The Seven P's of Assessment and Grading

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Learning Forward, MO
March 8, 2016

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"Terms (are) frequently used interchangeably, although they (should) have distinct meanings."

McTighe, J., and Ferrara, S., "Assessing Learning in the Classroom," *Journal of Quality Learning*, December 1995, 11

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What Do These Terms Mean?

MARK(S)/SCORE(S) (marking/scoring)

the number (or letter) "score" given to any student test or performance

7/10 4 3 2 1

GRADE(S) (grading)

the number (or letter) reported at the end of a period of time as a summary statement of student performance

A 91 4 E
B 78 3 G
C 64 2 S
D 57 1 N
F 42

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ASSESSMENT

- **gathering and interpreting information about student achievement using a variety of tools and techniques. It is the act of *describing* student performance, primarily for the purpose of enhancing learning. As part of assessment, teachers provide students with feedback that guides their efforts toward improvement.**

EVALUATION

- **making *judgments* about the quality of student achievement over a period of time.**

O'Connor, K. *How to Grade for Learning,* Third Edition, Corwin, 2009, 245

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Standards
=
Expectations
=
Outcomes
=
Learning Goals
=
Competencies

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"It takes courage to face the truth that the (traditional) A-F grading scheme is doing a disservice to our children and thwarting the efforts of educators to produce greater improvements in academic achievement."

Source: Sturgis, C. *Progress and Proficiency: Redesigning Grading for Competency Education*, iNACOL, 2014, 36

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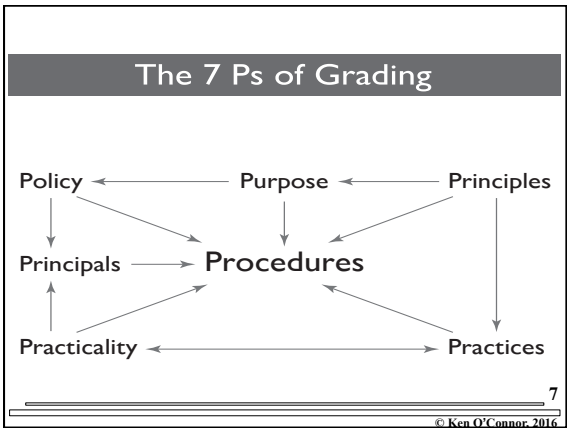

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Procedures

- **What schools/districts require teachers to do**
- **Should be public, published**
- **In the past often limited or non-existent**
- **Now often developed by committee or task force**
- **Should be derived from policy and make your mission statement "live"**

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What *procedures* do you have in place in your school/district?

Are they published and easily available to all stakeholders?

How were they developed? When? When were they most recently reviewed/revised?

Are they clearly aligned with policy?

Do they make your mission statement live?

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Purpose(s)

"The primary purpose of classroom assessment is

***to inform teaching and improve learning*,**

not to sort and select students or to justify a grade."

McTighe, J. & Ferrara, S. "Performance-Based Assessment in the Classroom," *Pennsylvania Educational Leadership*.1994

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Purpose

- **Communicate the achievement status of students to parents, (students), and others.**
- **Provide information that students can use for self-evaluation.**
- **Select, identify, or group students for certain educational paths or programs.**
- **Provide incentives to learn. (reward/punish)**
- **Evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs.**

Guskey, T. [Ed.], *Communicating Student Learning: The 1996 ASCD Yearbook*, 1996.

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Purpose

"It is very difficult for one measure to serve different purposes equally well. (p. 21)

"The main difficulty driving grading issues both historically and currently is that grades are pressed to serve a variety of conflicting purposes." (p. 31)

Brookhart. S, *Grading* (2004)

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Purpose

"The primary purpose of … grades … (is) to *communicate student achievement* to students, parents, school administrators, post-secondary institutions, and employers."

Bailey, J. & McTighe, J. "Reporting Achievement at the Secondary School Level: What and How?" in Guskey [Ed.] *Communicating Student Learning: ASCD Yearbook 1996*. 120

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Do you have a clearly stated primary *purpose* for grading?

