

Indian Lake Central School Changes in Grading Policy

15 Fixes To Broken Grades

Summary to Survey

Reference: O'Connor, K. (2007). *A Repair Kit for Grading: 15 Fixes for broken grades*. Portland: ETS.

Essential Question

1. How confident am I that the grades I report are accurately reflecting the student's knowledge of the subject?

Fix #1-Don't include student behaviors (effort, participation, adherence to class rules, etc.) in grades; include only achievement.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Elementary already has this in place-report out behavior, effort, etc. separately.-Grade actually reflects knowledge.-This will separate out the behavior. i.e. "You don't like my kid, so that's why his marks are low".-Accurate representation of information taught/learned.-Students are on even playing ground.-Easier to substantiate grade to parents as it may not be as subjective.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Fairness-What about the kids who get all their work in on time. We don't separate that out.-Where do we teach life skills?-We might get better behavior if we grade it.-This is assuming there is intrinsic motivation.
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Where is the buy in for the students if we separate out behaviors. Some school's have material rewards like jackets, etc. May need to change eSchooldata to accommodate narratives if included with assessment.

Fix #2-Don't reduce marks on "work" submitted late; provided support for the learner.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Will assess students only on what they know.-Not grading help from others.-May allow use of alternative assessments.-Students will still need to produce work..-Not a measure of home life.-Chronically late students have a chance at passing.-Teachers might actually get work from students.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-May affect how eligibility policy may work.-Eventually you run out of time and need a mark.-May lead students to wait until the end, feeding to procrastination.-No consequence to being late.(However, this is usually dealt with in a disciplinary manner).-Students who generally hand in assignments on time, may start handing them in late.-Doesn't really emulate real-world work habits. REALLY??-Difficult to hand back assignments to students when other have not yet completed it. May compromise the validity. (May need to create a separate assessment)
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Notes: May keep students at lunch to make up work. Grades 1 and 2 don't really grade Homework..

Fix #3-Don't give point for extra credit or use bonus points; seek only evidence that more work has resulted in a higher level of achievement.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-A form of enrichment.-Allows for differentiated instruction with one track for basic understanding and another for higher level learning.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Going to be the same students that did the homework anyway.-Extra-credit motivates students to earn extra points.
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Be up front to explain how much work is required for A, B, C, D or 100, 90, 80, 70, 60, etc.

Fix #4: Don't punish academic dishonesty with reduced grades; apply other consequences and reassess to determine actual level of achievement.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Actually find out what they know.-Students don't get out of doing work.-Consequence should fit the action.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-This may allow an extra day to study.-With Regents, you cheat, you are out.-Will the assessments measure the same? Validity?-More work for the teacher.
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Not really a huge problem.

Fix #5.: Don't consider attendance in grade determination; report absences separately.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Student grades will suffer normally.-True reflection of grade.-Student not being penalized for missing class for Doctor appointments and other legitimate absences.-What about vacations?-Separate attendance report speaks for itself.-Some absences are out of the student's control.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-What about vacations?-Can't re-create classroom situation.-Possible more pressure on teacher to get material missed to student.-May take away the incentive to not just miss class.
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Notes: If a student is sick for several days, why penalize. Should a student have an alternative assignment for material lost?

Fix #6: Don't include group scores in grades; use only individual achievement evidence. (We are not here yet)

<p>Pro's</p> <p>-True reflection of what the student knows, especially if some members of the group completed more of the project than others.</p>	<p>Con's</p> <p>-Many businesses organize groups of workers to perform a task and that group is measured on that task.</p>
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Fix #7: Don't organize information in grading records by assessment methods or simply summarize into a single grade; organize and report evidence by standards/learning goals.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-It makes it clear whether the standards have been met or not. Parents and students will have this information.-Clear class results/standings.-Allows teachers to adjust teaching to improve learning.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Have to train (provide information)to parents to interpret standards.-Complicated and difficult to achieve.-Some activities overlap the standards being addressed.-Subjective application of broad standards.
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Fix #8: Don't assign grades using inappropriate or unclear performance standards; provide clear descriptions of achievement expectations.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Students understand exactly what is expected.-Clearer level of grading.-Use of a rubric.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Students focus on the number, not quality of what is learned, etc.-May stifle creative things as kids may not strive to go beyond credit.-Sometimes we are stuck with questionable standards.
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Fix #9: Don't assign grades based on student's achievement compared to other students; compare each student's performance to preset standards .

