

## SUS GRADE INFLATION BIBLIOGRAPHY

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### Articles

[Abbott, W. M. \(2008\). The politics of grade inflation: A case study. \*Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning\*, 40\(1\), 32-37. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

The author examines the reluctance of most American colleges and universities to address grade inflation. In addressing the problem of grade inflation, the author describes two proposals he made to his faculty's Educational Planning Committee. The first, presented in spring 2002, proposed that two new items be added to each course listed on students' transcripts: the number of students in the course section and the average grade awarded. At the end of the transcript, a cumulative average of all the grades in all of the course sections would be listed alongside the student's own cumulative average. Anyone examining the transcript could thus see how well the student had performed relative to the other students in his or her courses. The author counters the following three objections from faculty colleagues: (1) All students can excel; (2) Academic freedom extends to grading; and (3) We must not disadvantage our students. Following the Academic Council's rejection of the author's transcript-notation measure, he proposed that the university registrar make available to all department chairs, at the end of every semester (1) the average grade given in each course taught in the department, and (2) the average grade awarded by each department in the school or college for that semester. This second proposal passed the Educational Planning Committee in 2004 but was voted down by the Academic Council. The primary objection was that this information might be used against a professor in the tenure, promotion, or merit-pay processes. The author's experience suggests that anyone seeking to curb grade inflation must, early in the process, thoroughly inform the various constituencies of the ways in which they are collectively harmed by the inflation.

[Adelman, C. \(2001\). Putting on the glitz: How tales from a few elite institutions form America's impressions about higher education. \*Connection: New England's Journal of Higher Education and Economic Development\*, 15\(3\), 24-30. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

Describes how what happens in the most elite institutions of higher education in the United States

creates the body of knowledge and attitudes by which most colleges are judged. Among the issues for which this phenomenon is apparent are those of grade inflation, graduation rates, and core curricula.

[Adelman, C. \(1995\). \*The new college course map and transcript files: Changes in course-taking and achievement, 1972-1993\*. National Institute on Postsecondary Education report. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

This report presents a taxonomy of precisely what is studied, where, and by whom, in universities, community colleges, and postsecondary trade schools in the United States. It is based on data from the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (NLS-72) and the High School and Beyond/Sophomores (HSB/So) survey of high school sophomores scheduled to graduate in 1982. With the addition of the HSB/So transcript sample covering the period 1981-1993, it is brought up to date. Section 1 describes how the data bases on which the taxonomy of courses and analyses of course-taking, credits, grades, and degrees were constructed and edited. Section 2 presents the long-term educational attainment of 2 cohorts: the NLS-72 and HSB/So students. Section 3 presents the taxonomy of over 1,000 course categories in postsecondary education that was derived from the HSB/So transcript sample. Section 4 uses 809 course categories to demonstrate how enrollments were distributed over instructional type. Section 5 focuses on the core courses taken by the two cohorts of students. Section 6 presents data on what students studied and how this has changed since the 1970s. Section 7 presents data on grade inflation and course failure rates. A conclusion provides next steps and illustrative issues. Two appendixes provide information on statistical procedures and data sources.

[Anglin, P. M., & Meng, R. \(2000\). \*Evidence on grades and grade inflation at Ontario's universities\*. \*Canadian Public Policy / Analyse De Politiques\*, 26\(3\), 361-368. Retrieved February 21, 2008, from JSTOR database.](#)

Using information on first-year university grades from across Ontario, we examine whether or not there has been grade inflation by discipline. In a survey of seven universities for the periods 1973-74 and 1993-94, we find significant grade inflation in various Arts and Science programs. The rate of inflation is not uniform. Some subjects, such as Mathematics experienced little or no change in average grades at most universities, while English and Biology experienced significant grade inflation.

[Basinger, D. \(1997\). \*Fighting grade inflation: A misguided effort?\* \*College Teaching\*, 45\(3\), 88-91. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

Inflated college grades reflect an underlying problem: inappropriate content, modes of presentation, and modes of assessment. Many popular assumptions about how to address the question of standards (modifying transcripts, freeing teachers from external pressure, using grades as an indicator of quality) emphasize grades rather than standards. College teachers should not fight grade inflation per se, but continue to address standards.

[Boretz, E. \(2004\). \*Grade inflation and the myth of student consumerism\*. \*College Teaching\*, 52\(2\), 42-46. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

The widespread acceptance of the phrase "grade inflation" poses a potentially damaging overstatement in reference to higher education. Grades are at an all-time high, but a review of the literature demonstrates that the improvement is not incongruous with a rise in faculty development programs and increased varieties of student support services. Students are not consumers who demand high grades from instructors in exchange for favorable teaching evaluations; instead, students aim to succeed through a communal effort to support their learning, and colleges and universities are rising to the challenge.

[Bowen, R. W. \(2006\). Bs are rare. \*Academe\*, 92\(6\), 87. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

The author responds to a commentary in the Chronicle of Higher Education which faults the American Association of University Professors for failing to address the problem of rising grades. According to the article, the failure is evidence that the association is not interested in making the profession more accountable. The author recounts how he led a failed campaign on his campus to address grade inflation when he served as a university president.

[Cavanaugh, J. K. \(2006\). What did you get? A faculty grade comparison. \*Quality Assurance in Education: An International Perspective\*, 14\(2\), 179-186. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Emerald database.](#)

This study investigates how the increased use of part-time and nontenure-track instructors may result in grade inflation. Design/methodology/approach ? This research uses ten years of registrar data at a Midwest State (USA) institution to perform a multiple regression grade analysis. Findings ? Evidence is found that part-time and nontenure-track instructors give higher grades even after accounting for many alternative explanations for grade differences. Research limitations/implications ? The source for the data used for the study is one public institution. Additional studies from a wider range of institution types would be necessary before more definite conclusions can be drawn. Originality/value ? This paper extends the work performed by a number of other authors by analyzing a significantly longer-time period and by using data not specific to a particular discipline. In addition, this study expands upon past studies by including full-time nontenure-track faculty whose numbers are increasing rapidly in higher education. A multiple regression analysis is also used that provides for more robust results and controls for many alternative explanations of grade differences.

[Chen, S., & Cheng, D. X. \(1999\). \*Remedial education and grading: A case study approach to two critical issues in American higher education\*. Research report submitted to the Research Foundation of the City University of New York. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database. \(ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED442433\).](#)

This study, which focuses on one college of the City University of New York (CUNY), is in two parts. The first part is a paper titled "Open Admissions and CUNY in Crisis: A Comparison of Remedial and Non-Remedial Students"; the second paper is titled "Factors Affecting Grading Practices." The first

study examined the difference between students who received remediation and those who did not need it, and assessed the differential impact of open and selective admissions. Sixteen data tables and 7 figures are included. The study found that students' native language played a major role in determining the need for remediation; that remedial students narrowed the academic performance gap as compared to nonremedial students during the normal 4-year period of college study; and that students with a greater need for remediation required a longer period of retention. The second paper discussed practical concerns of grade inflation. Findings revealed that adjunct faculty gave higher grades than full-time faculty; that faculty rank had only a marginal effect on grading; that grades in the humanities and social sciences were higher than in science and technology; and that the higher the course level, the higher the average grade.

