

Winter 2022 Faculty Inquiry Group Report

During the Winter Term of 2022, Sarah Lushia, Edrees Nawabi, Ingrid Nordstrom, Jennifer Von Ammon, Daphne Gabrieli, and Gina Szabady read *Grading for Equity*, and met to discuss the book's implications for their teaching and personal resonance with their lived experience, pedagogical approaches, and teaching philosophy.

Guiding Questions

- What/when/where did you learn about grading?
- Quantitative assessment and writing assignments have always been awkward bedfellows. What does this discussion of “mathematical accuracy” add to that conversation?
- What new issues or ways of thinking does it invite us to consider?
- What is the importance of coherence or shared approaches/philosophies across a department? A college?
- Where have you landed by the end of the book? What will you use? What will you remember? How did the book make YOU feel about grading and assessment?

Meeting Descriptions

Week 2: Chapters 1-4

Our first discussion centered on the topic of how and when we learned to grade and our personal responses to the early sections of the book, which are largely about the historical context under which common grading systems developed and making the case for change. Folks also touched on their personal experiences with grading as students and as caregivers. Many people expressed having strong personal/emotional reactions to the book despite a general sense of agreement with the primary critiques of grading it offers.

Week 4: Chapters 5-8

The group's second discussion engaged deeply in the issues with and inaccuracy of “traditional” grading models (e.g. the 100% scale), and we began discussing how grading “works” in alternative models. The group discussed 0-4 (as well as 1, 2, 4) grading systems, which came up in this section of the book, and talked about personal evolutions and experiences using rubrics. We also talked about the role of a collective commitment to the kinds of strategies this book presents; while many of us feel committed to (and have begun making) changes to individual classroom practices, the need to scale up such practices to the department or even the whole college level seems more challenging.

Week 6: Chapters 9-11

These chapters began introducing more specific strategies that promote equity. We engaged some questions from our department about the implications of texts like *Grading for Equity* for the College's current approach to student learning assessment, and how those implications might shape our approach to sharing our learning with the book. We

also talked about personal changes the book has inspired each of us to make and brainstormed what a “collective” experience with the text might look like.

Week 8: Chapters 12-14

We continued our discussion about strategies for sharing our experiences with this text to a larger audience in the college and our department. Issues like scoring only summative assessments and the role of homework were revisited. The role of homework

Week 10: Epilogue

We shared our takeaways from the book and prepared an [email](#) to share these and some valuable resources from the book with our colleagues in the Writing and Literature Department.

Helpful Resources

Folks seemed to find one another and the curricular approaches and materials shared by colleagues to be helpful in thinking through implementing “new to me” approaches to grading and course design. Several group members have arranged to meet informally to continue discussion and application of the book’s concepts in their classrooms. The book itself is also very practically oriented, with lots of very specific suggestions and templates to help illustrate various approaches outlined in the text. There is also a [Grading for Equity website](#) with supplemental materials, testimonials, and opportunities for future professional development.

Outcomes

Individual members of the group shared changes being undertaken in their courses in real time during winter term and/or being planned for implementation in spring. Other group members described how the book validated certain approaches they already use. As a way to share insights with our colleagues and keep the conversation going, we plan to start a “listserv” discussion where we each post meaningful quotes from the book and share some of the questions and insights we had in our FIG with others in our department. We also discussed the possibility of creating a study guide for folks who may wish to read the book in the future. Whatever happens with these formal sharing mechanisms, I am certain that folks who read this book will continue to reflect on and make improvements to the ways they engage in grading. As we move forward in developing and implementing our program assessment plan, I am sure conversations started in the group will be taken up in work groups and departmental discussions, shaping our practices and our conversations for years to come.