students should use.

Whether or not students participate, you need to be clear about your criteria. Examples of previously graded work may be helpful. Asking students to hand in their own estimates of their grades may help you to motivate them better and may also develop their abilities for self-evaluation.

In general, motivation is not helped simply by giving high grades; nor is it helped by setting very tough standards. Students are most motivated when they feel that they can achieve success with a reasonable effort (Harter, 1978).

In keeping students informed during the course about where they stand, you help them control much of the anxiety they feel when the grading system is indefinite and unstructured. Sometimes it may seem easier to fight off grade-conscious students by being very indefinite about grades, but student morale is better when the students know the situation with which they must cope.

Whatever your grading strategy, being more generous in assigning grades to tests and papers than in the final distribution of grades guarantees visits from aggrieved students. One way in which you get yourself into this position is by providing opportunities for students to omit questions on an exam, to throw out the lowest test grade, or to submit extra work for a higher grade.
Any of these procedures can have some educational justification, but you need to be able to convince administrators or colleagues that the pattern of grades you assign is appropriate for the achievement of your students.

GRADING ON THE CURVE: A MILD REPRISE

In the chapter “Assessing, Testing, and Evaluating,” we talked about grading a test on the curve. Now we extend our discussion to final course grades. One of the persistent controversies in college teaching is whether to grade “on the curve” or in terms of an absolute standard. In fact, these two positions are probably not as far apart as the argument would indicate. Even teachers who grade on the curve are influenced in setting their cutoff points between grades in terms of their feelings about whether this was a good or a poor class. Similarly, teachers who do not grade on the curve set their standards in terms of what previous experience leads them to regard as reasonable accomplishment in the course. As I indicated earlier, I believe that grading on the curve is educationally dysfunctional. If possible, your grades should, both in the students’ eyes and in actuality, be more nearly based on absolute standards than on relative standing in this particular class.

The use of an absolute standard is easier if you have formulated your major and minor objectives and tested their achievement. Travers (1950b) proposed one set of absolute standards:

- A: All major and minor goals achieved.
- B: All major goals achieved; some minor ones not.
- C: All major goals achieved; many minor ones not.
- D: A few major goals achieved, but student is not prepared for advanced work.
- E or F: None of the major goals achieved.

Ideally I should be able to list my goals for the course and at the end of the course have assessed each in such a way that I could use such a criterion-based system. In fact, however, my tests, papers, journals, research studies, and other elements of the

assessment of learning are seldom pure measures of a single goal. For example, my tests assess knowledge and understanding of the major concepts and facts as well as ability to apply and think with these concepts. To separate out each component would be almost impossible. Consequently, I assign points to each test, paper, and other assignment, and give grades on the basis of the total percentage of points earned by the student over the term. This at least avoids the detrimental effects of grading students' performance relative to one another and probably approximates the outcomes described by Travers.

WHAT ABOUT THE STUDENT WHO WANTS A GRADE CHANGED?

If you have kept students informed of their grades on tests, papers, and other graded work during the term, you will have avoided most complaints. But there still may be some. My basic strategy is the same as that used in returning tests or papers: listen first, then go over the criteria used. Try to understand the student’s reasoning. This may be a learning experience for both of you.

If students are worried about their grades in connection with their admission to a specialized school or because they are on probation, I may offer to write a letter to their advisor or other authorities describing their work in detail and pointing out any extenuating circumstances that may have influenced the grade. This may serve to cushion the refusal to change the grade.

In addition, of course, you may try to explain to the students the rationale of grades. Usually this doesn’t seem to do much good. Both students and faculty sometimes confuse two possible criteria on which grades may be based. One of these is the relative amount of progress the student has made in achieving the goals of the course; the other is achievement of the goals of the course at the end of the term. In most classes, research has demonstrated a relatively low correlation between these two criteria. If you were to mark solely on progress, the students who came into the course with the least background might still be the poorest students in the class at the end of the course and get an A for their progress. Most employers, registrars, and professors interpret a grade in terms of
achievement of course goals; hence professors who grade solely on
the students' progress may send the students into advanced courses
or jobs for which they lack the requisite skills and knowledge.

