

Providing effective & equitable feedback

Tools and techniques for grading

Learning Goals:

After today's meeting, TAs should be able to...

- 1) Describe the features of feedback that is both effective and equitable
- 2) Use grading tools for effective and equitable grading

What is the point of giving students feedback?

Feedback is *effective* when it...

- is aligned to the **learning goals** of the assignment.
- encourages students to adopt a **growth mindset**.
- creates a **dialogue** between student and teacher.

Feedback is *equitable* when it...

- uses **objective criteria** consistently across all submissions

- is free of **implicit or unconscious bias**

Key Grading Practices: Rubrics and feedback

Practice	Features	Reason
using rubrics for every assignment	<p>Rubrics have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• different components or criteria being measured• defined performance levels or weighted point values,• and descriptions of each component/criterion at each level.	
giving detailed feedback on all assignments	<p>Detailed feedback often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• includes a justification of the correct response,• describes why an answer is not correct,• focuses on the task not the student,• and gives positive and constructive feedback.	

An example

Question: (2 points) Explain what a positive control is and why they are used, then give an example of one you might design if you were to conduct an “experiment” at home.

Student response: Positive controls help you decide if an experimental result is an artifact of the experimental design. Suppose you were testing if adding baking soda to houseplant soil increases flowering. A positive control would be a set of houseplants that were given a commercial fertilizer that is demonstrated to increase the number of blooms.

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Point value (per part)	Explanation of positive control (1pt)	Example given (1pt)
0	missing entirely	missing entirely
+0.5	a positive control is correctly defined	the home experiment is described
+0.5	why positive controls are used is explained	the positive control identified is correct

Student Response: Positive controls help you decide if an experimental result is an artifact of the experimental design. Suppose you were testing if adding baking soda to houseplant soil increases flowering. A positive control would be a set of houseplants that were given a commercial fertilizer that is demonstrated to increase the number of blooms.

Example feedback:

- A. Not quite- a positive control receives a treatment that is known to produce a result comparable to what is proposed by your hypothesis.
- B. You gave an explanation of why positive controls are used and not what they are.
- C. 1.5/2 pts
- D. This is a good example of one application of a positive control, but your response is missing a full explanation of what positive controls are. Remember positive controls provide a comparison to a known outcome similar to that predicted by your hypothesis (1.5/2 pts).

What do you like and what is challenging about this process?

Remedies to Grading Challenges

Practice	Features	Reason	Remedies to challenges
<p>using rubrics for every assignment</p>	<p>Rubrics have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different components or criteria being measured • defined performance levels or weighted point values, • and descriptions of each component/criterion at each level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helps you to be more objective and grade fairly • ensures students understand expectations 	<p>Challenge: initial time and effort investment</p> <p>Remedies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rubrics could be reused and recycled for other assignments • rubrics save time otherwise spent disputing grades.
<p>giving detailed feedback on all assignments</p>	<p>Detailed feedback often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a justification of the correct response, • describes why an answer is not correct, • focuses on the task not the student, • and gives positive and constructive feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicates to students they can improve • outlines steps for success 	<p>Challenge: takes time to respond</p> <p>Remedies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a key for common feedback (often included in grading software like Gradescope).

Creating your own rubric and feedback

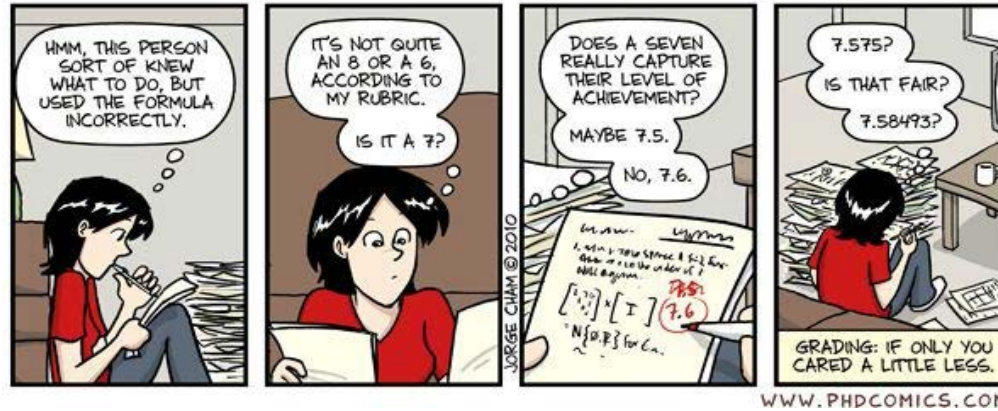
[Open-ended question prompt]

What would your rubric look like for this question?

In your own words, provide this student with feedback on their response.

[Student response]

Practical tips for giving feedback more efficiently



"Piled Higher and Deeper"
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- Look only at what was said, don't try to interpret what might have been meant.
- Make and stick to a rubric that aligns with the assignment goals
 - Don't focus on correcting every single little thing!
- Keep track of the most common pieces of feedback and copy/paste.

Grading fatigue is normal!



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- Shuffle the order of grading between questions.
- Try to stay consistent in your comments throughout.
- Take breaks to walk/stretch.
- Be kind to yourself!

Exit Ticket:

- + What are you taking away from today's discussion of effective and equitable grading?
- Δ Is there anything you still have questions about?

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