

## **Grading and Evaluation Procedures**

### **BTW 250-D2\_06-03, Nipa Patel, Benjamin Krop & Justin Meyer**

#### **EVOKE**

##### **About the Ethnographer**

The topic of subjective grading is of great relevance to our group. Throughout colleges, multiple students are often subjected to grades that might be perceived as unfair; however, who is to say what grade is most deserved? There was an incident where Nipa didn't agree with a grade she received on her portfolio when she was an architecture major in the College of Fine and Applied Arts. She received a "B" on something she thought to be more inventive than her peers who got an "A"; however, there was no justification on why she received this grade. Also, Ben feels as though the majority of his classes' grades depend mostly on tests as opposed to taking all class work into account when measuring performance. This really eliminates any chances of success for those students who are not great test-takers. All four of us are involved in different majors, and it is clear to us that the grading criteria throughout the colleges differ. Our group is well qualified to venture this controversy over grading because as college students we experience the difference in grading procedures and conclude that some are rather subjective. Our group would like to stress the importance of what a negative influence subjective grading can have on students.

BTW 250-D2\_06-03 - Senior in CBA

Nipa Patel - Junior in CBA

Justin Meyer - Junior in Agriculture Finance

Ben Krop - Junior in Engineering

#### **EXPLORE**

##### **Question**

**What questions is your inquiry contingent upon?**

- What is the purpose of grades?
- Explore student body's/instructors' perspectives on the University's grading Curriculum?
- What are various grading procedures and their pros and cons?
- How is grade inflation perceived on campus?
- What steps do instructors take to ensure uniformity across different sections of the same class?
- What precautions are taken to minimize grading subjectivity?

##### **Plan**

**How will you go about answering your inquiry?**

Students often perceive grades as "unfair," there is no perfect method that ensures both that all students will be content with their grades and that grades are serving their intrinsic purpose. Students and instructors often have dissimilar views of the ultimate purpose of grading, which contributes greatly to student feelings of grade bias and unfair evaluation. As a result, instructors must select the method that is most appropriate for the material and students to ensure that grades are assessed as fairly as possible for the given situation.

Ethnographic Research

- Conducted 46 student surveys across campus

-Conducted 6 interviews with professors and teaching assistants  
+ 3 instructors from the English Department  
+ 3 instructors from the Engineering Department

#### Secondary Research

-Books, electronic articles and journals, and other online sources (Google, Wikipedia, etc.)

#### **Files:**

[Timeline.doc](#) (Sun 04/30/2006 17:30)

## **OBSERVE**

### **What observations, or findings are you encountering in your research?**

From the student surveys' data, we analyzed that students in general claimed it is unfair to have different TAs grading different sections of the same class. Secondly, they also felt that the grades were a fair representation of their abilities and efforts. However, majority of them felt that they have been subjected to unfair grading at least once in their college career.

Interviewing the instructors at the University helped us gain a wider scope of the University's grading criteria. We decided to interview instructors from the English and Engineering Department because we feel as though their grading methods vary to a great extent. One field might be perceived as being more subjective than the other, and we wanted to explore what actions instructors took to maximize objectivity in grading.

#### **Files:**

[Student Survey Questions.doc](#) (Sun 04/30/2006 17:38)

[Instructor Interview Questions.doc](#) (Sun 04/30/2006 17:38)

[Survey Result.xls](#) (Mon 05/01/2006 0:38)

The attached file lists all sources we considered when conducting our research.

#### **Files:**

[Group 3 Bibliography.doc](#) (Tue 04/18/2006 23:44)

## **DISCUSS**

### **Discuss your inquiry, taking care to separate speculation from fact or data**

Rough draft

#### **Files:**

[Final Paper 1.doc](#) (Mon 04/24/2006 9:02)

[Roughdraft.doc](#) (Mon 04/24/2006 9:04)

[Roughdraft.doc](#) (Mon 04/24/2006 9:05)

[roughdraft.doc](#) (Sun 04/30/2006 17:50)

## **REFLECT**

### **Link**

**Connect with other resources and materials.**

#### **Files:**

[GradePaper-Final.doc](#) (Mon 05/01/2006 2:41)

“Assessing Learning in Australian Universities: Quality and standards”  
<http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/assessinglearning/06/index.html>

“Assigning Course Grades.”  
<http://search.epnet.com.proxy2.library.uiuc.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=2516394>

“The Origins and Evolutions of Grading Student Writing.”  
<http://www.louisville.edu/~cscart01/compexam.html#Boyd>

“A Different Take on Classroom ‘Fairness.’”  
<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2006/01/27/grading>

“Grade Inflation at UNC – Chapel Hill: A Report to the Faculty Council.”  
<http://www.unc.edu/faculty/faccoun/reports/R2000EPCGrdInfl.PDF>

“The Grading System.” <http://universitysecrets.com/essay02.htm>

“Pros and Cons of Typical grading Systems.”  
<http://depts.washington.edu/grading/plan/procon.htm>

## **Implications**

### **Could your findings have broader implications beyond this inquiry?**

Our group believes that our topic could have other implications such as extending out to explore the different effects of grading inflations or even the appropriateness of grade curving. Our research paper could have taken a different dimension and could have focused more on the effectiveness of teacher evaluations conducted by the students. These evaluations give students the opportunity to communicate the effectiveness of the course, and if they were able to comprehend the course objectives or not. However, we decided to focus primarily on the subjectivity of grading procedures because we feel as though this topic is relevant to not only the learning community of this University but also other institutions.