

# EIGHT GUIDELINES FOR GRADING

by KEN O'CONNOR

- 1. Relate grading procedures to learning goals (i.e., standards)**
  - a. Use learning goals (standards or some clustering of standards [e.g., domains, strands]) as basis for grade determination and grade reporting.
  - b. Use assessment methods as the subset, not the set (i.e., standards, learning results, expectations, outcomes).
- 2. Use clearly described criterion-referenced performance standards.**
  - a. The meaning of grades (letters or numbers) should come from clear descriptions of a limited number of levels.
  - b. If they hit the goal, they get the grade (i.e., no bell curve)!
- 3. Limit the valued attributes included in grades to individual achievement.**
  - a. Grades should be based on achievement (i.e., demonstration of the knowledge and skill components of the standards). Effort, participation, attitude, and other behaviors should be reported separately.
  - b. Grades should be based on individual achievement.
- 4. Sample student performance—do not include all scores in grades.**
  - a. Do not include formative assessment in grades—provide feedback on formative performance using words, rubrics, or checklists, not scores.
  - b. Include information primarily from a variety of summative assessments in grades.
- 5. Grade in pencil—keep records so they can be updated easily.**
  - a. Use the most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration for the more recent evidence.
  - b. Provide several assessment opportunities (varying in method and number).
- 6. Determine, don't just calculate, grades.**
  - a. Crunch numbers carefully—if at all.
  - b. Think "body of evidence" and professional judgment.
- 7. Use quality assessment(s), and properly record evidence of achievement.**
  - a. Meet standards for accurate assessment: clear targets, clear purpose, and sound design (which requires that assessments be well written, use appropriate target–method match, use appropriate sampling, and avoid bias and distortion).
  - b. Record and maintain evidence of achievement (e.g., tracking sheets, spreadsheets, gradebooks—hard copy and/or electronic—portfolios—hard copy and electronic).
- 8. Discuss and involve students in assessment, including grading, throughout the teaching/learning process.**
  - a. Ensure (age appropriately) that students understand how their achievement will be assessed and how their grades will be determined.
  - b. Involve students in the assessment process, in self-assessment, reflection and goal setting, and in communicating about their achievement and progress.