

In *Grading for Equity: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How It Can Transform Schools and Classrooms*, Joe Feldman argues that grading practices should be mathematically accurate, bias-resistant, and support, growth, motivation, and hope. These principles support equity by focusing on measuring a student's final academic performance with respect to a standard without penalizing them for environmental circumstances beyond their control or for making mistakes early in the learning process. In order to do this, he argues that instructors should consider changing common grading practices that do not support these principles.

Review your grading policies through the principles from *Grading for Equity*. How accurate, bias-resistant and motivating are they? How much does this vision for equitable grading align with your own? What are your concerns with the ideas in this vision? What are your hopes?

Principle I-Mathematical Accuracy: Our grading must use calculations that are mathematically sound, easy to understand, and correctly describe a student's level of academic performance.

- **Common problematic grading practices:**
 - Averaging scores (*can be thrown off by outliers, brought down by early performance when a student was still making mistakes*)
 - Assigning a team score (*allows weaker students to hide behind work of stronger students, may penalize stronger students for work done by weaker students*)
- **Equitable grading practices:**
 - Weigh more recent performances (*to replace earlier weaker performance, what is the most accurate representation of a student's present level of mastery?*)
 - Grade individual learning of academic content that results from team work

Principle II-Bias-Resistance: Grades should be based on valid evidence of a student's content knowledge, and not based on evidence that is likely to be corrupted by a teacher's implicit bias or reflect a student's environment.

- **Common problematic grading practices:**
 - Grading based on non-academic performance such as awarding points for participation or penalizing late work (*Disproportionately affects students who may be facing environmental circumstances that affect the timing of their work or ability to attend a given class, grading formative assessments makes students focus on getting points instead of learning*)
 - Assigning a zero for cheating (*inaccurate description of student learning, lets the student off too easily for cheating because they continue to avoid learning the content*)
- **Equitable grading practices:**
 - Grade only on academic performance not participation or timing of work Non-grade penalty for cheating (*consider a punishment with the primary aim of rehabilitation or restitution instead of*

retribution, consider how other equitable grading practices may reduce cheating by helping students focus on learning instead of points)

Principle III-Motivating: The way we grade should motivate students to achieve academic success, support a growth mindset and give students opportunities for redemption.

- **Common problematic grading practices:**
 - Grading on a 100 point scale (*biased towards failure, makes it difficult to recover from failure*)
 - Grading homework (*penalizes students for making mistakes, which is a necessary part of the learning experience*)
 - One-chance grading (*Failing grades don't motivate learning, may prematurely discourage historically disadvantaged students from persistence in a field*)
 - Ambiguity in expectations (*Particularly harmful to historically disadvantaged students who inherently have less trust in the education system*)
- **Equitable grading practices:**
 - Minimum grading (e.g. use a 0-4 scale or set the minimum score to 50 so each grade category has the same number of points)
 - Grades based entirely on summative assessment (*give feedback (not grades) and support learning from mistakes on homework, allow natural consequences to learning instead of point penalties for not doing homework*)
 - Retakes and redos (*more accurate representation of what happens in the professional world, allows second chance for learning and redemption, mandatory retakes are more likely to engage the weaker students, replace grade-don't average*)
 - Clarify standards (*Use rubrics to makes academic standards transparent to all, use a standards-based vs. a points based gradebook*)