Is it published and easily available to all stakeholders?

Is your primary purpose aligned or misaligned with your mission statement?

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Principles

- **The set of values that orient and rule the conduct of an individual or organization**
- **Often expressed in mission/vision statements**

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National Center for Innovation in Education

(Are there) PRINCIPLES that we can hold in common?

- Every child deserves a **world-class education**
- That will require intense focus on the individual, and **personalized learning** at scale
- Students should move through the system based on **performance** rather than time or age
- Learning can happen **anytime, anywhere** and every child should have opportunity, access, and choice
- Students need **comprehensive systems of support** and that will require new and different partnerships
- Students must own their learning and be architects of their own futures – **student agency**

Source: ***Presentation by Gene Wilhoit at the New Hampshire Convening on Competency Education, May 11, 2015.* Accessed 10/13/15**

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Spaulding High School believes in promoting *a safe and supportive community* where all students are recognized and encouraged to develop their *individual interests and talents*. We provide an education that challenges students to think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively. We believe that by promoting *a flexible, respectful, and challenging school environment* that applies learning in authentic ways, students will be supported to become *confident lifelong learners* and contributing members of their communities.

***Source:*www.rochesterschools.com/shs/core_values.html. Accessed 10/13/15**

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Personal Principle #1

"Teachers don't need grades or reporting forms to teach well. Further, students don't need them to learn."

Guskey, T. R. [Ed.], *Communicating Student Learning: ASCD Yearbook 1996*, 14

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Personal Principle #2

Schools should have a learning culture, not a grading culture.

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What *principles* does your school/district have in place?

Are they published and easily available to all stakeholders?

To what extent are your personal principles aligned with school/district principles?

Do they make your mission statement live?

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Practices
#1: Professional Judgment

Traditional view:

Objective good!

Subjective bad!

Strive to be objective!

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Practice #1: Professional Judgment

"All scoring by human judges, including assigning points and taking them off math homework, is subjective. The question is not whether it is subjective, but whether it is defensible and credible. The AP and IB programs (are) credible and defensible, yet subjective. I wish we could stop using that word as a pejorative! So-called objective scoring is still subjective test writing."

Grant Wiggins, answering a question on chatserver.ascd.org (January 19, 2000)

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Practice #1: Professional Judgment

"(Grading) practices are not the result of careful thought or sound evidence, … rather, they are used because teachers experienced these practices as students and, having little training or experience with other options, continue their use."

Guskey, T. R. [Ed.], *Communicating Student Learning: The 1996 ASCD Yearbook.* 1996. 20

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Practice #1: Professional Judgment

"I define *professional judgment* as 'decisions made by educators, in light of *experience*, and with reference to *shared public standards* and *established policies and guidelines*.'"

Cooper, D. *Redefining Fair.* 2011. 13

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What are your beliefs/practices with regard to PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT?

Colleagues?
Students?
Parents?

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Practice #2: Motivation

Drive

by Daniel Pink (2009)

- **Motivation 1.0: the ancient drive to survive**
- **Motivation 2.0: rewarding good work with pay, benefits, and promotions**
  - **Centres on "Type X behaviour," where people are motivated mostly by external rewards**

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Practice #2: Motivation

Pink believes it is time for a "full scale upgrade" to Motivation 3.0: intrinsic rewards that play to the intrinsic satisfaction of the activity.

Motivation 3.0 is based on what Pink calls "Type I behavior," where the main motivators are the freedom to do what you want, the opportunity to take a challenge, and fulfillment by the purpose of the undertaking.

Eisenberg, review in *USA Today*, January 25, 2010

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Practice #2: Motivation

"All kids start out as curious self-directed Type I's. But many of them end up as disengaged, compliant Type X's. …

"If we want to equip young people for the new world of work—and more important, if we want them to lead satisfying lives—we need to break Motivation 2.0's grip on education and parenting. …

"Unfortunately, as with business, *there is a mismatch between what science knows and what schools do*. …

"We're bribing students into compliance instead of challenging them into engagement."

