COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: Grading and Reporting for All Students

Presenters: Thomas R. Guskey and Lee Ann Jung

Hours: 30

Course Overview

While educational objectives and strategies have changed dramatically over the last century, grading practices have not kept up. Many experts in the field and practitioners find that current systems result in grades that are inaccurate, unfair, and often meaningless in what they communicate to their audiences. This course will help educators assess their grading practices and make modifications based on standards-based grading that provide students, their parents, and their teachers with precise information about where the student is succeeding and where he or she is struggling and what the teacher and student need to do differently to facilitate that student's continued achievement. Expert presenters Thomas Guskey and Lee Ann Jung look closely at tradition systems like percentages and letter grades, averaging, and assigning zeros that they argue fail students. They detail an Inclusive Grading Model that will enable educators to assess all their students—including such exceptional students as students with learning disabilities, English language learners, and gifted students—in a manner that serves those whom they should serve most: the students themselves.

Presenters' Bios

Thomas R. Guskey, Ph.D., is Professor of Educational Psychology in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky. A graduate of the University of Chicago, he began his career in education as a middle school teacher, served as an administrator in Chicago Public Schools, and was the first Director of the *Center for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning*, a national educational research center. He is the author/editor of 18 books, over 200 published articles, and in 2010 was awarded the Distinguished Achievement Award by the Association of Educational Publishers. Dr. Guskey served on the Policy Research Team of the *National Commission on Teaching & America's Future*, on the Task Force to develop the *National Standards for Staff Development*, and in 2009 was named a Fellow in the American Educational Research Association, which also honored him in 2006 for his outstanding contribution relating research to practice. His most recent books include *Developing Standards-Based Report Cards* (2010), *Practical Solutions for Serious Problems in Standards-Based Grading* (Ed.) (2009), *The Principal as Assessment Leader* (Ed.) (2009), *The Teacher as Assessment Leader* (Ed.) (2009), *and Benjamin S. Bloom: Portraits of an Educator* (Ed.) (2006).

Lee Ann Jung is Associate Professor of Special Education at the University of Kentucky. Dr. Jung is a graduate of Auburn University and has worked in the field of special education since 1994 as a teacher, administrator, consultant, and researcher. She is a national presenter on topics of family involvement, inclusion, IEP/IFSP development, and grading and reporting progress of exceptional learners. She has authored more than 30 journal articles and book chapters and has received in excess of $3 million in funding to support personnel preparation and research. She is an editorial board member for three special education journals and has served as guest editor for *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education.* Dr. Jung was named "Outstanding Junior Faculty Researcher" at the University of Kentucky in

2002. She serves on the governor-appointed council that advises Kentucky's Cabinet for Health and Family Services on matters of providing special education services to young children.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, educators will know:

- Aspects of the history of grading in the US to date
- The purpose(s) of grading
- Recommended grading methods
- The drawbacks of averaging, assigning zeros, and grading on the curve
- The distinctions between the learning criteria of product, process, and progress
- The Inclusive Grading Model as a method for grading struggling and other exceptional learners
- Methods for effective communication with parents and other audiences

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, educators will apply the following skills:

- Articulate a clear purpose for grades
- Utilize a standards-based grading system
- Distinguish product from process from progress on report cards
- Make modifications and accommodations for students as necessary
- Adopt the Inclusive Grading Model to ensure they are grading all students, including those who struggle, accurately and fairly
- Improve communications with parents and other audiences

Unit 1: Introduction

In this unit, presenters Tom Guskey and Liane Jung challenge participants to consider the purpose of grading, what aspects of student performance teachers do and should consider in determining the grades they assign, and why the lack of consensus among teachers with regard to these issues leads to confusion among students and parents about the meaning of grades.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:
Different purposes for grades

- What to incorporate into grades

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Determine why they grade
- Clarify what they include in grades

Unit 2: Grading Methods

In this unit, the presenters and participants explore such issues as the strengths and weaknesses of letter and percentage grades and how to incorporate standards into a standards-based report card. Participants will review the structure of their own report cards and explore methods of making them more informative, accurate, and fair.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Methods for incorporating standards into report cards
- The strengths and weaknesses of different ways of determining grades

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Begin to incorporate standards into report cards
- Evaluate current methods of determining grades

Unit 3: Text-based unit: "Computerized Gradebooks and the Myth of Objectivity"

Participants read "Computerized Gradebooks and the Myth of Objectivity," about what role computerized grading programs can play and what teachers must still do to offer accurate and fair grades, and then respond to relevant reflection questions.