[Clayson, D. E. \(2005\). Performance overconfidence: Metacognitive effects or misplaced student expectations? \*Journal of Marketing Education\*, 27\(2\), 122-129. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

Prior research has shown that students consistently overestimate their performance on academic exams, with the error being inversely related to their grades. The effect has been explained as a matter of competency. If true, then students who do not know what they do not know are put in a double bind. They do not have the cognitive ability to recognize their own level of skills and consequently are unaware of any need to change or develop those skills. Another explanation of the effect suggests that students are generally aware of their performance but consistently overestimate their abilities in a systematic fashion. This study examines these two hypotheses and finds no evidence that the overestimation was due to lack of cognitive competence. It appears to be a systematic effect, perhaps determined by a students' past experience and expectations.

[Conley, D. T. \(2000\). \*Who is proficient: The relationship between proficiency scores and grades\*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database. \(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED445025\)](#)

This paper examines the relationship between the grades teachers give their students and the scores external raters give the same students' work when using a common set of standards and criteria. Data were collected from 78 high school teachers participating in the Proficiency-Based Admission Standards System (PASS) project to establish standards for the Oregon University system. These teachers collected work from approximately 2,200 students over 1 academic year. Each teacher focused on one or two of the defined "proficiencies" in English or mathematics, and each collected multiple pieces of work from each of their students in targeted classes. Each teacher brought five to nine of these collections to be reviewed by trained reviewers, either other teachers or university professors. Findings suggest that proficiency scores are measuring something related to, but not the same as, grades. The degree of correlation between the two does suggest a relatively linear relationship between scores and grades, and that the relationship is in the expected direction. Statistical analyses also indicated that the distributions of proficiency scores and grades were statistically different. Stepwise regression analyses found little relationship between the grading system a teacher used and whether or not a student was proficient.

These findings make a case for the existence of grade inflation.

[Cook, R., Butcher, I., & Raeside, R. \(2006\). Recounting the scores: An analysis of the QAA subject review grades 1995–2001. \*Quality in Higher Education\*, 12\(2\), 135-144. Retrieved February 21, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.](#)

In this paper the grades awarded in the subject level review process that ran in England between 1995 and 2001 are examined. These grades have subsequently been used to sustain most published league tables and are often cited in debates about institutional quality. However, the grades were never subject to any moderation, either at the time of the individual visit or subsequently. Accordingly, there are substantial variations between subjects and marked grade inflation over time. This paper considers how to control for these effects and, once this is done, what the impact on the published league tables would be. The difference between the adjusted and unadjusted scores are significant and this further calls into doubt both the validity of the original process and the uses to which the outputs have subsequently been put. This serves as a warning to other quality assurance agencies who have used or are considering using audits based on subject review.

**Correa, H. (2001). A game theoretic analysis of faculty competition and academic standards. *Higher Education Policy*, 14(2), 175-182. no full text available –use [DOCUMENT EXPRESS](#).**

Explaining that grade inflation may result from the professor's competition for favorable student evaluations, asserts that the Theory of Games could be useful for analyzing interactions among professors and their impact on the number of students attracted to their courses. Presents a model based on these assumptions and analyzes policy-relevant consequences that can be derived from it.

[Correlates of college grades. \(2005\). \*ASHE Higher Education Report\*, 30\(6\), 9-14. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

This article presents information on College grading practices. It is an exceptionally complex phenomenon because it is subject to both external social forces and internal changes of the participants, policies and practices and other factors. Thus, a variety of factors can affect student grades in college. To identify the correlates of college grades, both the participants in the grading process and the environmental contexts contribute to the final product, college grades. Student grades in a given course are an indicator of student performance in the eyes of the faculty member. For this reason, students, faculty, contextual measures of the course, discipline, and the institution are major components in determining college grades and explaining the differences among college grades. Social contexts outside higher education can influence college grading, but outside social influences are largely beyond the control of a higher education institution. Inside the higher education system, the institution and academic discipline are two primary organizational formats that affect academic activities and grading practices. In a time of increasing concern about grade inflation, doubts arise concerning the validity of using grades as an indicator of student performance. Yet there remains no other direct measure of student performance.

[Cushman, T. \(2003\). Who best to tame grade inflation? \*Academic Questions\*, 16\(4\), 48-56. Retrieved February 21, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.](#)

Explores the problem of grade inflation in U.S. higher education. Factors contributing to grade inflation; Implication of grade inflation for the teaching professionals; Reasons for the difficult battle against grade inflation; Consequences for those who are brave enough to deflate grades and organize others to do so.

[Dowling, W. C. \(2003\). Meaningless grades and a new dishonesty. \*Academic Questions\*, 16\(4\), 57-62. Retrieved February 21, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.](#)

Discusses the impact of grade inflation on cheating habits of students. Different definitions of cheating; Overview of the problem of grade inflation; Logic behind academic cheating; Role of ethics in the prevention of the incidence of cheating.

[Ediger, M. \(2001\). \*Grade inflation in higher education\*. \(ERIC opinion paper\). Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database. \(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED452263\)](#)

The topic of grade inflation, the awarding of too many "A's" and "B's", is frequently mentioned in the literature on higher education. Many educational philosophies have suggested ways to evaluate students fairly. Some professors have used the bell-shaped curve as a model, giving grades according to the normal distribution curve regardless of the quality of students in the class. There are many reasons why this does not work well, and the practice may result in too many students getting poor grades. Portfolios have become an increasingly common way to evaluate the achievement of college students. As a purposeful collection of knowledge and products or skills of the student, the portfolio may contain several types of materials. They have the advantage of revealing connections to what has been learned, rather than the demonstration of achievement in isolation. Subjectivity is involved in grading no matter the approach taken. Even the term "grade inflation" is subjective. However, each university instructor needs to be accountable and fair in giving grades to students.

[Edwards, C. H. \(2000\). Grade inflation: The effects on educational quality and personal well being. \*Education\*, 120\(3\), 538. Retrieved February 21, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.](#)

Focuses on the causes and effects of grade inflation in United States colleges and universities. Negative effects of grade inflation on academic standards and the psychological well-being of students; Changes contributing to grade inflation, including budgetary pressures of universities; How efforts to build students' self-esteem actually damages their self-worth; Outlook for the revision of traditional grading systems.

[Eiszler, C. F. \(2002\). College students' evaluations of teaching and grade inflation. \*Research in Higher Education\*, 43\(4\), 483-501. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

Examined whether the use of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness has been a contributing factor

to a trend of grade inflation in a mid-sized, public university in the Midwest. Found a predictive relationship between student ratings of teaching and expected grades and an encouragement over time of grade inflation.