Pink, D. *Drive*. 2009. 174

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Practice #2: Motivation

According to Pink, the keys to Motivation 3.0 are:

Autonomy

Mastery

Purpose

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Practice #2: Motivation

1. **"Routine, not-so-interesting jobs require direction; non-routine, more interesting work depends on self-direction." (32)**

Pink, D. *Drive*. 2009

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Practice #2: Motivation

2."An incentive designed to clarify thinking and sharpen creativity ended up clouding thinking and dulling creativity. Why? Rewards, by their very nature, narrow our focus." (44)

Pink, D. *Drive*. 2009

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Practice #2: Motivation

3."By neglecting the ingredients of genuine motivation—autonomy, mastery, and purpose—they limit what each of us can achieve." (49)

Pink, D. *Drive*, 2009

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Practice #2: Motivation

Maximize intrinsic motivation.

and

Minimize extrinsic motivation.

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Practice #2: Motivation

Responsibility—"the state or fact of being responsible, answerable, or accountable for something within one's power, management, or choice."

—Dictionary.com

Compliance—"a) the act or process of complying to a desire, demand, proposal, or regimen, or to coercion; b) conformity in fulfilling official requirements."

—Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary

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What are your beliefs/practices with regard to MOTIVATION?

Colleagues?
Students?
Parents?

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Practice #3: Fairness

"Fair does not mean equal; yet, when it comes to grading, we insist that it does."

Patterson, "Breaking Out of Our Boxes," *Phi Delta Kappan.* April 2003. 572

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Practice #3: Fairness

"The power of grades to impact students' future life creates a responsibility for giving grades in a fair and impartial way."

Johnson & Johnson, *Meaningful Assessment: A Manageable and Cooperative Process*. 2002. 249

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Practices #3: Fairness

What Does FAIR Mean?

All students are given an *equal opportunity* to demonstrate what they know and can do as part of the assessment process.

Adaptations to assessment materials and procedures are available for students including *but not restricted to* students with learning disabilities, to allow them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, provided that the adaptations do not jeopardize the integrity or content of the assessment.

Adapted from Manitoba Education and Training at http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/metks4/curricul/assess/aepolprod/purpos~2.html)

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What are your beliefs/practices with regard to FAIRNESS?

Colleagues?
Students?
Parents?

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Policy

- **Broad statements of general intent**
- **"Board policy shall set out the general direction for what the District seeks to accomplish. The superintendent shall be responsible for the implementation of board policy through administrative policies and procedures."**

  —Des Moines Independent Community School District, IA

- **Policy has legal or quasi-legal status.**

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What *policies* are you required to follow?

Are they aligned or misaligned with your mission statement?

To what extent do you have to "compensate for the compulsory?"

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Practicality

- **Procedures and principles have to actually work in the classroom.**
- **We have to follow the spirit of the agreed-upon principles and the published procedures, but sometimes have to adapt to make them "work" at different grade levels and in different subjects.**

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Do you or your teachers 'tweak' procedures and/or policy to make it practical?

If yes, How?

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Principals/School Leaders

- **Principals can and do have a huge impact on how schools operate and on the quality of teaching and learning.**
- **Principals must provide informed leadership to promote and ensure effective communication of learning, primarily through grades and report cards.**
- **They must build shared understanding of purpose, procedures, policies, principles, professional judgment, motivation, and fairness.**

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- **Do your *principals/leadership teams* understand purpose, procedures, policies, principles, professional judgment, motivation, and fairness?**
- **Do your principals/leadership teams provide informed leadership?**

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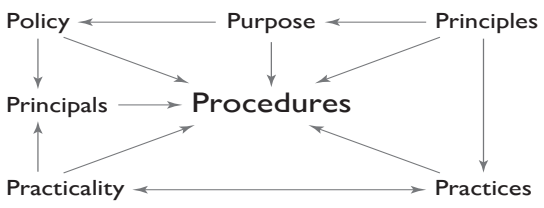
The 7 Ps of Grading



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The Essential Questions

Are your practices aligned with your principles and purposes?

Do you need to make changes in your procedures and/or policy and/or practices to align with your principles and purpose(s)?

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