However, progress is also relevant to prediction. A student
who has made a great deal of progress despite a poor background
may do as well in a further course or job as someone with some-
what better performance at the end of the course who made rela-
tively little progress. My own solution is to assign grades
primarily in terms of achievement of course goals (total perfor-
mance), but when a student's total points or overall performance
is close to the boundary between grades, to assign the higher
grade if there has been much progress.

No matter how you grade, some student will be unhappy. Be
sympathetic, but beware! If you begin changing grades, the jum-
gle drums of the campus will soon spread the word. Be sure that
you understand your institution's regulations with respect to
grade changes. Check, too, on procedures that students may use
to appeal capricious grading.

Don't finish reading this chapter with your own anxiety
aroused by the dangers of grading. It is proper that good teachers
should be humble as they see how great is the power they have
over the happiness of their students by printing a simple A, B, C,
or D. Nevertheless, one of the real satisfactions of teaching is giv-
ing a good grade to an ordinarily average student who has come
to life in your course.

A List of Don'ts

These may look absurd, but they have all happened. Avoid mak-
ing the same mistakes.

1. Never give students any idea of what their grades are before
the final examination. The shock of seeing an F as the final
grade will so stun them that they'll be incapable of protest. Or,
better yet, tell them they had A's all the way through the
course and got an A on the final, but you have given too many
A's, so you're giving them B's.

(Cont.)

2. Tell students that you really think they deserved a higher mark,
but that you had to conform to department grading policies
and hence had to grade them lower.

3. Tell students that their grades on the final exam were higher
than their final grades in the course. (Of course, they'll under-
stand that the final examination is only one part of the total
evaluation.)

4. Even though your school doesn't record pluses, tell students
that their grades were D+, C+, or B+. They'll gladly accept the
fact that the C-, B- or A- was only a few points higher and will
be proud that they did better than anyone else who got a D, C,
or B.

5. Tell a student that grades are really very arbitrary, and that you
could have split the B's from the C's in many different places,
and that grades are so unreliable that you really can't distin-
guish your top B student from your low A student. He'll appreci-
ate the aesthetic value of your choice of a cutting point.

RELEVANT RESEARCH

Not only do instructors control the pleasantness or unpleasant-
ness of a good many student hours, but because of their power
to assign grades they can block or facilitate the achievement
of many important goals. The importance of this aspect of
the teacher's role is indicated by studies of supervision in indus-
try. In one such study it was discovered that workers were
most likely to ask a supervisor for help if the supervisor did not
have responsibility for evaluating his subordinates (Ross, 1957).
This implies that, as long as students are anxious about the grades
the instructor will assign, they are likely to avoid exposing their
own ignorance.

Students' anxieties about grades are likely to rise if their
instructor's procedures make them uncertain about what they
must do in order to attain a good grade. For many students,
democratic methods seem unorganized and ambiguous. In an
ordinary course students know they can pass by reading assignments and studying lecture notes, but in an extremely student-centered class they may find that the instructor doesn’t lecture, doesn’t make assignments, and doesn’t even say which student comments are right or wrong. The student simply doesn’t know what the instructor is trying to do. Thus, if your teaching or grading procedures differ from those your students are used to, you need to be especially careful to specify the procedures and criteria used in grading.

Some instructors have thought that the grade problem might be licked by using a cooperative system of grading. Deutsch (1949) found no differences in learning between students in groups graded cooperatively and those graded competitively, although the cooperative groups worked together more smoothly. Following up Deutsch’s work, Haines and McKeachie (1967) also found no significant achievement advantages for students working cooperatively versus those working competitively for grades, but did find marked differences in group morale. Haines’s work suggests that cooperative grading in the discussion can be successfully combined with individual grading on achievement tests. (The chapters “Assessing, Testing, and Evaluation” and “Active Learning” also discuss grading groups.)

