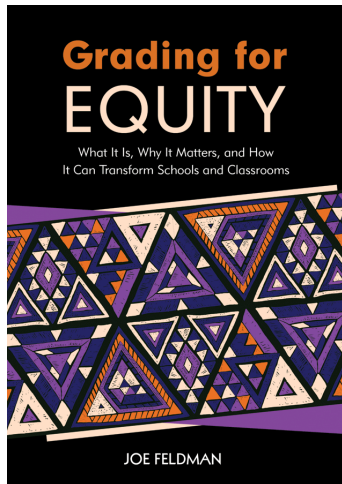
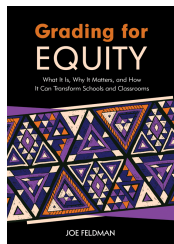


Grading for Equity in Theory and Practice



Structure of G4E



1. Close examination of traditional grading to help us understand the need for short and long term changes
2. Small changes with big impact
3. Standards based grading

Grading Exacerbates Inequality

Students who are struggling are met with more obstacles:

- Having to retake classes
- Academic probation
- Financial concerns
 - Scholarships/Awards
 - Employment
 - Car Insurance
- Rewards/Punishments from parents
- Confidence/Self-esteem

Extrinsic Motivation

- Extrinsic motivation is not effective at promoting higher-order or creative thinking tasks
- Extrinsic motivation undermines intrinsic motivation
 - Creates a dependence on extrinsic motivation

Grading Hurts Students

- Grading has been shown (from the K-12 to med school level) to:
 - ☐ Increase stress
 - ☐ Reduce self-esteem
 - ☐ Cause psychosomatic effects
 - ☐ Lower life satisfaction
 - ☐ Reduce academic performance
 - ☐ Reduce attendance
 - ☐ Reduce psychological well-being

Traditional Grading Teaches a Fixed Mindset

- Based in intelligence testing, based in the idea that intelligence is innate, immutable, and quantifiable
- When students can't figure out why they got a grade, they see it as a reflection on themselves
 - Students will ignore feedback
- Measurements throughout the semester treated as equal reflections on students

So, No Grades?

Eliminating grades and otherwise working academia out of its role in reinforcing societal inequalities and causing psychological harm is a noble, but very long-term goal.

- Changing how we grade can be done now
- Easy change – major impact
- Can change perspectives in academia to support future changes, help sway administration/accrediting bodies.

Principles of Grading for Equity

Grades should exactly reflect students' final demonstrated level of proficiency with learning outcomes, in a way that makes it clear which learning outcomes students have demonstrated and which they still need to work on.

- Accurate
- Bias-resistant
- Motivational
- Can support equity when combined with equitable learning outcome practices.

Unwanted Factors

Definition of a C

Fair; basic understanding of subject has been demonstrated

- “Group grades”
- Assumptions about students’ time and resources outside the classroom (inc. homework, extra credit)
- Penalties for lateness
- Participation/effort grades
- Penalizing disruptions to students’ semesters

Homework

Not grading homework:

- Don't want to measure learning objectives during the learning process
- Removes incentive to copy
- Students develop a sense of responsibility for self-assessment
- Removes “double-punishment”
- No assumptions about students' time and access to resources
- Students will read feedback on homework

Significant Disruptions

Equity

Not experiencing disruptions for an entire semester is a form of privilege

- Disability
- Socioeconomic background
- Awareness of expectations

What can we do?

- 50% minimum
- 0-4 scale
- Retakes

Retakes

“Students are motivated to keep learning if we let them – if they have the chance to redeem themselves and show improved performance”

- All students should be allowed retakes in all circumstances
- “Retakes are equitable only when they are *mandatory*”
 - “Should whether a student retakes ... depend on ... life circumstances outside [their] control?”
- Grade should fully report all demonstrated understanding.
- Great for test anxiety

Facilitating Retakes

- Only retake missed material
- Some students might want to “reroll the die”
 - Have them demonstrate some work towards improvement first.
- Easier if we organize tests by standards/topics
- Set time aside for retakes

Standards-Based Grading

- Grade book is a list of learning outcomes, not assignments
- Each assessment updates the level students have demonstrated those learning outcomes at
- Learning outcomes and how they are assessed is communicated
- Students can see clearly what outcomes they need to work on by looking at the gradebook and are motivated to do so
- Makes it easier to keep track of demonstrated outcomes over a student's career
- Can provide many different ways of demonstrating a single outcome

What about Soft-Skills?

- Can't be measured objectively
- Make explicit the connection between these soft skills and academic success
- Can create (ungraded) rubrics and clear expectations to help students evaluate their own soft-skills
 - Self-evaluation is itself a key soft-skill

Benefits of Grading for Equity

- Increases rigor: no “fluff” grades
- Reduces failure rates
- Reduce achievement gaps
- Improves standardized test scores
- Improves correlation of grades with standardized test scores
- Improved student attitudes/engagement