

Do grades reflect
what students' have
learned?



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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to understand if grades reflect what students have learned over a course period with the recently identified phenomenon of Grade Inflation, especially in higher education. Various literature and academic studies related to the student's perception, the objective of the grading system and its effectiveness, grade inflation, faculty evaluation, and grading criteria were researched to address the question. These sources gave a conclusion of irrelevant correlation between grades and student's abilities, which is influenced by the faculty's expertise, budget crises and evaluation related with universities and faculty members. This conclusion demands the change in present academia, with such enhancement to portrait the actual grades of students, away from inflation to help prevent student be confident over void grades. Present grading system demands the generalization of grades and content with no variation of content and criteria to slowly minimize the growing effect of grade inflation.

Introduction

Education can be quite expensive yet challenging. Since birth, an average child spends almost 1/3 of his life studying. After completion of Education, we seek for a job and get along with it, for the rest of 2/3 of life, until we die or take retirement. However, doing so is still not as easy as described above. In every step of the education process, students must pass the exams with satisfactory grades. The grades only are taken as a medium to determine if a student is eligible for higher education. Various questions arise with this practices. Some of them involve grades accurately measuring what students

have learned. Question on those students' performance who memorize contents to get good grades and forget whatever they learned the next day. Are they still considered intelligent in those subjects? What about those confusions A's where we do not know whether intelligence or memorization has scored?" These questions seem biased but need to be analyzed and answered from this research to get a broad idea of coloration between our grade system and student's intelligent and able. After precise understanding; we can even enhance the grading system or modify according to the needs. Sources, which analyze the impacts on students about grades and perceptions, will be significant to answer this question. We can take examples from successful entrepreneurs who are successful today but had the worst college experience. Their life stories can lead us to explore secret intelligence within students, whose abilities may need enhanced evaluation, and maybe grade would not be a critical factor here. Every student has some distinct abilities; it just takes some work to explore it. This research will especially converge on students who are unaware of their, understanding, and motivate them to study from the outcome of the research question.

Review of Literature

We have been engaged in self-delusion for years, believing our education system is among the best in the world," Education Minister Ruairi Quinn (May 2011).

Evolve of Grading System

Objectives and Criteria

Students had been evaluated in class through different means. But the modern grading system did not exist until late 1800. Previously, students' were assessed through various assessments provided by colleges and universities. However, those measures differ from college to college, so a baseline where every institution can refer back as needed was a necessity. In fact, in the 18th century, there were no standardized means of assessing students with no method by which student performance would compare one institute to another. Just like the currency, where we can instantly transfer from one country to another through the generalization of the banking system as a baseline. Education system demanded a similar method to generalize the performance of Students'. The first attempt to evaluate students systematically appeared in the era of Ezra Stiles, President of Yale University in the 18th century. In 1785, he divided students who were present for an examination into four ranks or grades: optimi, second optimi, inferior and peiores—Latin terms indicating relative quality, best, worse and worst. (Lassahn, Nicole. "History of Grading Systems") .

The objective of the grading system is to describe how well students have perceived the course contents established for the course of study. Specific learning standards must be based to reflect students' grade and their performances . There should be establishment of articulated criteria for grades to make the grading process more fair and evenhanded. Where Students' can use their abilities to dwell more on the content to perceived more of the course content, for better performance, and higher grade. Based on the necessity of grading generalization, The system of grading system has evolved. So far, during that period, the grading criteria have been significant enough to distinguish student precisely. However, later on,

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criteria differed from different teachers and institutions. The course started varying the criteria in determining students' grades which students aren't always informed of. (Guskey, Thomas R., and Jane M. Bailey) believed recognizing that diverse sources of evidence misconstrue the meaning of fair grade, educators in many parts of the world assign multiple grades based on various criteria . This beliefs provide the basis towards generalization approaches (Standardization) to grading. Furthermore, educators recognize among the product, process, and progress learning criteria.

Student Perception of Grades

The present scenario at academia is widely spread out. There is a disruption between students and faculty in perception, and the reasoning behind academic evaluation, exhibiting in a different understanding of the process of grading. According to *Goulden and Griffin (1997)* grades should be determined using established standards more than faculty report that reflecting both the subjectivity of the grading process and student misconceptions of the evaluation process. Since students and faculty play a different and significant role in the academic environment, dispute regarding how grades should be appropriately assigned and what should be taken into consideration in grading needs to be resolve. Differences of expectation and perception generates misunderstanding and conflict between faculty and students, which may misrepresented student perception of academic purpose its proper evaluation (*Greenberger et , 2008*) .