IN CONCLUSION

1. Grades are communication devices. Instructors cannot unilaterally change their meaning without distorting the communication process.

2. Grading standards differ from college to college and department to department, but there is some shared sense of the meaning of grades.

Supplementary Reading

The Meaning of College Grades

Paul Dressel (1983) has defined a grade as “an inadequate report of an inaccurate judgment by a biased and variable judge of the extent to which a student has attained an undefined level of mastery of an unknown proportion of an indefinite material (p. 12).” In too-many instances, experienced instructors have heard anecdotal evidence from honest and forthright students that support the accuracy of Dressel’s statement. Is his observation equally true for all course grades? While I think not, I would suggest that a course grade should be viewed as “the alphabetic or numeric symbol representing the end product of an evaluation process used in a specific course, taught by a particular individual, during a specified semester.” Though institutional grading systems typically dictate the particular symbols used (e.g., letter grades, letter grades with pluses and minuses; numbers), individual faculty are responsible for creating the evaluation process used in the courses they teach. Thus, grade definitions are only as informative and precise as the evaluation process allows. Further, in most instances, course grades are unidimensional symbols into which multidimensional judgments made by a faculty member have been cast (Milton, Pollio, and Eison, 1986). Daily attendance, active class participation, the timely submission of assignments, completion of extra credit activities, as well as scores on quizzes, tests, papers, and projects are often used by faculty in rational yet idiosyncratic manners; definitional clarity of grade meanings, for students and other audiences, will be enhanced by complete written disclosure of the learning activities and outcomes used in the computation of course grades.

Problems with Grades as Communication Devices

Jedrey (1982) has claimed, “Grading is an important means of communication with our students... The grade conveys a relatively unambiguous message about a student’s progress, in a universally understood system of academic notation (p. 104).” While few would argue with the thought expressed in Jedrey’s first sentence, objections to Jedrey’s second thought should know no bounds. Communication about the specific meaning of a course grade occurs between faculty and students most often in the privacy of the classroom, but seldom, if ever, is this information communicated to others (e.g., parents, business recruiters, graduate school admission committees). For example, the official 1988-1990 Bulletin of my campus states, “Grades are assigned as follows: A = excellent; B = superior; C = average; D = inferior; F = failure; (p. 33),” “in the absence of additional information provided by the instructor, interpretation of these symbols by a transcript reader is as much a “projection” of the reader’s personal views and experiences as is the “projective” interpretation of the meaning and significance of an inkblot made by a psychiatric patient.

To improve the communication value of grades, faculty must improve the frequency and quality (e.g., depth, breadth, specificity) of feedback provided to students. It has been my experience that most faculty members describe the assignments and other important expectations used to compute course grades; in fewer instances, however, are students provided with illustrative examples of classroom tests or samples of previously graded written work that illustrate qualitative differences in students’ writing. In short, what qualities or characteristics differentiate superior student work from work of average or inferior quality? This information can, and should be, provided to students. It is in this area that individual faculty members can make the most significant improvements and reforms—in the words of K. Patricia Cross (1989), “one class at a time.”

Grades as Motivators

Over 5,000 students enrolled at one large research university, four regional state universities, one liberal arts college and two community colleges completed a self-report inventory designed to assess students’ orientations towards learning and towards grades (Eison and Pollio, 1989). This questionnaire contains the statement, “I think grades provide me a good goal to work toward,” between 73% and 90% of the students in each sample agreed or agreed strongly with this belief! To enhance the motivational impact of course grades, faculty should recognize differences in student orientations towards learning and towards grades and design instructional and evaluative activities that are responsive to these differences.