[Felton, J., & Koper, P. T. \(2005\). Nominal GPA and real GPA: A simple adjustment that compensates for grade inflation. \*Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education\*, 30\(6\), 561-569. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

Grade inflation is a longstanding problem whose seriousness is demonstrated by a wide variety of studies of grade distributions. A few institutions have changed the information on their transcripts in an effort to account for it. Proposals to index grades have been largely unsuccessful for a variety of reasons. A simple index, the Real GPA, is calculated as a ratio of the individual students instructor-assigned GPA to the average GPA of the class and expressed numerically on the same scale as the inflated assigned grade. Recorded on transcripts next to the Nominal GPA, the Real GPA makes the relative degree of inflation in a transcript immediately visible and creates positive pressures on academic standards.

[Fincher, M. \(2006\). Grade inflation in accelerated adult degree programs: The impact of faculty development on grade differentiation. \*Journal of Continuing Higher Education\*, 54\(3\), 36-41. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

The article discusses a study on grade inflation in accelerated degree programs for working adults affected by intensive faculty development activities. Accelerated degree programs for adult students motivate the learning process by demanding high levels of group interaction and collaborative activity. The study results revealed that faculty development focused on group learning and grading techniques is related to a more stringent standard for grades.

[Frank, M. L., & Feeney, L. \(2006\). Plus/minus grading: A within instructor comparison. \*College Student Journal\*, 40\(4\), 852-856. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

A three semester, within instructor, interrupted time series analysis of grading practices was conducted in order to observe the effects of the implementation of a plus minus grading system. Over 260 individual instructor's grades were compared before and after implementation of plus minus grading. The results indicate no overall effect of the grading practice on average student grades at the college. Plus minus grading seems to have no impact on grade inflation or grade deflation.

[French, D. P. \(2005\). Grade inflation. \*Journal of College Science Teaching\*, 34\(6\), 66-67. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

Provides information on the existence of grade inflation in the educational system in the U.S. Proposal to add the Rank in Class category to transcripts for every class; Reasons why faculty hold inappropriate standards that result to grade inflation; Effect of ranking the students on their performance.

[Germain, M., & Scandura, T. A. \(2005\). Grade inflation and student individual differences as systematic](#)

[bias in faculty evaluations. \*Journal of Instructional Psychology\*, 32\(1\), 58-67. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

The media has recently exposed that grade inflation is a concern for higher education in North America. Grade inflation may be due to consumerism by universities that now compete for students. Keeping students happy (and paying) may have been emphasized more than learning. We review the literature on faculty evaluation and present a model that incorporates students' individual differences and grade inflation as sources of bias in teaching evaluations. To improve teaching effectiveness, and avoid consumerism in higher education, faculty evaluations must begin to focus on students and the reciprocal role of grade inflation in teaching evaluation.

[Grading problems in higher education. \(2005\). \*ASHE Higher Education Report\*, 30\(6\), 1-7. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

This article presents information on grading problems in higher education. The crusade against grade inflation is occurring in a new arena. Some argue that grade inflation in higher education is a "dangerous myth" because the discussed phenomenon has been accepted on faith, not on the basis of data and reasoned analysis. The first purpose of this report is to delineate a conceptual framework to help understand various grading problems in college. Without a shared frame of reference, conversations about grade inflation are likely to be unproductive and possibly counterproductive. Second, this report summarizes empirical evidence about college grades and grading practices through the use of the proposed conceptual framework. Third, this report aims to reconcile the conflicting arguments about college grades. The underlying forces responsible for the grading problem are also identified. Last, the emerging practices and innovative proposals used to address the varied problems surrounding grade inflation are discussed.

[Grove, W. A., & Wasserman, T. \(2004\). The life-cycle pattern of collegiate GPA: Longitudinal cohort analysis and grade inflation. \*Journal of Economic Education\*, 35\(2\), 162-174. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

Individual semester-by-semester undergraduate grade point average for each of the eight semesters of the collegiate academic life cycle for five entire student cohorts for the classes of 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 at a large, private university in the northeast (N = 12,663) reveal a "check-mark" pattern: students' grades fell in the second semester, rose thereafter, and slumped in the last academic term. Attrition and participation in the Greek system explain over half of the longitudinal change in academic achievement. A comparison of the five cohorts of students indicates a rate of grade inflation comparable to that obtained for multischool studies covering the period 1960 to the late 1990s.

[Hamid, Z. \(1988\). Grade inflation: A way out. \*Journal of Economic Education\*, 19\(3\), 217-226. Retrieved February 21, 2008, from ABI/INFORM Global database.](#)

Over the last two decades, we have seen the emergence of grade inflation in all levels of education (Carney et al. 1978; Kolevzon 1981; Millman et al. 1983). This erosion of grading standards has had

harmful consequences for faculty, the university, employers, and students themselves. The harm comes from the ambiguity and noncomparability of grades within and among departments, schools, and universities.

[Hassel, H., & Lourey, J. \(2005\). The dea\(r\)th of student responsibility. \*College Teaching\*, 53\(1\), 2-13. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

More than eleven hundred university students were surveyed to determine attitudes toward learning and accountability. Apathy, absenteeism, and grade inflation emerged as contributing to the lack of student accountability. This article suggests institutional changes to reanimate college classrooms: explicit expectations; smaller, engaged classes; absenteeism consequences; grading consistency; elimination of the extra credit model; and reorganizing responsibility for retention and enrollment.

[Higbee, J. L. \(2005\). A "grade A" controversy: Student perspectives. \*Research & Teaching in Developmental Education\*, 21\(2\), 65-72. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

Presents information on the perception of students of University of Minnesota General College about responding to grade inflation by limiting the percentage of As a teacher can assign. Implementation of Princeton University's new policy to combat grade inflation; Criticisms of the new policy; Proposal of an alternative norm-referenced grading, which fosters competition rather than collaboration among students.

**Horn, J. (2000). The lowest common denominator: How Texas colleges of education are failing teachers and students. *Texas Education Review*, 1(1), 27-46. no full text available – use [DOCUMENT EXPRESS](#).**

Examines perceived incompetence within Texas colleges of education, discussing: whether schooling promotes equality; prior analyses of the issue; grade inflation and social promotion; and student teachers' attitudes and curricular preferences. Overall, admissions standards are too low, resulting in marginal teachers who retard students' academic development. Student teachers appear unaware of the important role of students' individual differences on educational outcomes.

[Kamber, R., & Biggs, M. \(2004\). Grade inflation: Metaphor and reality. \*Journal of Education\*, 184\(1\), 31-37. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.](#)

Grade inflation has become a general term for teachers and administrators in recent times and is an ambiguous denomination which needs to be identified. The allegory and reality of grade inflation is discussed.

[Kernan, A., Toby, J., Gottfried, P., & Weissberg, R. \(2002\). Symposium: Pleasing the academic customer. \*Academic Questions\*, 15\(2\), 39. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

Discusses the emergence of another kind of higher education during the 1960s in the United States. Results of the social revolution; Factors contributing to the creation of the open university; Disadvantages of grade inflation; Americans' belief that grading is an anti-democratic, judgmental act which in any form manifests the elitist view that all people are not equal.

