



Grade Delineator: What kind of grading model best fits my class?

DIRECTIONS: Review the four types of courses described in the delineator. Select the description that best describes your course design. A grading model is suggested for each type of course. Keep the purposes of assigning a grade in mind:

- The purpose of a grade is to communicate a teachers' **culminating judgment** about a student's academic gains **towards a clearly communicated exit proficiency level**
- Short "informative" assessments are a means of communication between the teacher and the students. Use short formative assessments to monitor students' academic progress. Review formative assessments to identify and correct learners' misunderstandings; there is no requirement to GRADE each assignment. Some teachers include homework completion as part of the participation grade. Only grade on things that students have been told will be graded.
- Use a simple and easy to understand grading system that aligns to the type of learning you expect students to do as a result of your teaching.
- Never grade on the curve and never assign a zero if you are using a 1-100 scale (See "*Grading Tips*" for research-based rationales.)

Grading Delineator

Select the course description that best describes the course you are teaching.

- a) Learning in this course is primarily conceptual and requires a developmental approach. Students' understanding of the content develops as the course progresses; their greatest level of understanding is at the end of the course.
- b) The course has a module design in which certain topics (perhaps even different lecturers) are introduced, explored and closed, not to be revisited after this module's summative assessment.
- c) The course is emergent and exploratory: there are some common course outcomes but the expectation is that students will create their own line of inquiry and pursue new ideas and questions
- d) The course focuses on skill development: writing; a type of thinking; computation, etc.

a) **LEARNING IS CONCEPTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL**

If learning is more developmental; and students' understanding of content builds as the course progresses, then weight assignments accordingly: the later in the quarter the heavier weighting of cumulative and summative scores.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
Wed Quiz		Wed Quiz		Wed Quiz		Wed Quiz		Wed Quiz	
			Exam 1				Exam 2		Exam FINAL

- Quizzes are **always** announced
- Quizzes are either 4 or 8 points (5 x 4 points =20 points)
- If a quiz is missed allow students a make-up assignment online that is more work than showing up for class to take the quiz
- Quizzes monitor students' continued growth over the quarter and account for only 20% of the grade
Quizzes could be substituted with writing assignments or other formal methods of determining student growth

Grade Calculations

- Quizzes = 20 points
- Exam 1 = 20
- Exam 2 = 20
- Exam 3 = 40
100 points

*Please note: **ONLY** the assessments given for calculating a grade are shown above; Students are to be regularly assessed (daily) through observation, clicker assessments, short essays, group work etc. Such short assessments are critical to monitor students' progress and to modify instruction; they do **NOT**, however, figure into the calculation of a grade.

b)

If your course moves students through a series of chapters or modules then an appropriate approach to evaluating student knowledge would be to take a series of summative assessments: each at the end of each module. Because all modules are equally important each is weighted the same.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
		Module Exam 1			Module Exam 2				Module Exam 3
			Assign 1				Assign 2		

Assignments1 & 2

It is recommended that instructors administer regular ongoing assessments of students' progress in ADDITION to the formal assignments. Ongoing check-ins assist us in monitoring students' academic growth and misconceptions and provides important feedback on our teaching (what might we need to clarify or reteach?) Not all formative assessments need to be graded though; ONLY those announced and designed to formally assess students' progress. To simplify grading, make these assignment expectations clear through the use of a rubric, designed on a 4-point scale rating system: A, B, C, D, or failure to complete is an F.

Grade Calculations

Assignment 1	= 5%
Assignment 2	= 5%
Exam 1	= 30%
Exam 2	= 30%
Exam 3	= 30%
	<hr/>
	100%

c)

Seminars or classes characterized by self-directed learning are most frequently located at the senior or graduate levels of a university curriculum; it is more challenging to determine all have learned as a result of their personal explorations. Students are, however, quick to admit they had high learning gains. Pre-assessments assist both the teacher and learners in determining "pre-existing prior knowledge" and provide a "baseline" to which the instructor and student can compare "exit" levels of knowledge and proficiency to at the completion of the course. Because the learners are conducting their own investigations the use of reflective essays is warranted.

Another issue in these types of courses is the importance of on-going participation in the readings and discussions. The class as a whole suffers when one participant is missing because they miss that person's insights. Make the importance of attendance about "the significance of each person's input," rather than an elementary "checking-up-on-you strategy." When attendance is properly framed students will understand why participation is part of the calculated grade.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
Participation One grade Each week	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
	Reflect 1-4			Reflect 1-4			Reflect 1-4		
		Final Project Progress 4 x 2 = 8			Final Project Progress 4x3=12			Peer Review of final projects 4x3 = 12	Final Project + Reflect 4x10=40

In this course we see regular participation as weekly graded expectations. This can work IF the instructor uses a rubric to clarify how discussion skills progress and develop over time. It is also important to vary the size of the discussion from large to small groups and allow students to write about the insights gained as a result of the discussion. This supports the shy and less proficient English speakers, (thus the "reflect" assignments noted above).

Grade Calculation

Participation (4-point rubric) 4x9=	36 points
Reflections (4-point rubric) (3 assignments on 4 point scale)	12 points
Progress Checks (use final 4-point project rubric)	32 points
Final Project	<u>40 points</u>
	120 points

To calculate the grade, divide each student's total points by 120

d)

Courses that emphasize skill development must take into account learners' need to practice the skill. Practice is just that: practice. As teachers, we expect to see growth of students' skill levels as they progress through the course. Their "first approximations" made early on in the quarter will be naïve and require specific feedback. As the students practice the skill with feedback, proficiency will improve over time. Instructors' must intentionally scaffold learners' skill development, thus group work will be more present at the beginning of the course and as students' proficiency increases, the assignments and assessments become more independent.

In the course below, students will be learning how to "construct logical arguments" (the target skill of the course) while they learn about social inequities in the United States. This course emphasizes BOTH content and a target thinking skill. Therefore we need to design the course, and assessments accordingly.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
	Assn 1		Assn 2		Assn 3		Assn 4		
				Midterm: Content and analysis of argument				Peer Review of final paper	Final Paper Due

Assignment 1:	Collaborative (4 points)	4 points
Assignment 2:	Diads (8 points)	8 points
Assignment 3:	Independent (8 points)	8 points
Assignment 4:	Independent (16 points)	16 points
Midterm		24 points
Final Paper		<u>40 points</u>
		100 points