(Continued on back)
For instance, approximately one out of every two students surveyed agreed with the statement, "I think that without regularly scheduled exams I would not learn and remember very much," almost as many students reported that they "get annoyed when lectures or class presentations are only rehashes of easy reading assignments," and over 85% of the students on each campus reported that they "appreciate the instructor who provides honest and detailed evaluation of my work though such evaluation is sometimes unpleasant." Though student feedback such as this often surprises faculty, its instructional implications are clear. For example, periodic examinations are needed to motivate some but not all, students to study; the vast majority of students, however, desire honest and detailed feedback from instructors. Benjamin DeMott (1988) has asked, "Is not knowing who you're talking to as bad as not knowing what you're talking about?" Faculty members will benefit from efforts to empirically explore the motivational impact of grades and have upon their students.

Problems with Grades as Predictors of Adult Achievement

Because undergraduate grades often influence post-baccalaureate educational and professional opportunities, one must ask, "To what degree do college grades predict adult achievement?" The best available answer to this question of grade validity is found in the results of a recent meta-analysis (Cohen, 1984) of 108 studies correlating college GPA with various criteria of adult achievement (e.g., ratings of job performance, income, promotions, attainment of a graduate degree). The mean correlation for the 108 studies reported was r = .18. While statistically significant, an effect of this magnitude is considered "small." Along similar lines, Samson and colleagues (1984) performed a meta-analysis on 35 studies reporting on the relationship between GPA and occupational performance (e.g., income, job satisfaction, effectiveness ratings) in various fields (e.g., teachers, engineers, business, nursing, medicine, military and civil service) and concluded that "the overall variance accounted for makes grades or test scores nearly useless in predicting occupational effectiveness and satisfaction." Given the consistent and convincing nature of these findings, perhaps faculty members should collectively urge registrars to insert a note of interpretive caution prominently on each students' official transcript for external audiences and should demand that institutions place less reliance on the GPA as the primary measure of student achievement for internal decision making such as the awarding of honors.

Concluding Thoughts

Though grades are an issue that won't go away, the life-force of higher education is good clear thinking followed by good clear decisions (Milton, Pollio and Eison, 1986). Dispelling common myths and misunderstandings about grades, and thinking critically about how to best use grades to promote learning are significant challenges that faculty must face; examination of the works cited below can help guide one's deliberations.

Professor Eison
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References
Soul Search: Are You More Grade Oriented Than Your Students?

Who could be more grade-oriented than our students? Not very long ago I had a student who appeared about to have a stroke because he felt an action taken by another group robbed him of five possible BONUS points on an assignment worth over 100 points. His face was red, his voice angry, and his rage heartfelt. Nothing I said helped him put some perspective around what had happened. Finally in desperation I said, “Brett, if it’s the end of the semester and you’re five points from the grade you’ve earned, I’ll give you that grade. Let it go and think about what you’ve learned in the assignment.” He seemed more inclined to think about what kind of a teacher would cave in and let him “win” in this difficult and unfair situation.

With students it’s forever and always about the points — or so it seems. For those of us committed to learning, no bigger obstacle stands in front of our efforts to get students thinking about, interested in, and committed to learning. And this problem is clearly a student problem — or is it? Perhaps not, if we believe the results of a series of studies, undertaken by the same research team and all exploring “the positive and negative values that students and instructors attach to learning and grade orientations.” (p. 86)

The researchers conducted three studies using a previously developed instrument designed to measure learning and grade orientations of students and using a more recently developed instrument designed to measure the same orientations as perceived by instructors. In the first study, researchers attempted to measure the extent to which students are dissatisfied with their own orientations. The second study looked at the student opinions as to the emphasis they believe instructors place on learning or grades. And a final study analyzed professors’ opinions as to the learning or grade orientation of students. Taken together, the results show an interesting pattern of finger pointing.