[Kezim, B., Pariseau, S. E., & Quinn, F. \(2005\). Is grade inflation related to faculty status? \*Journal of Education for Business\*, 80\(6\), 358-363. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

The authors performed a statistical analysis to investigate whether grade inflation existed in the business school at a small private college in the northeast region of the United States. The results showed that grade inflation existed and exhibited a linear trend over a 20-year period. The authors found that grade inflation was related to faculty status with significant differences seen between mean grade point averages of students being taught by tenured and adjunct faculty and between those students taught by nontenured and adjunct faculty. They also found that average grades given by adjunct faculty were higher than those of either tenured or nontenured faculty. Thus, the results indicate the increased use of adjunct faculty exacerbates grade inflation in higher education.

[King, M. \(2005\). Voluntary conscription: Enlisting the children of Lake Wobegone in the battle against grade inflation. \*College Literature\* 32\(1\), 127-145. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

Anecdotal evidence and statistical evidence indicate that undergraduate grades have risen over the past several years. Examination of this upward movement has resulted in an increasingly polarized and unpleasant grade inflation debate occurring both within the academy and in the mainstream media. Despite the belligerent tone of this grade inflation debate, little progress has been made in realigning undergraduate grades to a more realistic standard. This essay seeks to begin that realignment process, not by vilifying students, instructors, or the media, but rather, by promoting a classroom level, student-centered activity that seeks to form a more accurate consensus on the nature of (and relative scarcity of) true excellence. By using students' innate sense of scarcity of excellence and encouraging them to evaluate the work of their peers, the instructor may create conditions under which he or she feels comfortable evaluating undergraduate student work realistically.

[Kohn, A. \(2002, November 8\). The dangerous myth of grade inflation. \*Chronicle of Higher Education\*, 49, B7-B9. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

Examines public worries about grade inflation. States that these concerns are neither new nor well-founded. Asserts that these "myths" perpetuate a tendency to confuse quality with difficulty.

**Kolevzon, M. S. (1981). Grade inflation in higher-education - a comparative-study. *Research in Higher Education*, 15(3), 195-212. Retrieved February 27, 2008, from Web of Science database. no full text available – use [DOCUMENT EXPRESS](#).**

No abstract available.

[Krautmann, A. C., & Sander, W. \(1999\). Grades and student evaluations of teachers. \*Economics of Education Review\*, 18\(1\), 59-63. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ScienceDirect database.](#)

Revisits determinants of college student evaluations in a model allowing for the possibility that (expected) grades are simultaneously determined. Estimates evaluations using both ordinary least squares and two-stage least squares, finding that grades do affect a college instructor's evaluation. Results suggest that instructors can "buy" better evaluations via more lenient grading.

[Kuh, G. D., & Hu, S. \(1999\). Unraveling the complexity of the increase in college grades from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. \*Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis\*, 21\(3\), 297-320. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from JSTOR database.](#)

Studied the factors contributing to the widely reported increase in average undergraduate grades by analyzing grades of 22,792 students from the mid-1980s and 29,464 from the mid-1990s. Found evidence of grade inflation in some cases, and grade deflation in others. Findings indicate that academic effort was rewarded consistently across time at all institutions.

**Lacher, D. A., & Wagner, S. M. (1987). Mcat scores to grade-point ratio - an index of college grade inflation. *College and University*, 62(3), 201-206. Retrieved February 27, 2008, from Web of Science database.** no full text available – use [DOCUMENT EXPRESS](#).

No abstract available

[Lawler, P. A. \(2001\). Grade inflation, democracy, and the Ivy League. \*Perspectives on Political Science\*, 30\(3\), 133. Retrieved February 21, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.](#)

Focuses on issues concerning grade inflation within universities and colleges in the United States. Role of the affirmative action in grade inflation; Role of democracy in grade inflation; How political correctness caused grade inflation.

[Lindsay, N. K., Howell, S. L., Laws, R. D., & Chico, N. \(2005\). Investigating grade inflation in continuing higher education. \*Journal of Continuing Higher Education\*, 53\(1\), 2-12. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

Investigates grade inflation in continuing higher education in the U.S. Reviews of literature related to grade inflation; Grade comparison studies of traditional and continuing education; Methods used in investigating grade inflation in continuing higher education.

[Lorents, A., Morgan, J., & Tallman, G. \(2003\). The impact of course integration on student grades. \*Journal of Education for Business\*, 78\(3\), 135-138. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

Grades from 112 students in 3 business courses integrated in block format were compared with those of 151 other business majors. High achievers did not self-select into blocks. Grading rigor did not suffer and grades were more correlated in block presentation, possibly because of content integration.

[Martinson, D. L. \(2000\). Student evaluations of teaching and their short term validity. \*Journalism and Mass Communication Educator\*, 54\(4\), 77-82. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

Discusses the potentially dysfunctional impact that has resulted from an over-reliance on student evaluations as a measure of good teaching. Argues that the long-term impact of the whole student evaluation process (and the student mentality of entitlement that supports it) should be examined.

[Martinson, D. L. \(2004\). A perhaps "politically incorrect" solution to the very real problem of grade inflation. \*College Teaching\*, 52\(2\), 47-51. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

Few would disagree that grade inflation is a major problem at colleges and universities across the country. In this article, the author argues that a significant contributing factor-perhaps the single most important factor has been the institution of the now almost universal practice of administering anonymous, multiple-choice student evaluations of instruction at the end of most courses. He argues that the process has been examined incorrectly from a short-term perspective--whether there is a correlation between the grades an instructor gives and instructor evaluations in a particular course. The problem must be addressed from a much broader academic cultural perspective.

[Mason, P. M., Steagall, J. W., & Fabritius, M. M. \(2003\). The changing quality of business education. \*Economics of Education Review\*, 22\(6\), 603-609. Retrieved February 27, 2008, from ScienceDirect database.](#)

There is a pervasive perspective that both students and college courses are not what they used to be. A utility maximization model exhibits why students prefer easier courses to those that provide more challenge, and presumably more knowledge. The model also demonstrates why faculty members accommodate these students with less stringent courses. Survey data from professors in various disciplines in colleges of business across the United States verify the perception of declining quality in many of 18 different categories.

[Mathies, C., Bauer, K. W., & Allen, M. \(2005\). An exploratory examination of grade inflation at the University of Georgia. Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, San Diego, CA. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database. \(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 491043\)](#)

This study examined the change in term grade point average (GPA) from 1974 through 2004 for 368,282 undergraduate student records at a large, research-intensive university in the Southeast. Descriptive analyses showed an increase in term GPA and average SAT scores over the 31-year period. Although average SAT and GPA increased, standard deviations decreased. To examine possible factors related to predicted GPA, linear regression models were developed for each year 1984-2004. (Years 1974-1983

were not included due to missing data.) Regression analyses found SAT and receipt of the HOPE scholarship, gender, race, and college of major to play a role in predicted GPA, and contributions of some of these variables varied widely over the 21-year period. While preliminary findings indicate the contributing nature of these variables to the change in GPA, the adjusted R square values are relatively low. Other factors such as changing student and faculty demographics, teaching pedagogy and technology in the classroom may likely be important contributors that were not included in this study.

