**July 2023**

*Please share with your faculty:*

**Issues with grading**

Hough (2023) recently wrote an interesting article published in the [Harvard Ed. Magazine called “The Problem with Grading”.](https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/ed/23/05/problem-grading) The article discusses the arbitrariness and inconsistency of letter grades. Although the article focuses its discussion on K-12 education, it is relevant to issues with grading in higher education, including grade inflation, and the often subjective and non-transparent nature of grading within college and graduate school courses. The article also makes the important distinction between grades and assessment. Assessment provides students and instructors with feedback for the purpose of improving learning and instruction. Grading on the other hand puts value on students’ work. If the grading process is arbitrary then it will not provide meaningful feedback about the extent of student learning. The article ends with a discussion of some alternatives to traditional grading that some school systems are experimenting with. For example, rather than providing letter grades students receive “mastery” or “in progress”. Another alternative is to allow students opportunities to constantly revise their work on assignments. While these alternatives aim to achieve the goal of students’ mastering the information that they are learning, I believe that they may raise other issues. Some would argue that grades are an important extrinsic motivator for students, and without them, many students would not be as driven to succeed. In addition, while in theory providing students with constant opportunities to revise their work would be ideal, it may be a difficult practice to expect from both students and instructors who have limited time. Although there is no one and done solution, this article raises interesting points for reflection and debate for improving learning in education.

**Please share any alternative grading practices your program uses** and I will featurethose examples on [YU’s Learning Assessment Website](https://owa.yu.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=qfPSe4wRYkKrpT3C8vPq8A7wjn94UtMIlXPnm4uIb63uPB_8kYqY2U_p2t2TYINMonFFOW1vbo0.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fyu.edu%2fprovost%2fassessment%2f).

**Important Reminder:** If you have not yet submitted your Spring 2023 assessment report, please email it to me ASAP. Thanks very much.