Grading Philosophies

Faculty Development Workshop
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What purpose do grades serve at the university level?

Defining Grades

"A" means distinctive work (rare--unusually effective, creative, comprehensive)

"B" means very good work (clearly above average--not just correct or competent)

"C" means satisfactory work (average, typical, competent)

"D" means unsatisfactory but passing work (flawed, weak, below average, minimal)

"F" means failing work (seriously flawed, incompetent)

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What is a reasonable class average?

•For a lecture class?

•For a seminar-style class?

•For a lab class?

•What is your target average for an exam? Why?
How should a student interpret a grade of 68%
on your exam? How do they know?

•Does the department have any actual policies?
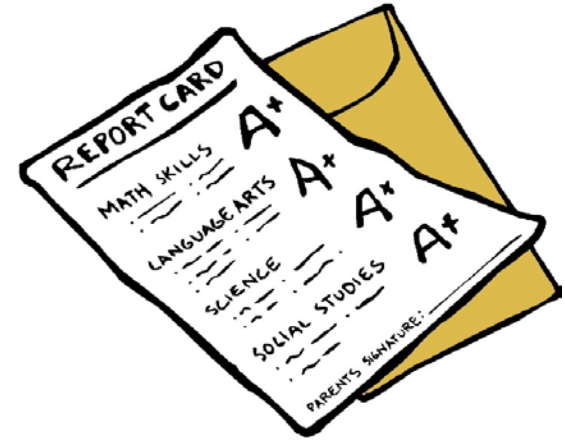
Norm-based versus Criterion-based Grading

Norm-based

- Measures how students perform compared to each other

- Distinguishes between high and low achievers within a group

- Disperses students along a bell curve

Criterion-based

- Measures how a student performs against a pre-determined objective or criterion

- Determines if a student has achieved specific skills or concepts

- May improve cooperation and reduce competition

What do we use, when do we use it, and why?

What is my grading philosophy?

1. How are grades determined?

2. What does the syllabus say?

3. Do you curve and how?

4. Do you assign extra credit and how is it added into the grade?

5. How does a student know if they are passing or not based on their exam/assignment average?
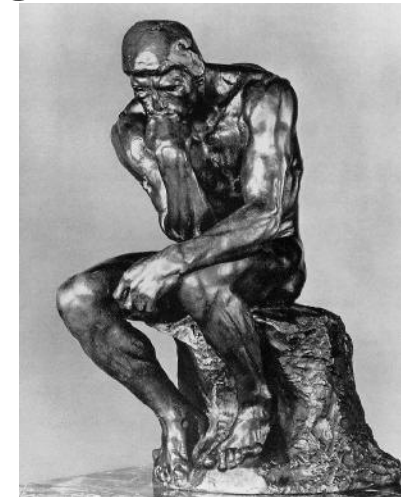
What challenges does grading present?

- Balancing difficulty level with grades

- Grading strategies versus end-of-course evaluations

- Grading strategies and the withdrawal rate