**McConahay, M., & Cote, R. (1998).** *The expanded grade context record at Indiana University. CAUSE/EFFECT, 21(4), 47-48, 60.* [no full text available – use DOCUMENT EXPRESS.](#)

The Indiana University Expanded Grade Context Record system generates a student record that includes the elements of a traditional transcript plus additional information that places grades in a broader context, including class grade distribution data and the percentage of majors in the class. The system was developed in response to concerns about grade inflation.

[McPherson, M. A., & Jewell, R. T. \(2007\). Leveling the playing field: Should student evaluation scores be adjusted? \*Social Science Quarterly, 88\(3\), 868-881.\* Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

**Objectives.** Colleges and universities routinely use evaluation scores to assess the quality of an instructor's teaching for purposes of promotion and tenure and for merit-raise allocations. This article attempts to identify the determinants of these scores, and to suggest ways that departments' numerical rankings of instructors might be adjusted. **Method.** This article applies a feasible generalized least squares model to a panel of data from master's-level classes. **Results.** We find that instructors can “buy” better evaluation scores by inflating students' grade expectations. Also, the teaching experience of instructors has an impact on evaluation scores, but this effect is largely seen as an increase after tenure is granted. In addition, we find evidence of a bias against nonwhite faculty. **Conclusion.** Our results suggest that an adjustment to the usual departmental rankings may be in order.

[McSpirit, S., & Jones, K. E. \(1999\). Grade inflation rates among different ability students, controlling for other factors. \*Education Policy Analysis Archives, 7\(30\).\* Retrieved March 7, 2008, from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v7n30.html> .](#)

Compared grade inflation rates among students of different abilities at an open-admissions public university by examining trends in graduating grade point average from 1983 to 1996. The higher grade inflation rates among low aptitude students suggest that faculty might be using grades to encourage learning among marginal students.

[McSpirit, S., Jones, K., Chapman, A., & Kopacz, P. \(2000\). Identifying grade inflation at an open-admissions institution. \*College Student Journal, 34\(2\), 228-236.\* Retrieved February 21, 2008, from Academic Search Premier database.](#)

Examines the extent of grade inflation at Eastern Kentucky University. Sample used in examining grade

inflation; Sample characteristics constant across time; Rise in grade point average upon graduation.

**McSpirit, S. J., Kopacz, P., Jones, K. E., & Chapman, A. D. (2000). Faculty opinion on grade inflation: Contradictions about its cause. *College and University*, 75(3), 19-25. no full text available – use [DOCUMENT EXPRESS](#).**

A faculty survey at a large open enrollment public university found most faculty felt grade inflation was a problem and one-third felt the primary cause was student evaluation of instruction. However, individual faculty did not feel that they themselves were influenced by student evaluations in grade assignment. Results did not differ by faculty rank or tenure status.

[Merrow, J. \(2004\). \*Grade inflation: It's not just an issue for the Ivy League\*. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching report. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database. \(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 498995\)](#)

These days it seems as if nearly everyone in college is receiving A's, making the Dean's List, or graduating with honors. What is more interesting is that college students in general are spending fewer hours studying, while taking more remedial courses and fewer courses in mathematics, history, English, and foreign languages. Students everywhere report that they average only 10-15 hours of academic work outside of class per week and are able to attain "B" or better grade-point averages. In a study for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, former Harvard Dean Henry Rosovsky found that in 1950 about 15 percent of Harvard students got a B+ or better: today, it is nearly 70 percent. Last year 50 percent of the grades at Harvard were either A or A-, up from 22 percent in 1966, and 91 percent of seniors graduated with honors. Eighty percent of the grades at the University of Illinois are A's and B's, and 50 percent of Columbia students are on the Dean's List. If today's college students were smarter or better prepared, that would explain the higher grades, but that does not seem to be the case. Over the last 30 years, SAT scores of entering students have declined, and fully one-third of entering freshmen are enrolled in at least one remedial reading, writing or mathematics course. Neither do students seem to be working harder. The assumption behind most college courses is that students will spend two hours studying for every hour they spend in class, but that is rarely the case. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) reveals that not even 15 percent of students come close to this mark. Merrow advocates in favor of "engagement," genuine involvement in courses and campus activities, leading to "deep learning," or learning for understanding, and is very different from just memorizing stuff for the exam and then forgetting it. In today's society, the writer says, the need to educate for understanding has never been more important and is as critical in community college as in the Ivy League. What should students be learning, and what kinds of learning matter most? What kinds of teaching and student interaction promote "deep learning"? Can that learning be measured? What is the evidence? As basic as it sounds, few institutions in America can answer these questions with any certainty. Some in higher education are trying to get a handle on what really happens in the classroom. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) looks at the classroom activity which is known to enable significant learning, while the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) directly measures student learning and the "value added" of each campus. Both are challenging ranking systems as measures of college quality. There is also the issue of educational purpose: whether or not students and faculty have common goals.

It appears that there is still much work to be done to reclaim the priority of undergraduate teaching and learning on American campuses.

[Mulvenon, S., & Ferritor, D. \(2006\). Grade inflation in higher education: Isolated or systemic? \*International Journal of Learning\*, 12\(6\), 55-62. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

An issue of gaining relevance in higher education is the steady increase in grades during the last four decades. Numerous postsecondary institutions have examined the effect of increasing grades and have implemented or are investigating strategies to mitigate this current phenomena. Many questions and theories exist regarding the impact of what has been referred to as "grade inflation" and the purpose of this study was to empirically examine the impact of increasing grades at a major southern AAU research institution, the University of Arkansas. More specifically, to determine the effect, if any, of increasing grades on the academic quality of degrees.

[Muuka, G. N. \(1998\). One business professor's experience with the diversity issue and pressure to raise students' grades. \*Journal of Education for Business\*, 73\(3\), 184-189. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

A business professor who attempted to improve satisfaction and retention of international students relates how his strategies failed. He argues that students should be judged solely on performance, and pressure to raise grades should be resisted.

[Nagle, B. \(1998\). A proposal for dealing with grade inflation: The relative performance index. \*Journal of Education for Business\*, 74\(1\), 40-43. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

Grade inflation has reduced the usefulness of the Quality Point Average as a hiring device. The Relative Performance Index, which expresses student performance relative to other students enrolled in the same course sections, is proposed as a better tool.

**Pugh, R. G. (2000). The expanded grade context record at Indiana University and its relationship to grade inflation. *College and University*, 75(4), 3-12. no full text available – use [DOCUMENT EXPRESS](#).**

Describes a new format for academic record keeping and grade reporting at Indiana University in the context of faculty divisions on the problem of grade inflation. Reports the new record format resulted in a more effective means to communicate to students the context of their academic performance in each course. The format has received a professional "best practices" award.

