Syllabus

Course: Grading and Reporting for All Students
Presenters: Thomas R. Guskey and Lee Ann Jung
Number of credits: 1

From the Resource tab in the eClassroom, please download and read the “Expanded Syllabus” which includes your grading rubric and the KDS plagiarism policy.

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.

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

Units

1. Introduction

Overview

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

2. Grading Methods

Overview

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

3. Challenging Traditions

**Overview**

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

4. Distinguishing Learning Criteria

**Overview**

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

5. Challenges of Grading Struggling Learners

Overview

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

6. 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

7. Other Forms of Communicating

**Overview**

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

8. Leading Change

**Overview**

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

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.

Methods of Instruction:

- Videos (presentations consisting of lecture, interviews, and classroom footage)
- 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 their intentions for their practice)
- Quizzes (selected-response quizzes to assess understanding of the video presentations)
- Optional discussion forum (prompts after each unit that engage participants in online dialogue with their cohorts)
- Final (a sustained reflection on an overarching final question)
All steps listed under each topic must be completed to receive credit for the course. No partial credit is given.

Plagiarism Policy

KDS recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the dishonest 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, 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.

KDS Rubric for Letter Grade Courses: 1 Credit

Percentage of Course Credit

- Quizzes 10%
- Reflection questions 30%
- Final 60%

A: 90 - 100 points
B: 80 - 89 points
C: 70 - 79 points
F: Fewer than 70 points

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<td>The assignment is substantially incomplete</td>
<td>Many requirements met, but a few pieces are missing, while others are underdeveloped—e.g., missing reflection or rubric or scant reflection and vague rubric</td>
<td>Participant has fulfilled all the requirements of the assignment</td>
<td>Participant has fulfilled all the requirements of the assignment with marked creativity, intelligence, and thoughtfulness</td>
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<td>-No main idea and/or main idea is irrelevant to the assignment</td>
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<td>-No apparent paragraph organization</td>
<td>-Relevance to main idea of supporting paragraphs is not always clear</td>
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<td>-No supporting evidence for supporting ideas</td>
<td>-Supporting ideas are only minimally illustrated by examples or quotes</td>
<td>-Supporting ideas are evident, and usually include illustrating examples and/or quotes</td>
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<td>-No evidence in the lesson plan—in objectives, activities, or assessments—that the learner comprehends the course content</td>
<td>-The lesson plan does not show enough evidence that the learner understands the course content. Objectives and/or activities and/or assessments only vaguely apply to the course content</td>
<td>-The lesson plan shows evidence of understanding of the course content in its objectives, activities, and/or assessments</td>
<td>-Lesson plan shows evidence of a deep understanding of course content and participant uses that understanding to create opportunities for students to authentically show what they have learned</td>
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**KDS Rubric for Pass/Fail Option: 1 Credit**

Passing Requirements: 70 points or higher