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Helps prepare for standardize assessment.-Accurate-Based on individual assessment/achievement.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Some students may not achieve success when held to high standards or even regular standards.-May discourage some students.-Some tests (Regents) are graded on a curve. This is a mixed message. <p>*I believe they are referring to a scaled score.</p>
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Fix #10: Don't rely on evidence gathered using assessments that fail to meet standards of quality; rely only on quality assessments.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-We feel we provide quality assessments.-Students understand clearly what it is they will be assessed on.-Student learning is clearly identified.	<p>Con's</p> <p>Students may not have the pre-requisite skills for these types of assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Will never be able to avoid all bias's.-Students can identify bias's as an excuse not to take tests
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Fix #11: Don't rely only on the mean; consider other measures of central tendency and use professional judgement.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-A way to help with biases.-Offers students a better average if poor grades are combined.-We already do this. It should be stated in our policy.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Students may not be held accountable for poor grades.-Exceptional grades may be overlooked in the mode/median grade.-Mean is okay to look at overall trends, but not overall students.-Parents could question teacher's choices.
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Fix #12: Don't include zeros in grade determination when evidence is missing or as punishment; use alternatives, such as reassessing to determine real achievement or use I for Incomplete or insufficient evidence.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Gives students an opportunity to make up work.-Most do not hand out permanent zero's.-More reflective of student achievement.-Students have more opportunities to reach mastery.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-When no grade is ever assigned it may allow students to miss work.-Students may be working on assignments no longer relevant to current study.-When is it too long?-Encourages procrastination.-Doesn't reflect work ethic (not in standards).-How do you move on if several are working on past assignments.
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Fix #13: Don't use information from formative assessments and practice to determine grades; use only summative evidence.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Students could try things risk free.-Students can learn from mistakes without risk.-Can determine from summative assessments what knowledge has been gained.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Students will not do homework if they think it is not graded.-Work that goes toward the final product is not counted.-Can hurt bad test-takers.-Will need to communicate to the parents and students the new grading policy and reasons for the change.
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Fix #14: Don't summarize evidence accumulated over time when learning is developmental and will grow with time and repeated opportunities; in those instances, emphasize more recent achievement.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Student is graded on growth of skills.-Good for skills based classes (art, music, physical education).-Shows what has been learned throughout the entire course.-Incentive to keep working and trying to improve.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Not appropriate for content based classes.-Feasibility-How do you change your grading processes/policies?
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Fix #15: Don't leave students out of the grading process. Involve students; they can-and should-play key roles in assessment and grading that promote achievement.

<p>Pro's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Students know how they are assessed.-We do this.-Helps build ownership of work.-Student ownership in the process.-Allows for self-evaluation and reflection.	<p>Con's</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Too hard on themselves.-Some don't take seriously.-Student may take advantage of the situation.
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Old Grading System

- Middle School-33% Test; 67% Homework, Quiz, other
- High School-50% Test; 50% Homework, Quiz, other

Goal

To provide an accurate representation of a student's knowledge of a subject area.

Timeline

- Summer 2008-Meeting with Minerva, Newcomb, Johnsburg and Indian Lake. Hosted by the team from BOCES
 - Purpose was to look at our grading practices
- Ordered 25 copies of Ken O'Connor's *A Repair Kit for Grading-15 Fixes for Broken Grades*
- Start of the school year began meeting with elementary, middle and high school teams to discuss each fix and how it related to ILCS

Timeline Continued...

- Gave each BOE member a copy of the book and then discussed it at board meetings ☺
- Met with the PTSO
- Met with the Student Council
- Met with Shared Decision Making Committee
- Inform parents, Inform parents, Inform parents
- Attending Assessment Awakenings-Thanks Nicole!

Areas where the old system fell down the most...

- Attendance part of grade
- Behavior part of grade
- Cheating on homework
- Students failing course but still passing Regents

New System

- Grades based on 100% Summative Assessments
 - Need for DI
- At least 5 summative assessments per quarter
- No Zero's (Almost)
- ERB's (Stealing from Newcomb Central School), thus change in report cards (Need to Keep Parents Informed)
- After school study hall (T, W, Th)
- Eligibility Policy for Extra-Curricular Activities

New System Continued

- Establishing a parent portal with our student management system (Some teachers have column to indicate missing assignments)
- Re-establishing mid-terms and continuing final exams with each not worth more than 10%
- Continue to provide timely feedback on homework, but if formative in nature, it would not count toward a student's GPA
- More intentional about attendance (Principal's Office)-Help from DA

Overall...

- Seems to be going well with the new system.
- Still experiencing situations where there does not seem to be any other option then for a zero.
- Most difficult with vocal and instrumental music and PE.
- Remove argument that the student doesn't understand the homework so it's unfair to grade it. Also takes away argument about the student's attendance being part of the grade if out for legal absence.
- Continued discussion topic: How to assign homework??
- Questions.....