[Reexamining the empirical evidence. \(2005\). \*ASHE Higher Education Report\*, 30\(6\), 29-43. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

This article presents information on college grading problems. Grading problems are differentiated into

four major types, grade increase, grade inflation, grade compression, and grading disparity. Both grade increase and decrease might raise legitimate concerns about college grading practices. Half a century ago, it was common to hear complaints about the "too stringent" grading practices in higher education. Yet today the increase in college grades has become a concern. Grade increase is the gross measure of the trend of college grades over time, without consideration of changes in other related factors. Descriptive statistics can show whether an increase in college grades exists. Grade inflation, on the other hand, indicates a "net" increase in grades resulting from changes in grading practices and standards over time, independent of other contributing factors. Therefore, it usually requires multivariate analysis to obtain an accurate answer. Grade inflation usually indicates a tendency toward the lowering of standards in grading practices. Grade compression is the pattern of decreased correlation of college grades and some meritorious measures such as student academic achievement.

[Reframing the college grading problem. \(2005\). ASHE Higher Education Report, 30\(6\), 15-27. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

This article presents information on grade inflation. Some argue that the simple upward trend of college grades cannot be considered evidence of grade inflation. They argue that concerns about grade inflation are warranted only if evidence suggests that higher grades are undeserved. Two aspects have been advanced from this line of reasoning. First, inflation needs to be discussed in relation to some underlying measure of the quality of student work or student performance. In the event that the measuring of the quality of student work is not available, it is desirable to consider factors that might contribute to the quality of student work, such as student academic ability or effort. Without an original meritorious measure, the discussion of grade inflation is unproductive or even counterproductive. Many factors can contribute to college grades, it is necessary to use a multivariate approach to understand the change in college grades. Commonly examined factors are student background characteristics, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, academic preparation, academic performance out of college (GRE scores), effort on educationally purposeful activities and inflation in college grading practice. Therefore, grade inflation may be at work for the current generation if the grading standard has changed over time. Other factors need to be controlled for examining the change in grades over time.

[Ridley, D. R., Quanty, M. B., & Sciabica, M. \(1998\). Grading standards and course challenge: An analytical-empirical approach. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Miami, FL. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database. \(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 427575\)](#)

This study examined whether conditions affecting intellectual challenge and course difficulty experienced by students were associated with the severity of grading standards. A policy by a university academic unit that reduced the number of high grades awarded by one of its departments provided an opportunity to test a research-based prediction related to this issue. It was predicted that mean grades would fall while courses would deliver greater intellectual challenge to students. Data were obtained from university records of grade distributions and surveys of student evaluations of instruction related to course difficulty and course challenge. It was found that after the policy reducing the number of high grades awarded to students was implemented, mean grades fell significantly while ratings of course

challenge and difficulty rose significantly in relation to other courses. The results supported the hypothesis that monitoring grades given by faculty members can create changes that increase both the perceived difficulty and the challenge of the course.

[Sabot, R., & Wakeman-Linn, J. \(1991\). Grade inflation and course choice. \*The Journal of Economic Perspectives \(1986-1998\)\*, 5\(1\), 159-170. Retrieved February 21, 2008, from ABI/INFORM Global database.](#)

The number of students graduating from American colleges and universities who had majored in the sciences declined from 1970--71 to 1984--85, both as a proportion of the steadily growing total and in absolute terms (U.S. Department of Education, 1987). This decline has prompted forecasts of a nation of scientific illiterates and a loss of economic competitiveness.

[Searching for cures. \(2005\). \*ASHE Higher Education Report\*, 30\(6\), 63-73. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

This article presents information on effective strategies to correct inappropriate grading practices. Grading disparity accounts primarily for the increase in student Grade Point Averages (GPA) and institution-level average grades, as students have been choosing courses with higher average grades. Grade inflation is also a problem; however, the magnitude of grade inflation is not as substantial as grading disparity. These two types of problems need to be addressed for the good of higher education and society. The problem is not only that most institutions have accepted grading practices that persistently blur the distinction between good and outstanding performance, while they award passing grades for showing up and turning in work, even when that work is poor. It is also that students and faculty members, administrators and trustees, accrediting bodies, and higher-education associations have been united for more than 25 years in their willingness to ignore, excuse, or compromise with grade inflation rather than fight it. Although conversations about grading problems are abundant, actions aimed at addressing those problems are scarce. Faculty are major participants in higher education governance, and academic policies often originate from the faculty. Their awareness of grading problems, willingness to address the problems and competency in grading students fairly and rigorously all contribute to the restoration of good practices in college grading.

[Shivpuri, S., Schmitt, N., Oswald, F. L., & Kim, B. H. \(2006\). Individual differences in academic growth: Do they exist, and can we predict them? \*Journal of College Student Development\*, 47\(1\), 69-86. Retrieved February 27, 2008, from Project Muse database.](#)

No abstract available.

[Sonner, B. S. \(2000\). A is for "adjunct": Examining grade inflation in higher education. \*Journal of Education for Business\*, 76\(1\), 5-8. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

A study that explicitly compared average class grades given by adjunct instructors and full-time faculty over a 2-year period found that, controlling for class size, instructor credentials, subject, and course

level, adjunct instructors give higher grades.

[Uncovering the roots. \(2005\). \*ASHE Higher Education Report\*, 30\(6\), 45-61. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

This article presents information on factors affecting changes in college grading. Colleges and universities have little or no control over the social environment within and surrounding the school. Therefore, one needs to focus on the grading problems that can be influenced by institutions policies and practices. Two grading problems emerge from the analysis. First, the grading disparity among different courses is the primary problem that contributes to the increase in individual student GPAs and institution-level average GPAs. Second, grade inflation within individual courses also contributes to grade increases. This section explores the causes for grade inflation and grading disparity and suggests helpful policies and programs that can be implemented to address these problems. Grades are related to a number of factors, the student, faculty, course, discipline, and institution. The main influences contributing to this upward trend are the changes in student population, grading disparity between courses, the shifting of students' coursetaking patterns, and, to some extent, grade inflation.

[Venditti, P. N. \(2000\). \*The long-term learning agreement: A new assessment tool for educators.\* \(ERIC opinion paper\). Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database. \(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 445049\)](#)

Long-term learning agreements are compacts between faculty members and students that permit students to "borrow" a grade and then pay to keep it by carrying out specified supplementary activities during an extended period after an academic term ends. These agreements can combat grade inflation, reinforce students' self-confidence, allow instructors to diversify and individualize learning experiences and pathways, and counteract the tendency of students to "take" classes the way a person "takes" medicine, by consuming it as swiftly as possible and then forgetting about it forever. The cost of the agreements is negligible, their applicability throughout the college environment is broad, and their specifications can be decided on by instructors to meet any learning objectives they choose. A sample learning agreement is attached.

[White, H. B. \(2005\). Commentary: Problem-based learning and grade inflation. \*Biochemistry & Molecular Biology Education\*, 33\(2\), 133-134. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

Focuses on issues concerning problem-based learning (PBL). Background on the trend towards higher grades of students in the U.S.; Problems on PBL course; Analysis on grade inflation.