The researchers indicate, based on the first study, “that most students would like to be different than they are now; in fact, 97% of students would like to be more LO [learning oriented].” (p. 89) And that finding is further buttressed by results from the second inquiry in which “students clearly and emphatically regard the ideal professor as more learning oriented than the typical professor.” (p. 93)

The researchers go on to explain in a compelling way how it is students might conclude faculty are more interested in grades than learning. “Almost every syllabus contains descriptions of how grades are calculated; few address the need to find excitement in course material. Colleges regularly establish remedial classes for students receiving poor grades; they rarely, if ever, offer remedial instruction for students unable to find excitement in English literature or physics. Grades are a required part of every class, but instructors are not obliged to stimulate interest in course content. In fact, it is possible for someone to teach for an entire career and not excite interest in his or her discipline; any instructor who failed to assign grades would be dismissed after only a short tenure.” (p. 93)

Results of the third study were as we might anticipate. “Most instructors reported their ideal student would be less, and not more, grade oriented.” Taking results of the three studies together the researchers write, “Basically, the present situation seems to be that both students and professors want the same changes — stronger emphasis on learning, weaker emphasis on grades — and both seem to hold the other responsible for the present, less than ideal situation.” (p. 98)

Discussion of the results is an especially strong part of this research article. Authors speculate as to why students and instructors “misjudge” the value each other place on learning and grades. Even more importantly they explore what might be done to correct these misjudgments. They recommend dialogue that encourages students and faculty to view the classroom from the perspective of each other. They challenge faculty to look beyond the short term benefits that accrue from always using grades to “prod reluctant students to study” (p. 99) and see that the ultimate “cost of using grades to induce learning may result in college graduates who seldom learn intellectually challenging material just for the fun of it, and “learning not to learn” may become the most long-lasting lesson of a college education.” (p. 100) What tragic irony if learning not to learn is the lesson we end up teaching.


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Grades: What Students Expect and What They Get

Most of us know there's a serious disconnect between our goals and expectations for grades and those of our students. But we might be surprised to learn just how far apart we are. Jane Gaultney and Arnie Cann surveyed 220 students enrolled in large introductory psychology classes to discover their motivations and goals regarding preferences for course requirements and evaluation methods. The results are not cause for celebration. Here are some highlights:

- When asked what they hoped to accomplish by taking the course, 61% said good grades; 22% hoped to learn new information that they could apply in life.
- 44% prefer fun or interesting academic tasks, followed by 20% who prefer ones on which they'll get a good grade as compared with 15% who prefer ones that let them learn something new.
- 53% prefer multiple-choice tests, 10% essay tests.
- 83% think grades should be determined by a curve or modified curve, leaving the remaining 17% in favor of preset cutoffs.

The survey also questioned students about fair grade distributions and found that students thought that A's, B's, and C's should each make up a bit less than one-third of the grades in a class. And when calculating grades, they thought mastery of the material should count the most, followed by effort, attendance, participation, and extra credit. They weighted each of these items using a 10-point scale, giving mastery a mean score of 4.29 and effort 3.80 — so what you learn is worth just a bit more than how hard you work to learn it.

Most students (71%) reported that they generally did get the grade they expected, but when they were surprised, for 58% it was because the grade was lower. And when the grade was lower, 74% believed it was because the professor failed to take into account the effort they had expended. However, in response to another question asking students how accurately they thought faculty could assess effort, out of a possible 8 points, the mean was 3.68, below the midpoint.

The researchers conclude: “Overall, these students’ preferences describe a set of conditions almost guaranteed to create high levels of dissatisfaction with the outcomes of instruction.” (p. 87) The data offer intriguing examples. Students report that they want to be graded on a curve but what they believe equals a fair grade distribution is not close to how grades would fall across a “normal” curve. Students want assignments that are fun and interesting and yet they believe mastery of the material should be weighted most heavily when the instructor assesses their work. “Only if developing mastery can be consistently fun or easy will they be pleased with the process.” (p. 87)

Finally they think effort ought to count but in other responses do not indicate a high degree of confidence in faculty ability to assess effort.

The researchers recommend that faculty take time at the beginning of the course to clarify evaluation processes and procedures they will use as a way of helping students to develop more accurate expectations. We see it as a means of narrowing the disconnect between expectations and reality.