Unit 4: Challenging Traditions

This unit explores the questionable practices of averaging, assigning zeros, and grading on a curve. The presenters and participants consider why these practices prevail and what the alternatives are. They also scrutinize the impact of D's and F's on students and question the appropriateness of selection of a valedictorian. Finally, participants engage in a discussion of how to clarify for students (and parents) what exemplary work looks like.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Alternatives to averaging, assigning zeros, and grading on a curve
- The problems with D's and F's
- How to communicate what constitutes exemplary work

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Change their approach to grading to make them more accurate, informative, and fair
- Communicate to students what constitutes exemplary work

Unit 5: Distinguishing Learning Criteria

In this unit, the presenters and workshop participants discuss different learning criteria used to determine grades and how to effectively report on each. Participants grapple with the distinctions among product, process, and progress, and explore methods for responding to all three.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Different learning criteria appropriate to report on
- Distinctions among product, process, and progress

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Distinguish between product, process, and progress
- Report on each learning criteria separately

Unit 6: Text-based unit: "Helping Standards Make the Grade"

Participants read "Helping Standards Make the Grade," an article about what grading systems educators need to adopt in order to show how students are measuring up to standards, and then respond to relevant reflection questions.

Unit 7: Text-based unit: "Grading Exceptional Learners"

Participants read "Grading Exceptional Leaders," an article about what constitutes a high-quality grading and reporting system for exceptional learners, and then respond to relevant reflection questions.

Unit 8: Challenges of Grading Struggling Learners

Grading exceptional students (e.g., students with disabilities, English language learners, and those receiving interventions in an RTI model) poses particular challenges for educators. In this unit, the presenters and participants explore what they have done in the past and how to change their practice to better assist and communicate with these struggling students in the future.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Methods for grading exceptional students

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Use different methods for grading exceptional students
- Improve the accuracy and fairness of grades for exceptional students

Unit 9: The Inclusive Grading Model

Presenters Guskey and Jung introduce their Inclusive Grading Model in this unit, working with participants to select and modify standards for struggling students. They explore the differences between accommodations and modifications and how they affect grading practices. They also review the Intervention and Progress Record document, designed to facilitate teachers' articulation of goals for struggling students and development of appropriate interventions.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- The Inclusive Grading Model
- Accommodations vs. modifications
- The Intervention and Progress Record

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Use the Inclusive Grading Model to assist struggling students
- Distinguish accommodations from modifications
- Use the Intervention and Progress Record
- Develop appropriate interventions for struggling students based on data

Unit 10: Text-based unit: "Making the Most of Progress Monitoring"

Participants read "Making the Most of Progress Monitoring," an article outlining the authors' sample intervention plan and respond to relevant reflection questions.

Unit 11: Other Forms of Communicating

In this unit, the presenters and participants scrutinize how they currently communicate information about student learning to students, parents, and other audiences, and how they can improve and extend those communications.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Methods for communicating about student learning

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Communicate more effectively with various audiences about student learning

Unit 12: Text-based unit: Office of Civil Rights Letter and "The Communication Challenge of Standards-Based Reporting"

Participants read a letter from the Office of Civil Rights about grading and reporting on the achievements of exceptional students as well as "The Communication Challenge of Standards-Based Reporting" about overcoming communications challenges with parents as letter grades are replaced by standards-based reporting systems, and then respond to relevant reflection questions.

Unit 13: Leading Change

In this unit, the presenters and participants consider recommendations for how teachers and school leaders can lead efforts to reform grading policies and practices. They explore the effects that standards-based grading has had on both teachers and their students.

Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:
- Teachers' and administrators' roles in facilitating standards-based grading
- The effects of standards-based grading on teachers and students

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Facilitate a shift to standards-based grading for their students and peers

Unit 14: Text-based unit: "Five Obstacles to Grading Reform"

Participants read "Five Obstacles to Grading Reform" in which Guskey argues that "education leaders must recognize obstacles to grading reform that are rooted in tradition—and then meet them head on." They then respond to relevant reflection questions.

Methods of Instruction

- Videos (presentations consisting of lecture, activities, and classroom footage)
- Text (units based on required reading)
- Reflection questions (open-ended questions at intervals throughout the video presentations where participants are asked to reflect on the course content, their own practice, and intentions for their practice)
- Quizzes (selected-response quizzes to assess understanding of the video presentations)

Plagiarism Policy

KDS recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as one's own and includes failing to cite sources for others' ideas, copying material from books or the Internet (including lesson plans and rubrics), and handing in work written by someone other than the participant. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and may have additional consequences. For more information about plagiarism and guidelines for appropriate citation, consult plagiarism.org.

Passing Requirements:

In order to complete the requirements of the course, the participant must complete all course work. We do not award partial credit.

- Quizzes   40% of total grade
- Reflection Questions   60% of total grade

KDS Self-Assessment Rubric:

	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Quizzes	100% Correct	80% Correct	60% Correct	0-40% Correct

	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Reflection Questions	Participant provides rich detail from the content of the course in his or her responses Participant makes his or her responses to the questions personally meaningful	Participant includes appropriate content from the course in his or her responses Participant makes thoughtful comments in direct response to the questions	Participant includes some content from the course, usually appropriate, in his or her responses Participant answers the questions directly, not always fully	Participant includes no content from the course in his or her responses Participant does not address the questions posed