[Wikström, C. \(2005\). Grade stability in a criterion-referenced grading system: The Swedish example. \*Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice\*, 12\(2\), 125-144. Retrieved March 12, 2008, from Education Research Complete database.](#)

This study investigates empirically the mechanisms behind the increasing grade point averages in

Swedish upper secondary schools. Four hypotheses are presented as plausible explanations; improved student achievements, student selection effects, strategic behaviour in course choices, and lowering of grading standards. The analysis is based on extensive data, and focuses on grades and test scores from upper secondary school graduates over a 6 year period. The result shows that the increase in grade point averages cannot be explained by better achievements, selection effects or course choices, which means that standards have been lowered, which is interpreted here as grade inflation. The grade inflation is most likely an effect of the leniency in the grading system in combination with pressure for high grading, related to the upper secondary school grades' function as an instrument for selection to higher education.

**Wilson, R. (1998, January 16). New research casts doubt on value of student evaluations of professors. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 44, A12-A14. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from Lexis Nexis Academic database. [full text through LEXIS NEXIS ACADEMIC – NO PURL.](#)**

A University of Washington study that found professors who are easy graders receive better evaluations than those who are tougher, and another study showing faculty enthusiasm alone raises student evaluations, have shaken a long-standing consensus among researchers that student evaluations are a good measure of a teacher's skills. Most institutions currently use such evaluations.

[Wood, A. L., Ridley, D. R., & Summerville, R. M. \(1999\). \*University grade inflation through twenty years: An analytical and empirical investigation\*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, San Antonio, TX. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database. \(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 439646\)](#)

This paper presents a new method to test for grade inflation. Defining grade inflation as the decreasing value of grades in the coin of student achievement, the study avoids the assumption that a rise in mean grade is a necessary condition of grade inflation. The study, which was conducted at a single university, also sought to determine whether grade inflation could be demonstrated if mean grades have leveled off. To measure general academic abilities, Graduate Record Examination (GRE) data was used. Data was grouped into three time spans (1976-80, 1984-88, and 1992-96). To examine the influence of students' majors, data were also separated into two broad groups, "humanistic" and "scientific," because literature had shown roughly that the former revealed more grade inflation than the latter. Findings suggested grade inflation relative to GRE total and verbal scores, but no evidence of grade inflation when GRE quantitative or GRE analytical scores were used, and it is postulated that this is a result of declining academic standards in the sense that verbal reasoning ability associated with grade point average is lower than it used to be. Differences were also found between disciplines, with some evidence of grade inflation found for science majors.

[Young, C. \(2003\). \*Grade inflation in higher education\*. ERIC digest. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database. \(ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 482558\)](#)

Grade inflation has commanded increasing attention in the academic world in recent years, with administrators, faculty, and academic analysts unable to agree on whether grade inflation actually exists

or is a myth to be debunked. This Digest reviews research in support of and against the existence of grade inflation. A statistical analysis report by the U.S. Department of Education found that student grades have actually declined slightly over the last 20 years, but other researchers have found evidence supporting the existence of grade inflation and have linked it with various causes.

[Zirkel, P. A. \(1999\). Grade inflation: A leadership opportunity for schools of education? \*Teachers College Record\*, 101\(2\), 247-260. Retrieved March 7, 2008, from ERIC \(EBSCO\) database.](#)

Grade inflation pervades U.S. schools at all levels, and it is particularly pronounced in the humanities fields and in departments, schools, and colleges of education (DSCEs). This problem presents a leadership opportunity for DSCEs to develop and implement a credible and meaningful grade distribution system to combat pervasive grade inflation.

### **Dissertations**

[Airola, D. T. \(2007\). Validity of the grade inflation index and the college readiness index as school-level and student-level measures of college preparation. \(M.S., University of Arkansas\). Retrieved February 20, 2008, from Dissertations & Theses database.](#)

This study examined the validity of the Mulvenon and Airola (2005) Grade Inflation Index (GII) and College Readiness Index (CRI) in assessing the effect of high school grading standards on college preparation and prediction of college completion. A correlation matrix was constructed for criterion-comparisons to evaluate validity of the GII. Alternate methods for calculating grade inflation resulted in strong, significant correlation coefficients. Mean mathematics achievement, a criterion associated with college preparation, demonstrated a weak inverse relationship with the GII. The GII provides a valid, simple index at the school level for evaluating congruence of grading practices with a standardized achievement measure of college preparation. The CRI was evaluated as a predictor of college completion using logistic regression. The CRI was a significant predictor of college completion with predicted odds similar to those using existing indicators, high school grade point average (HSGPA) and ACT exam scores.

[Apple, M. R. \(2002\). A study of grade distribution and grade-point averages of the tennessee board of regents associate-degree nursing programs. \(Ed.D., East Tennessee State University\). Retrieved February 20, 2008, from Dissertations & Theses database.](#)

Grade inflation has occurred in postsecondary institutions and has been accompanied by a concomitant rise in grade-point average. Nursing educators are expected to prepare competent future nurses. Because many nursing programs use grade-point average as admission, retention, and progression criteria, it is imperative that grades accurately reflect each student's proficiency. This study assessed whether grade inflation had occurred between 1995 and 2000 in Tennessee Board of Regents Associate-Degree nursing programs and evaluated the use of grade-point averages as effective criteria for admission, retention, and progression or as predictors of success. The population included 1,256 students who were enrolled in the class of 1995 and in the class of 2000 in eight associate-degree nursing programs. The majority of the

colleges' cumulative mean nursing admission and graduating grade-point averages had not changed significantly between the class of 1995 and the class of 2000. A majority of the colleges did not have statistically significant higher mean clinical nursing grades or an increase in the percentage of the grade of B and higher awarded between the class of 1995 and the class of 2000. The findings did not indicate grade inflation had occurred in clinical nursing courses. The majority of the colleges' results indicated a significant association existed between the cumulative mean nursing admission grade-point average and successful completion of the nursing program in both the class of 1995 and the class of 2000. The results support the high standards needed in nursing education to ensure that graduates are competent, safe practitioners.

[Lane, T. L. \(2006\). Undergraduate grades and grade inflation: Comparison of faculty attitudes and institutional data. \(Ph.D., University of Dayton\). Retrieved February 20, 2008 from Dissertations & Theses database.](#)

The relationship between faculty grading attitudes, institutional grade data, and grade inflation were evaluated at a medium-sized, religious-affiliated, research intensive institution in the Midwest. Tenured and tenure-track faculty attitudes were ascertained via a 54-item Grading Attitudes Questionnaire. Institutional data consisted of average annual undergraduate grade point averages and recentered standardized test scores from 1980-2004. The results indicated that there was evidence of grade inflation in the School of Education; significant GPA differences between college/school and year over the 24-year period; and the usage of nonachievement factors tend to inflate grades.