Educational evaluation has completely been upon the assessment of what

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students can demonstrate as opposed to perhaps a more desirable assessment of what knowledge students hold or what learning has occurred (Race, 2014). Alternatively, performance is the factor considered to be most representative of mastery of material and therefore performance is most heavily evaluated by faculty (Adams, 2005). From the perspective of faculty, if proficiency of content hasn't been amply demonstrated, it must be true that students' aren't at their best. Despite any possible argument faculty has to go through during grading, the realities of faculties ability in the academic environment, where the determination of effort attention makes such effort insignificant to educational assessment. As a result, the faculty's reliance on performance results significant for students to appropriately communicate their knowledge or understanding in assessment (Race, 2014). Despite understanding the inability of faculty to adequately assess the effort in grade allocation (Gaultney and Cann, 2001), students continue to perceive effort and its consideration as important to assessment. This concludes, either determined unreasonableness in the expectations of students or a gap in student understanding. This conflict between student desire and reality create a way for student frustration in a situation where faculty-evaluated performance is incompatible with students' perceived effort and its importance to assessment.

GRADE INFLATION AND STUDENT MOTIVATION

Grade inflation is the distribution of a grade to a student who has not yet reached the achievement level represented by that grade, and it has become a recognized phenomenon in college and high school students.

Edwards (2000) relates that higher education institutes are more significant

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issues than the high schools. Grade inflation has impacted on undermining the purposes of the university, altering student-instructor relationships, eliminating the sentry role of the university, and failing to prepare students for the world of work adequately” (Edwards, 2000). Furthermore, various research was done to undermine this burning issue related to student’s career, and the road of the education system. Until 1994 where “ Levine” surveyed more than 4900 colleges where there graduates from the years 1969-1993 are found with the number of A’s given has increased by 4 times while the number of C’s has dropped by 66%” (Edwards, 2000, p. 538) additionally describes that SAT and ACT scores have decreased while proving students deserve the grades they are getting is fallacious.

Grade inflation causes are heavily depended upon the following two factors: faculty evaluations, budget crises (Financially). First one, in colleges and universities most faculty members are evaluated on a regular basis by their students through course evaluation method — professors whose classes have some failing students each semester becomes infamous for being ineffective and likely to be replaced. On the other hand, the professors whose students with a satisfactory class average hold their positions longer and favored by the students, which helps professors to secure job and positive course evaluation. In other words, we can say that Poor grades are not in faculty members economic best interest. They believe that low grades affect faculty ratings with low classes size in future (Beaver, 1997), and ultimate loss of their jobs” (Edwards, 2000, p. 539). When the point difference between grades and evaluation determine whether or not an instructor returns to the classroom the following year, grade inflation is

intentionally hidden behind its consequences. However, on the other side, the student's motivation for understanding might differ from person to person and highly determined factors such as behaviors, background, effort, and academic orientation (Tippin, Gregory K; Lafreniere, Kathryn). Overall, objectives of any students for any class would be to pass the class at any cost at once, which is beneficial both financially and academically, so they do not care about what they have learned over the beautiful "A" on the transcript.

Results and Discussion

After the brief analysis of the studies mentioned above, we can assure that students and the public, in general, grades assigned to our students aren't accurate. There are hidden factors such as faculty evaluation, student's academic orientation, and variation of faculty grading criteria, which have been influencing the determination of student's grades. The baseline of standardization, which differs in the results achieved by students in one institution comparable with similar results obtained by students from another institution, has triggered the term grade inflation where it hasn't mattered much in front of faculty job and position security with easing budgets crises for the university to attract upcoming students.

Conclusion

The analyzed studies confirm the impact of grade inflation that the grades given to students aren't always accurate or may not indicate the achievement of students, which answers our question that grades do not always collaborate with student's intelligence and their learnings. Still yet <https://assignbuster.com/do-grades-reflect-what-students-have-learned/>

research needs to be done to identify what helps to determine the student's ability or what needs to be changed to portrait the real grades of students in the present grading system. Since increase GPA did not increase the standardized score like SAT, Fairfield University in New England has changed its admission criteria to minimize the victims of grade inflation among students. William Abbott (2008), a professor at Fairfield University, said “ While SAT scores arguably are not the best gauge of ability, the fact that our real SAT scores ... were lower in 2003 than they had been 14 years earlier, yet our grade-point average was higher, indicates that our grade inflation cannot be attributed to an improvement in our students' intellectual capacities. Our selectivity ratings bear this out: 49. 4 percent of applicants were admitted in 2003 compared to 37 percent in 1988 (2008, 33-34)”

The statement is a change towards the determination of students able. However, its identification is still a big issue. Keeping marketing, and politics of grade inflation aside from a higher education institute; having authorities of examination for every important course related to higher education can help to generalize grading criteria. This system would eradicate the concept of faculty evaluation and budget crises since the grading criteria are unbiased with no privilege for a faculty member to set up exams or inflate with grades to save his/her position. This system would even motivate students for understanding the content because their examination would be set up and checked by standardized authorities, leaving no chance for easy grades, replica exams, and cheatings resulting student's actual academic grades.

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