

Effective Grading Book Discussion Group

SESSION 3 (FEB. 18): DEFINING CRITERIA FOR GRADING

This third section of the book, which focuses on defining criteria and assigning grades, gets to the heart of some of your biggest concerns about the grading process—being fair, saving time, communicating with students, assessing what’s important. Having well-designed assignments can help, but as the authors argue in chapter 5, establishing criteria is crucial. In this session, we will explore ways to state your criteria and how to implement your system when you assign grades.

❖ **Reading:**

- Ch. 5 “Establishing Criteria and Standards for Grading”
- Ch. 6 “Calculating Course Grades”
- Appendix C “Examples of Primary Trait-Based Scales”

❖ **Some questions to think about as you read:**

- In chapter 5, Walvoord and Anderson describe the use of Primary Trait Analysis. How similar is this method to your own system for establishing grading criteria? How is it different? In what ways could it benefit your grading process? What difficulties might it present?
- Pages 73-76 describe 4 different options for translating PTAs to grades. Which of these best fits the goals and purpose of your course?
- Chapter 6 opens with the statement: “A model for calculating course grades is not just a mathematical formula; it is an expression of your values and goals, because different models will express different relationships among types of student performance and will have different effects on how students perceive the reward system in the course.” What does your current model reveal about your course?
- Appendix C offers several examples of PTA scales. Do any of them look like something you could use in your courses? If so, what adaptations would you need to make (besides the obvious change in content)?

❖ **Bring with you:**

- A set of grading criteria that you are currently using, and, if you have them, sample student assignments.

❖ **Looking ahead:**

- Session 4 (Feb. 25): Grading and giving feedback (ch. 7, 8, & 9)