# THE IMPACT OF GRADING ON STUDENTS' LEARNING

## Umida Jalilova
*English Teacher, School 11, Navoi, Uzbekistan*

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM (WHY IS THIS A PROBLEM AND FOR WHO?)

I have been practicing teaching for a number of years and the worst thing in my career that I do not enjoy is grading. To my mind, grades create an unhealthy school environment based on the "survival of the fittest" principles. In this unhealthy environment, students lose their integrity and motives, as well as they seem to be threatened with their bad grades or marks rather than feel engaging. Grades can depress pupils so much and when they get bad grades, they are not able to focus long enough to get things done. The problem is our educational system are dedicated by traditionalists who pretty much act in our outdated educational system that is infallible and refuse to significantly update it. And, in these schools, pupils are being taught to only know and memorize. I do not believe grading is being used in a traditional classroom in an effective way, as the purpose for grades are often misused. They are only snapshots of the "general" performance of a student at any time. I think grades are overrated, but no counter-productive. In exam-like conditions, the learner learns to perform under pressure fearing of something and feeling oppressive. They worry about marks because they have to deliver more than they receive: to their parents, teachers, colleges, in other words, to all that want those marks. Parents pressure them over bad grades and compare them to theirs, but every pupil has their strengths and weaknesses. As a result, pupils try to get high grades, because they do not want their parents to be pissed of, but their grades are not what they are worth, because they get grades but forget everything after each test. The reason is that they do not really care about what subjects they are learning, they just want to have good grades and for them grades are the only thing that matter. And, the irony is that some of them get good grades because they have a pretty good memory, but they actually could not care about the material and to fully understand. On the other hand, when it comes to the quizzes, some students get so anxious thinking of failing, as well as, because of depression and anxiety, they could not concentrate and their memory can be cloudy and they forget everything during the test and feel disappointed when they see the bad result, although they study hard. As a result, they become desperate for the future and obviously, it hurts their self-esteem. We should have schooling in the first place for preparing students for their lives and careers, but not give them a sense of frustration.

## WHAT IS YOUR CREATIVE ANSWER OR ANSWERS FOR THIS PROBLEM?

The point of the class should not be the grade, it should be to help grow skills and move on. We need more projects and assignments based on degrees and replace exams and test with projects that are completed with percentage points. Students can show their ability in a fair way by presenting portfolios or projects to give evidence of their knowledge in written form or via an interview. The most important thing is not telling the students what needs to be in the report exactly, and letting them explore the subject and figure out what needs to be discussed. This obviously takes a lot more effort than simply giving someone marks but is also much more informative. In addition, we can use homework as practice by assign questions as optional ungraded work. If a student wants to answer the questions and write out answers to be prepared for the fishbowl discussion, it is great. If another student is just not ready, it is not disaster. Some just do not like doing homework, but can enhance their understandings during the class and are able to demonstrate themselves joining the discussion. Different brains need different things, so our aim is not criticizing or discriminating, just finding a way to show their abilities and giving a sense of credibility in their knowledge. Sometimes, I do not grade my pupils' homework assignments, which is awesome for my students, because they know and I know how hard it is, but I correct their answers the next day during the class by giving some explanations according to their mistakes. By this way, they can develop the ability of self-evaluation which means that they reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and work on themselves to do their best.

## WHY ARE THESE ANSWERS CREATIVE/INNOVATIVE?

The current educational system is overly standardized that does not let people explore their interests. I think that it is a wasting talent, all we can do as teachers is encouraging students to go beyond their comfort zone, pushing them to think differently in creative ways rather than to urge to remember. Opportunities must be given to the students and they should be taught with constructivism. I really want to develop well-rounded students and citizens for the future of our world. Finding out about our students' flaws and potential must help us come up with a good guide to future prospects of students. We need to reflect and rationalize thoroughly in order to become effective teachers.

Only the teacher can identify the strength of students and lead to dreams come true by inspiring and motivating, not showing their lack of ability. Being able to determine your students' strength and weaknesses, as well as ensuring the students' best performance outcomes are the strategies that makes a teacher more effective. Every teacher has their own strategies to improve and broaden the knowledge of their students and handle their learning environment. An effective teacher absolutely manages to improve students' learning, as the general outcome of the learning is of primary importance in teaching. It helps you to be a great model as a teacher. Evaluation factors should not influence students' mood, as the increase of stress level hinders learning outcomes. By supporting activities during the class, students learn more while they have fun, and they do not feel pressure like: "I have to get at least a 70 on this test or I will get in troubles with the teacher, my parents, and people who attempt to judge me based on a number". If a teacher ensures her or his students learn with a sense of inspiration, she or he becomes an effective teacher. A teacher can suggest a lot by making comments and giving feedbacks on their work, as well as assist his/her students when necessary in order to allow them to see what has to be changed and improved. It is important to mention that nice comments always improve their confidence.

## WHO IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE? (WHO COULD OR SHOULD USE YOUR CREATION?)

The target audience mainly consists of educators who are responsible to teach students and deliver lessons in productive ways, as well as authorities who are concerned with the quality of education. Unfortunately, in education system, so few people in power that can make a difference and are actually trying to correct the situation and improve the standard of learning and what is actually important in the real life. Everyone who works within the educational system should not ignore the root causes of the problems in schools in terms of grading system. Where one teacher stands in front of 20 kids having strains, different needs, different gifts, different dreams, but all of them are taught the same thing in the same way. School systems are flawed in treating every student the same, and, in spite of their a range of passions, interests, strengths and weaknesses, none of them are considered. Education system should be to make a base for the kids to be creative. Consequently, they can be able to invent things that can shape the future of the world. Teachers should also care about pupils' personal education rather than care about how high their grades are. If a child had phenomenal secret talents, they should get to bring it out, because schools has such a specific and strict way of teaching. Grading should never be prioritized by educators rather than actual teaching, as well as they should more care about the students as individuals and their future.

