

The Scandal of Faked Grades

In schools and universities in the United States and elsewhere, it is standard practice to falsify the results of academic assessments as a means of punishing and controlling students. Typically, grades are reduced as punishment for disciplinary offences such as lateness to class, without even a pretence that the resulting grade is an accurate measure of the student's knowledge or competence in the subject in question. **Here's** a case where grades are being fraudulently *raised* as part of the fine-adjustment of a complex punishment. But whether the grade is raised or lowered, this practice deliberately misrepresents the student's competence to future employers or educators.

That this institutionalised corruption of scholarly values is accepted as normal in the world's most rational society never ceases to amaze and disgust us.

Academics and teachers should refuse to participate in it, starting right now.

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Do high-school grades really ...

Do high-school grades really represent competence to future employers?

by a reader on Sun, 05/25/2003 - 02:49 | [reply](#)

So What?

No. But they matter for getting into college, and also children are made to care what grades they get by their parents.

(This is not a recommendation for going to college.)

-- Elliot Temple
<http://curi.blogspot.com/>

by [Elliot Temple](#) on Sun, 05/25/2003 - 04:00 | [reply](#)

Yes

Some employers won't hire people who have not graduated from

high school. If students don't pass classes due to artificially bad grades, they are unable to present a qualification that they in fact deserve.

Also, as Curi pointed out, colleges consider high school grades in making decisions about who gets in.

by **Woty** on Sun, 05/25/2003 - 07:27 | [reply](#)

Umm, yeah

My answer did assume you graduated. If the messed up grades prevent that, it has to be revised to say it does mess up employment. Although if you get a GED, will that work just as well for employers? I'm not sure. I hear GEDs are super easy.

-- Elliot Temple
<http://curi.blogspot.com/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Sun, 05/25/2003 - 19:22 | [reply](#)

Generally speaking a GED is b...

Generally speaking a GED is better than nothing at all, but isn't considered as good as actually graduating from high school. I believe some states, like California, have a super-GED test that is more difficult than the 'regular' GED.

by a reader on Sun, 05/25/2003 - 22:19 | [reply](#)

Attendance

You note that tardiness and I would assume attendance, in-class behavior, and other factors not related to the knowledge learned by a student are being taken into account when calculating final grades. I'm actually shocked that you'd think this is a bad thing.

You write that it misrepresents the students' competence. That's most definitely not the case. Competence includes things like ability to get to work on time, to stay on task, and to maintain a professional workplace. These things are in addition to what is normally thought of as scholarship. And the truth is that scholarship is only part of what employers look for.

by **Rob Michael** on Thu, 07/10/2003 - 15:21 | [reply](#)

Attendance

Employers might be interested in more than scholarship, but they don't get useful information from a single grade that consolidates many factors.

It might be reasonable to argue that other factors such as tardiness, attendance, ass-kissing should be reported separately, so that employers could consider these things if they want to. But arguing that the grade that is supposed to measure command

of subject matter should be polluted with these other factors for the sake of employers is mistaken.

by [Gil](#) on Thu, 07/10/2003 - 16:41 | [reply](#)

Purpose of Grades?

I'm not sure I'm willing to agree with you that the purpose of a grade is to measure command of subject matter. I would say that it is a measure of performance in class. Performance includes understanding of the subject, attendance, etc. And, because teachers have been including attendance, behavior, and other factors in their grades at least as far back as the 80s (my own experience) I'd say there are few people who would agree with you that grades measure subject matter alone.

by [Rob Michael](#) on Thu, 07/10/2003 - 21:13 | [reply](#)

What is this obsession with competence anyway?

Rob Michael wrote:

I'm not sure I'm willing to agree with you that the purpose of a grade is to measure command of subject matter.

Exactly! What is this obsession with competence anyway? What possible use is a pure measurement of competence? When I go to have surgery I am interested in picking a well-rounded individual to operate on me. I want a surgeon who is not merely competent in his field, but is also good at performance in class, which I understand also includes attendance, behavior, and other factors in his grades, especially whether he used to hurry for the bus in the mornings when he was a student. Someone who often risked being late for class as a student might arrive late for my operation, and where would I be then? Am I supposed to wait for him, or what? That way lies anarchy. And who cares if one surgeon is slightly better than the other *at surgery*: I'll take the one who is slightly worse every time, provided he never talked back to his teachers.

by a reader on Thu, 07/10/2003 - 21:40 | [reply](#)

Learned behaviors...

Well, seeing as how surgery is not typically taught at the K-12 level (or the undergraduate either) I don't think your analogy works. Even setting aside my objection, learned behaviors like attention to detail, ability to focus on a task, and the desire to be properly prepared are not usually addressed beyond K-12. Once you hit college, most professors expect you to be able to show up on time, stay on-task, etc. Those behaviors have to be learned somewhere and if universities expect you to already have them, then it is clear that educators expect such learning to take place in K-12.

You didn't even take into account the attention or ability to stay

focused of your fictional surgeon. Could this be because we generally expect our surgeons to already have such behaviors???. Where do you think those behaviors are aquired?

by [Rob Michael](#) on Fri, 07/11/2003 - 14:41 | [reply](#)

Or better yet, beat the syste...

Or better yet, beat the system and don't get a regular job :P

by [entivore](#) on Mon, 08/18/2003 - 09:03 | [reply](#)

I think grades should measure...

I think grades should measure competence in the material, if only for the reason that the other stuff is biased beyond any usefulness anyway. I once had a teacher in high-school in 1st period who would penalize "points" for arriving late. The problem is, the bus service at the school was very unreliable, somewhere along the lines of 25-50% arrivals late. If every other day you are getting penalized on your grade for something you really have no control over, how does this indicate anything useful to future employers?

How about likability factor? If the teacher doesn't like you, they are more likely to penalize you for the same behaviour.

I think the only sane thing to do is make the most out of your job interviews and resumes. Make it clear that you know how to do the job, or at least know how to learn to do the job quickly. If a certain place doesn't want to consider you solely on your academics, it's their loss. . . unless of course you suck so badly at selling yourself that noone at all will hire you. Then it is your loss :P

I think I accidentally posted the post script to this first somehow. lol

by [entivore](#) on Mon, 08/18/2003 - 09:05 | [reply](#)

Surgeons

Rob Michael,

I want my surgeons to be on time and not like some of those smart-ass surgeons these days.

I also want him to be able to spell S-U-R-G-E-O-N... or at least be able to copy someone else when they spell it. Come to think of it, I want people in casual conversations to do the same thing.

But whether or not he can spell his profession, or you can, has little to do with his competence.

As Elliot says... Ho hum.

-Dan

by a reader on Thu, 08/26/2004 - 23:48 | [reply](#)

High-school Grades

I am an employer and have never asked about a potential employee's grades. We are rarely the same people we were in high-school. Personally my grades ranged from Cs one semester to As the next depending on my family ups and downs. As a college student I have been straight As.

by a reader on Thu, 09/14/2006 - 02:16 | [reply](#)

Grades

That might be reasonable when interviewing a 30-year old, but not a 19-year old.

by **Yoni** on Sat, 09/16/2006 - 16:28 | [reply](#)