

Assessment Ideas

The 15 Fixes

From: *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for Broken Grades*. O'Connor, K. (2011).

Fixes for Practices That Distort Achievement:

DO NOT include student behaviors (effort, participation, adherence to class rules, etc.) in grades	BUT RATHER, include only achievement.
DO NOT reduce marks on “work” submitted late	BUT RATHER, provide support for the learner.
DO NOT give points for extra credit or use bonus points	BUT RATHER, seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement of standard.
DO NOT punish academic dishonesty with reduced grades	BUT RATHER, apply other consequences and reassess to determine actual level of achievement.
DO NOT consider attendance in grade determination	BUT RATHER, report absences separately.
DO NOT include group scores in grades	BUT RATHER, use only individual achievement evidence.

Fixes for Low-Quality or Poorly Organized Evidence:

DO NOT organize information in grading records by assessment methods or simply summarize into a single grade	BUT RATHER, organize and report evidence by standards/learning goals.
DO NOT assign grades using inappropriate or unclear performance standards	BUT RATHER, provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations.
DO NOT assign grades based on student’s achievement compared to other students	BUT RATHER, compare each student’s performance to preset standards.
DO NOT rely on evidence gathered using assessments that fail to meet standards of quality	BUT RATHER, rely only on quality assessments.

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Fixes for Inappropriate Grade Calculation:

DO NOT rely only on the mean (average)	BUT RATHER, consider other measures of central tendency such as mode and median and use professional judgment.
DO NOT include zeroes in grade determination when evidence is missing or as punishment	BUT RATHER, use alternatives, such as reassessing to determine real achievement, or use "I" for incomplete or Insufficient Evidence.

Fixes to Support Learning:

DO NOT use information from formative assessments and practice to determine grades	BUT RATHER, use only summative evidence.
DO NOT summarize evidence accumulated over time when learning is developmental and will grow with time and repeated opportunities	BUT RATHER, in those instances, emphasize more recent achievement.
DO NOT leave students out of the grading process	BUT RATHER, involve students with self-assessments and ideas on grading and assessment.

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Summative Assessment Self-Evaluation

Subject(s) you teach: _____ Grade Level: _____ Years of Experience: _____	0 = Not at all 1 = Somewhat 2 = Often 3 = Almost Always
1. I give my students several small quizzes before the large summative assessment.	
2. I change summative assessment dates when I know many students aren't ready for it.	
3. I ask my students to do some type of self-evaluation after their tests have been graded and given back to them. (Kind of treat it like a formative assessment)	
4. I reflect on my teaching/lessons after summatives since my students' achievement on these assessments correlate with the quality of my teaching.	
5. I give my students opportunities to retake tests or quizzes.	
6. I spend some time teaching my students HOW to study for quizzes and tests.	
7. Summative assessments are not just tests in my classroom, but also a variety of products to assess the big picture of learning at the end of the unit.	
8. My students track their own summative scores via a graph and set goals for the next summative.	
9. I differentiate assessments by doing the following:	
10. A goal for my classroom to support powerful, success-for-all summative assessments is...	

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How To Create a Great Test

***Remember that summative assessments should also include products rather than just big end-of-unit tests.**

1. Make sure outcomes are clumped together on the unit test so that students, parents, and teachers can see which areas still need continued practice.
2. Vary the assessment formats and mix traditional with non-traditional formats: question-answer, observations, conferences with student, interviews, multiple choice, essays, T or F with Support, matching, cloze, analogies, drawings, analyzing real-life applications, critiquing others' performances or responses, etc.
3. Assessment must provide accurate evidence of student learning of the standards/outcomes.
4. The format should mimic how the students practiced it during the lesson.
5. The assessment should not have surprises unless you have prepared them for the "extra" information.
6. The assessment should provide data that allows the teacher to continue to change instruction and reinforce or support the learning.
7. The assessment should be modified based on IEPs, 504s, and ELL needs.
8. Tests should measure the standards. How can you differentiate a test? Provide choice in questions; provide choice in format; change the formats based on the special needs of students.; provide a more challenging test that includes synthesizing the information on the regular test (let's talk about how to grade these); etc.

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Summative Assessment Research

INTERESTING: When tests are not accompanied by feedback, some items (those that were not correctly retrieved) might not benefit from the testing (Pashler, 2005). If students get an item wrong, they **NEED** feedback to correct the learning.

IMPLICATION: After summative tests, the formative assessment process should still occur! Create a personal assignment that students complete for each incorrect item on their test:

1. Write about the approach they took to answer that item (what they were thinking).
2. Write about how their brain came up with the wrong answer (why they got it wrong – may need peer or teacher assistance)
3. Write about what they would do differently the next time.

*Give student partial credit for each debriefed corrected answer.

Pointers:

- More short, quick quizzes and less **LARGE** summative assessments!
- If students do well on the quizzes, they should do well on the summative assessment.
- Take the time to correct and reteach quiz items. Encourage all students to retake quizzes if they receive a 70% or below – after all, that is not mastery!

Show students how to study for these quizzes. Study small chunks of information along the learning journey.

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Big Questions to Discuss with Leaders at Your School

By: Rick Wormeli (Workshop: Grading in the 21st Century: Create a Plan for Your School, NASSP, 2011)

- Why do we grade students?
- What does a grade mean?
- Does our current approaches best serve students?
- How does assessment inform our practice?
- How do we communicate with our parents? Is it effective? Why or why not?
- Is what we're doing fair and developmentally appropriate?
- How can we counter the negative impact of poverty on our students' learning?
- What role does practice play in mastery?
- What is mastery for each curriculum we teach?
- What is homework, and how much should it count in the overall grade?
- How are our current structures limiting us?
- Whose voice is not heard in our deliberations?
- What evidence of mastery will we accept?
- What do we know about differentiated practices and the latest in cognitive theory and how are those aspects manifested in our classrooms? If not, why not?
- Are we mired in complacency?
- Are we doing things just to perpetuate what has always been done?
- Does our report card express what we're doing in the classroom?
- How are modern classrooms different from classrooms 30 years ago?
- What will our practice look like in 15 year from now?