## HOW DID YOU REACH THE CREATIVE SOLUTION?

My strong desire of creating ideal schools that is designed to create boredom to show abilities lead me to think deeply how to solve problems of depression and stress related to grading. At first, all pupils feel that school is a place to socialize and entertain themselves, but later, it sounds like for them: "welcome to school" and "here you will feel useless, suicidal, and depressed". They realize that school is a place to get good grades. But, what their grades mean, literally nothing, it only means they are good at the tests and memorizing, but not things that they will need to be good at in life. Pupils are always forced like robots to remember but not learn anything. We should consider that how only remembering will help them, as well as how schools can be designed more better to fit pupils' needs. Each one of students has a different talent and something they are not good at. It is true that many teachers just try to make sure if a pupil know the information, but do not care if he/she enjoys it or not. Each of students is so obsessed with the grades and do not see what the problem they are facing. Teachers should always be aware of what their students are interested in, why they are interested in it, and getting them to the point of being able to learn more. If they feel uninterested, they need to be motivated and instructed to learn other things. It will connect them with other people that are interested in the same things and they can get more and more efficiently. If they are struggling in something then we actually help them rather than say, "get over it and learn it".

## HOW COULD THIS SOLUTION BE IMPLEMENTED? WHAT WOULD BE THE NEXT STEPS TO PERFECT, DISSEMINATE, AND GENERALLY MAKE YOUR CREATIVE SOLUTION AVAILABLE?

As a human, we are not perfect and we need someone's help and guidance. Every pupil needs a tutor who will teach life and how to build life. I wish schools and parents appreciate the children's talent rather than their memory power. School should not be about getting grades, but it should be about learning. Students connect success with a number or a letter and literally think they are worthless if they are not perfect. Apparently, a lot of students learn to receive a good grade and there is too much emphasis on grades than the actual content and the use of it outside school. Many students do not actually and truly know what they are learning. So, grades should not be used as a weapon, because grading is not essential to the instructional process. On the other hand, a grade is just a product quality, students learn to memorize and replicate. The grade just shows how well they are able to perform rather than really learn. I really wish students had more opportunities to explore themselves, and felt support every time rather than struggling for their grades. It is crucial to start from a younger age exploring new possibilities rather than only focusing on grades and not being so afraid if things do not go as planned. It takes time, but we have to reshape education from the inside. Schools

should not keep students to think inside the box rather than outside of it.

## WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF YOUR CREATIVE IDEA OR IDEAS?

Grades mean nothing, but failure is a key to success because if you do not try and fail, you are not challenging yourself in things you do not know, which means you are not learning anything, just regurgitating things you already know. We do not need grades as a means of pressure, however we do need assessments to do properly so that it informs students and their teacher how students can improve their skills, knowledge and understandings. Looking at the grades of students in high school is very important, as high schools can give someone who deserves a better place in the future. Schools expect students to get good grades, but they do not care what actually students want to do and all they want is from students to memorize. It does not matter if they understand or not and it does not matter if pupils can remember it the day after exam. Grades are no in way indicative of a student's self-worth, self-respect, originality, creativity, teamwork skills, interpersonal skills and their imagination. Grades are merely a tool of coercion used to judge or label students on their blind and passive conformity towards the educational bureaucrats' purely subjective and superficial standards. As a result, schools make pupils stressed because they force pupils to memorize things and take standardized tests for a number that barely does anything. They literally prioritize that over learning. Grades do not define intelligence, but it can be about effort, motivation, trying to learn something new. Some students do not study hard, because schools make them procrastinate and lazy. Some personally love learning but grades always discourage them. Some students are very capable, but do not try their hardest, or do not perform their full potential or maybe do not have enough motive. Schools need a reboot, as they are outdated and lame and kill creativity. We should kids to question things more than anything.

## WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION FROM DOING THIS PROJECT?

By doing this project, I realize that the most profound original creative ideas is so multidimensional in its nature that holds a factual inspiration for every field of existence to enhance the untapped creative potential still unexplored within the whole humanity. Anything can be taught, it just depends on the skills of the teacher to be able to intrigue the students enough to want to listen. Creativity is so valuable in life that it needs to be taught, because we need kids get better, not worse at creating things, building things, and solving problems as they go through school. I think the processing of thoughts is education. Fostering creativity or creating the appropriate environment that would allow for creativity should be the main responsibility for schools rather than judging students' grades. People think

of teaching as showing or instructing someone how to do something and they are not wrong. That is really the definition of teaching. But, you cannot really show someone how to be creative, since everyone is creative naturally, educators must provide them with the right resources, encourage them to follow their interests and use their core strength, and give them autonomy. Creativity can happen at random moments, it is not very predictable. That is why organizations often fail to teach creativity to their employees, because they are trying to teach them the process of creativity, but actually, creativity is anti-process, it is not something you can follow step by step or force in a set timeline. It is the free flowing of one's own ideas and making connections, both of which happen as they work on something. Different people approach it differently and inner process cannot be taught by the actual definition of teaching. We can only cultivate creativity by changing the way we teach and educate. We can start this by stopping barking orders at students and trying to get them all to conform to one path and curriculum like in the current prevailing education system. Creative minds needs its voyage and adventure, and it cannot do that within the confinements of a fishbowl and feeling concern, tension and depression with their grades.

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