

הוראות לנבחנים

סטודנטים יקרים,

- בחינה זו מורכבת משני קטעי קריאה (עמ' 2-4, עמ' 5-6).
- לצד קטעי הקריאה תוכלו לכתוב הערות. אלה לא ייבדקו ולא יינתן עליהן ציון.
- ענו על השאלות במקומות המיועדים לכך בגוף השאלון.
- **יש לענות באנגלית בלבד** על בסיס המידע שקראתם בטקסט.
- הקפידו על כתב יד ברור וקריא.
- יש להגיש את כל חלקי הבחינה. שאלון שייחסר בו דף לא ייבדק.

ARTICLE 1:

Grade Inflation: Causes and Consequences

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Journal of Education and Learning; Vol. 7, No. 6; 2018

Introduction

Grade inflation has become the norm in many colleges and universities around the world and we have seen the grades of students steadily increasing in the last 30 years. However, most educators today agree that the escalation of grades is not due to increased learning or an increase in students' knowledge and skills. Even though most academic institutions are aware of the dangers of grade inflation, the problem is typically overlooked and rarely discussed in academia. But if grades are a form of academic currency, then grade inflation results in the devaluation of that currency. Grade inflation erodes confidence in the whole system of academic evaluation, devaluing all grades and even the degrees to which they lead.

Our purpose in this paper is to map out the various aspects of grade inflation. We begin by explaining why various agents such as educators and academic institutions engage in the practice of grade inflation. Then, we examine the various consequences of grade inflation.

1. The Causes of Grade Inflation

This section will address why different agents, such as educators and institutions, may engage in grade inflation.

1.1 *Why Do Educators Engage in Grade Inflation*

Nearly all academic institutions evaluate the performance of course instructors through student feedback. In most cases, student evaluations has a major role in assessing the instructors' teaching effectiveness and other decisions regarding contract renewals, promotions, tenure and teaching awards. Therefore, the desire for job security and financial benefits may encourage some instructors to practice grade inflation. Students also tend to gravitate toward instructors who inflate grades and away from those who do not, making the classes of instructors awarding higher grades fill up

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more rapidly. In some cases, this may lead to fewer students in the classes of instructors who grade honestly, which can possibly lead to a reduction in their pay for the course undertaken.

Moreover, instructors may also practice grade inflation due to concern for their students' psychology, motivation and life prospects. Some educators admit that students today face excessive parental and social pressures to achieve high grades. Under such circumstances, teachers may decide that grade inflation is preferable to causing deep psychological harm to students or preventing them from attaining their future prospects.

1.2 Why Institutions Engage in Grade Inflation

Academic institutions are enrollment-driven and every semester they face enormous pressure to enroll more students. Today greater competition for student enrollment between and within institutions is a prime factor for grade inflation. If students are not awarded high grades in a particular university, then they will transfer to another university where high grades are easily awarded.

Moreover, most academic institutions believe in the customer-based concept that "we are here to serve and please customers". Some researchers, such as Brian (1998), state that as the cost of education has increased, students have been led to expect a greater value for the money that they spent on their education. Consequently, pressure exists on academic institutions to deliver grades that will satisfy students and parents, regardless of whether or not the standards of excellence are met.

Most academic institutions subscribe to the myth that high grades and success are closely linked, particularly in terms of future success. By awarding high grades to the students, academic institutions often try to give signals to potential employers that their students are comparatively better than others. Therefore, grades are often used as a tool by the academic institutions to gain a strong foothold in the competitive marketplace.

2. The Consequences of Grade Inflation

This section presents two different potential victims of grade inflation: the students, and the academic institutions.

2.1 How Students Are Affected

Grade inflation may mislead students regarding their actual degree of academic performance. If teachers award higher grades to students than what they actually deserve, then the students will misunderstand their own capabilities. The students may believe that

they are well-prepared to succeed at endeavors for which they have insufficient knowledge and skills.

Grade inflation may also result in grade compression, where higher grades are awarded for average or even relatively poor performance. Grade compression is mainly unfair to the best students in the class, who may have to share the same good grades with less hardworking classmates

Another problem is that grade inflation can deteriorate the work ethic of students. If high grades are awarded easily, then students may believe that they do not need to work as much to achieve high grades. This can create problems, as the student may find it difficult to do well in the advanced courses due to a lack of adequate knowledge.