[Malmstrom, S. S. \(2006\). Rigor in the classroom. A case study of grading differences: Teacher characteristics for improved practice. \(Ph.D., Capella University\). Retrieved February 20, 200, from Dissertations & Theses database.](#)

Student evaluations of faculty (SEF) have become common practice in higher education. Originally intended to give instructors feedback for improvement in teaching, student evaluations have become important in personnel decisions, tenure, and as indicators for faculty improvement. Early studies of student evaluations showed they were a valid measure of teaching effectiveness. However, grade inflation coincided with the adoption of student evaluations of faculty at a disturbing pace. It is commonly accepted in popular literature and in many research studies that student evaluation of faculty causes, or at least is correlated with, grade inflation. Yet some instructors manage to grade rigorously or deliver courses with greater workloads and do not receive lower evaluations from students. Why? This comparative case study attempts to answer three questions. What strategies or teacher characteristics in the classroom can instructors use which will reduce grade inflation and not lower SEF? Is there a difference in characteristics between instructors who are rigorous graders, demand more of students, and still earn high evaluations from instructors who are not rigorous graders or who demand less of students and earn high SEF? Do grades really influence SEF as much as instructors claim they do? The cases suggest that teachers with three categories of effective teaching characteristics can demand heavy work loads and grade with rigor while earning high evaluations from students. Application of the model proposed may lead to improved practice in higher education.

[Olsen, D. R. \(1995\). Grade inflation: Reality or myth? student preparation level vs. grades at brigham young university, 1975-1994. \(Ph.D., Brigham Young University\). Retrieved February 20, 2008, from Dissertations & Theses database.](#)

This study was designed to investigate the extent to which grade inflation has existed at BYU after accounting for increased preparation levels of entering students over time. The average ACT score of entering freshmen has gone from the 70th percentile nationally in 1975, to the 90th percentile nationally in 1994. Analyses were conducted for the university at large and individual colleges. Data analysis consisted of (a) developing a model to forecast GPA by preparation factors and from a time series analysis to establish formulas for forecasting levels of inflation adjusted for errors incident to time, and (b) administering a questionnaire to analyze grading attitudes with pre-defined subscales pertinent to grading issues to all faculty who have been at BYU 20 plus years. The lower third of the student body according to preparation level that existed 20 years ago has all but disappeared. Adjusting for the increased preparation level of students, grade inflation is not presently an overall problem at the university level. However, disparity exists across colleges with some colleges experiencing grade inflation and others experiencing grade deflation. Grades during spring/summer term are much more inflated for each of the colleges and the university at large than during fall/winter semesters. Differences of opinion on grading issues are abundant among the faculty, though opinions are generally consistent at college levels. University-wide consensus among faculty on a grading policy would be difficult to achieve. If historical trends continue, grade inflation will certainly become a significant problem unless some form of policy or control is instigated.

[Singer, T. S. \(1993\). Changes in undergraduate grading practices in response to grade inflation in higher education. \(Ed.D., University of Louisville\). Retrieved February 20, 2008, from Dissertations & Theses database.](#)

The development of grade inflation was explored as were practices which have been implemented to reduce its impact in higher education. The data from the 1982 and 1992 American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers Survey of Undergraduate Grading and Grading Practices were used as the statistics for analysis in this study. The data were examined to determine whether there were any significant emerging trends in grading practices which may have been developed in response to the phenomenon of grade inflation in higher education. A significant increase in the number of institutions which utilize detailed four-point grading systems, including plus and/or minus grading systems, was first found. Second, a significant increase was found in the number of institutions which penalize students for earning failing grades by the process of assigning, recording, and computing these grades in the student's cumulative grade point average. Third, significant decreases were found in the number of institutions which include transfer grades in student grade point averages and in making determinations for graduation honors. Fourth, significant movement toward making honors determinations based on percentage of graduating class, instead of on a pre-determined grade point average was also identified. Fifth, a significant decrease was found in the number of colleges and universities which allow students to enroll in courses on a pass/fail basis, but no significant evidence of restrictions placed upon such enrollments was indicated. Finally, a significant increase in the number of institutions which replace repeated course grades was also found. In addition to being analyzed for the

total number of respondents to both surveys, the data were also studied by program type (two-year college, four-year college, four-year university), funding control (public, private), and enrollment size ( $\leq$ \$2,500; 2,500-9,999; 10,000-19,999; 20,000+ students) and all appropriate combinations thereof.

[Sloop, S. L. \(2000\). Keep a "B" and go to college free: An examination of grade inflation. \(Ph.D., University of Georgia\). Retrieved February 20, 2008, from Dissertations & Theses database.](#)

Recent interest in college grade inflation has focused on the impact large scale merit aid programs like the HOPE Scholarship in Georgia. The six major theories on increasing college grades over time include: (1) adaptation theory of grading, (2) changes in faculty grading policies, (3) changes in students' course-taking patterns, (4) changes in students' academic motivation levels, (5) use of student course evaluations in tenure and promotion decisions, and (6) the onset of large scale merit aid programs. Descriptive statistics were generated to examine the increases in freshman grade point averages (FGPAs) and changes in the FGPA distributions in the post-HOPE years. A collection of analyses using multiple regression, regression discontinuity, and repeated measures analysis of variance were used to examine the following research questions: (1) Can the increase in FGPAs be explained by an increase in student ability? (2) To what extent has a change in student demographic characteristics affected FGPAs? (3) Have freshmen altered their course taking patterns enough to affect their FGPAs? (4) Can the increase in FGPAs be explained by a corresponding increase in freshmen motivation levels? and (5) By process of elimination, can the increase in FGPAs be attributable to the implementation of the HOPE Scholarship program? Convincing results emerged from this study. First, there was consistent support for an increase in System FGPAs in the post-HOPE years. After controlling for student ability characteristics, the remaining error between the actual and predicted FGPA was still positive but not very large. Second, a large amount of institutional variation existed in the extent and magnitude of GPA inflation in the post-HOPE years after controlling for student academic and demographic characteristics. Lastly, this study demonstrated that a positive relationship existed between GPA inflation and the implementation of the HOPE Scholarship program. Even if there is national phenomenon of increasing college grades, the evidence from this study suggests that it may be exacerbated in Georgia due to the HOPE Scholarship program. The results of this study, however, could not rule out all of the plausible alternatives for increases in FGPAs in the post-HOPE years.

## **Books**

[Blythe, T., Allen D., & Powell- Schieffelin, B. \(2008\). \*Looking together at student work\*. New York: Teachers College Press.](#)

[Hu, Shouping. \(2005\). \*Beyond grade inflation: Grading problems in higher education\*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.](#)

[Johnson, V.E. \(2003\). \*Grade inflation: A crisis in college education\*. New York: Springer.](#)

[Laska, J.A., & Juarez, T. \(1992\). \*Grading and marking in American schools: Two centuries of debate\*.](#)

[Springfield, Ill: Charles C. Thomas.](#)

[Marzano, R.J. \(2006\). \*Classroom assessment & grading that work\*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.](#)

[Marzano, R.J., Pickering, D., & McTighe, J. \(1993\). \*Assessing student outcomes: Performance assessment using the dimensions of learning model\*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.](#)

[McDonald, J.P. \(2003\). \*The power of protocols: An educator's guide to better practice\*. New York: Teachers College Press.](#)

[Strickland, K., Strickland, J., & Stillman, P. \(1998\). \*Reflections on assessment: Its purposes, methods, and effects on learning\*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.](#)

[University of Maryland, College Park. \(1975\). \*Report on gradeinflation\*. UMCP. College Park, MD: The University.](#)

[Walvoord, B., & Johnson-Anderson, V. \(1998\). \*Effective grading: A tool for learning and assessment\*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.](#)