

Professional Development Committee

January 31, 2018, 2:45-3:15
Room 420

Members: Steve Bluford, Eric Castro, Carlos Gazulla, Emily Goodell, Helena Miller-Flieg, Paul Molinelli, Kristen Moraine, Carole Nickolai, Jeff Noblejas,

Excused: Patrick Ruff, Ray Orque, Tim Egan

1. Announcements

- [Summer Curriculum Grants](#): Applications are due by Monday, March 26. Please contact to Paul if you're interested in submitting a proposal.
- [Studying Skillful Teaching](#): NOW to be held June 11-14 (M-Th). Please let Paul know if you'd be interested in taking this course, free of charge to all SI faculty (3 graduate units available). Space is limited!
- [Teaching Fellows](#): Consider applying if you have teaching-and-learning topic you'd like to explore.
- [White Privilege Conference](#): To be held 4/4-4/7 (Wed-Sat), in Grand Rapids, MI. Please let Paul, Maricel, or Yosup know if you're interested in attending. SI has sent a contingent since 2008, including our largest ever last year (4 from Social Science, 5 from Religious Studies).
- [Assessment Training Institute](#): To be held this July in Denver. Please let Paul know if you're interested in attending this excellent conference on all things assessment and grading!
- Adrian O'Keefe & Online Astronomy: Monday, 2/12, 3-4
- [Accreditation](#): Our work in Integral Groups will begin at our faculty in-service, 2/20. Faculty and staff will be notified shortly about group assignments. Integral Group Chairs are prepared to help lead this next phase of our self-study process.

2. Work with Assessment/Data

Paul asked committee to take a few minutes to consider how best to set the context for having a productive conversation about school-wide assessment and grading policies. Academic Council had recently begun a similar conversation.

To help identify ways to approach this discussion, the committee participated in a short activity taken from an *Educational Leadership* article entitled, "[Starting the Conversation About Grading](#)" by [Susan Brookhart](#). Committee members first responded individually to the 4 statements (see "Which Do You Believe?") by noting their agreement (with a check) or disagreement (an X) with these statements.

Members then shared their responses in pairs and with the whole group. While there was a great deal of agreement, some committee members disagreed with parts of these statements. For example, discussion surfaced some disagreement about the audience for grades, and whether cooperative skills should be reflected in a student's grade. There was general acknowledgement that some aspects of grading might vary among teaching disciplines. Noting and understanding



Use these discussion points to start a conversation about grading.

- Grades should reflect achievement of intended learning outcomes—whether the school is using a conventional, subject-based report card or a report card that represents these intended learning outcomes as standards.
- The primary audiences for the message conveyed in grades are students and their parents; grading policies should aim to give them useful, timely, actionable information. Teachers, administrators, and other educators are secondary audiences.
- Grades should reflect a particular student's individual achievement. Group and cooperative skills are important, but they should be reflected elsewhere, not in an individual's academic grade.
- Grading policies should be set up to support student motivation to learn. A student should never reach a place where there is no point doing any more work because failure is inevitable.

these and other differences underscored how we'll need to listen to one another as we continue and extend this conversation. It will be important for us to first come to some consensus about the purposes for grading, since this will inform or direct any policy decisions we eventually decide to make. And at the heart of any discussion about the purpose of assessment/grading is our shared beliefs about what constitutes learning, including how (and why) we teach.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Paul sent the [Brookhart article](#) to the committee, as well as Guskey's, "[What Is the Purpose of Grading?](#)" taken from his book *Answers to Essential Questions About Standards, Assessments, Grading, & Reporting*. Each of these are excellent, short pieces on this topic.

Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting: 2/28/18