

Effective Grading Book Discussion Group

SESSION 1 (FEB. 4): CLARIFYING OUR OBJECTIVES

Walvoord and Anderson define grading as “the *process* by which a teacher assesses student learning through classroom tests and assignments, the *context* in which good teachers establish that process, and the *dialogue* that surrounds grades and defines their meaning to various audiences” (p. 1). To open our series of discussions, we will begin by exploring the many roles grading plays in our courses and reflecting on our own goals for the grading process.

❖ Reading:

- Ch. 1: “The Power of Grading for Learning and Assessment”
- Ch. 2: “Managing the Grading Process”
- Appendix A: “AAHE’s Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning”

❖ Some questions to think about as you read:

- On p. 2, the authors describe four roles that grading plays: evaluation, communication, motivation, and organization. Think about a graded assignment/test that has been very successful for you. How does it fill each of these roles? Conversely, think of an assignment that you’re not happy with. Which role(s) does it not fill as well as you would like?
- Chapter 1 argues that grading can help us improve teaching. What have you learned from the grading process in your classes? What changes have you made based on what you learned?
- The first principle listed in chapter 2 acknowledges that there are flaws and constraints inherent in any grading system. What constraints most affect how you grade? In an ideal world free of these constraints, how would you assess student learning in your classes?
- Appendix A lists 9 principles of good practice for assessment. If you had to add a 10th, what would it be? Are there additional principles that are specific to your discipline?

❖ Bring with you:

- Choose a course or courses that you’d like to focus on over the next several weeks. Bring whatever materials you have concerning the grading in the course(s): e.g., syllabus, grading system, assignment sheets, sample work, etc.

❖ Looking ahead:

- Session 2 (Feb. 11): Designing assignments and exams (ch. 3 & 4, appendix B)
- Session 3 (Feb. 18): Defining criteria for grading (ch. 5, 6, & appendix C)
- Session 4 (Feb. 25): Grading and giving feedback (ch. 7, 8, & 9)