2.2 *How Institutions Are Affected*

Grade inflation can have a negative impact on the academic reputation of schools and universities, as their degrees will have less value in the market. Schools and universities that practice grade inflation may be classified as “grade sellers” and at some point, their graduates may become less marketable.

3. Conclusion

Most of the academic institutions that practice grade inflation believe in the notion of “student consumerism”, which states that students want their money’s worth and therefore want to obtain easy ‘A’ grades. Moreover, these institutions seem to feel obligated to inflate grades to help their poorer-performing students to acquire better opportunities in the job market. However, it is important for these institutions to understand that, in the long run, the institution’s reputation and student abilities and skills are more important than individual grades.

End of article 1

ARTICLE 2 :

Grade inflation is just plain bad. Right? Maybe not.

By Zachary Bleemer

September 21, 2021 at 11:34 a.m. EDT *Washington Post*

Introduction

Grades at American high schools and colleges are rising at a faster rate than students' performance on standardized tests. This "grade inflation" has generally provoked criticism from educators, who feel that it is not fair to give grades that haven't been earned, and the people who end up being cheated are the students themselves.

However, the distribution of grades is an educational policy choice, and we should evaluate grade inflation in the same way that we evaluate other educational policies and ask the question: Do higher grades improve or hinder the learning and longer-run outcomes of grade-inflated students?

Latest research

A series of recent studies by several independent teams of economists have addressed this issue and found that, in many circumstances, grade inflation may be providing important benefits to many of today's students.

Consider the choice of majoring in science and engineering (STEM) fields. STEM courses tend to award lower average grades than other fields, and female students are more likely than male students to switch their fields of study if they earn low grades in introductory courses.

As a result, inflating grades in introductory STEM courses might increase the share of female students who go on to earn STEM degrees, narrowing the worrying gender gap in those majors. Indeed, a recent study of the University of Kentucky presents evidence that equalizing grades in STEM and non-STEM courses would shrink the STEM gender gap by over 10 percent.

Another study, conducted by researchers at Brigham Young University and Purdue University, showed that grade inflation played

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an important role in encouraging students to persist with their education despite challenges.

Grade inflation: a problem?

It may still be true that the people who end up being cheated are the students themselves. After all, grade inflation may make it more difficult for students to assess their own level of academic preparation and aptitude, which could lead students to persist along educational tracks that may not best match their talents. This line of argument assumes that students who earn low grades in certain classes may be better off focusing on something else, for their own good, no matter their personal preferences.

My own research suggests that this is not the case. It seems to be to a student's advantage if they are able to pursue studies in a subject they have chosen. Failing an introductory course should not be a reason for them being forced to change subject. It is an important benefit of grade inflation if it helps more students stick with their preferred major —rather than being discouraged by low grades.

Grade inflation in school

All of these studies focus on college grades, but the same arguments hold for high schools. Higher grades could mean less discouragement from challenging subjects and could result in greater confidence and commitment to complete courses of study.

The admissions board for universities has suggested that grade inflation is greater at affluent high schools, which could potentially limit college access for students from lower-income schools. However, there's some evidence of the opposite effect: Top students at many affluent high schools have already benefited from high-level teaching, but top students from less-affluent schools can be helped by their own schools' grade inflation. This gives students from less-affluent schools the opportunity to benefit from higher education.

Conclusion

We have a lot more to learn about the motivational and learning effects of higher or lower grades. But when it comes to the real educational outcomes of American students, the grade inflation we've seen in the past few decades may have caused more good than harm.

End of article 2

Advanced B Standard Exam

Article 1
Article 2
Synthesis (40 points)
Personal opinion (20 points)

- Evaluating the article's reliability (5 points)
- Mapping the article (17 points)

- Evaluating the article's reliability (5 points)
- Mapping the article (13 points)

Article 1:

Grade Inflation: Causes and Consequences

Evaluating the article's reliability (5 points)

- ❖ The *Journal of Education and Learning* is an open-access, international, double-blind peer-reviewed journal published by the Canadian Center of Science and Education.
- ❖ Faieza Chowdhury is a lecturer at Southeast University in Bangladesh, which is the highest ranked university in Bangladesh in QS World University Rankings.
- ❖ The article was published in 2018.

1. Do you think this article is reliable? Justify your answer by relating to any relevant information, such as:

- where the article was published
- the credibility of the author
- when the article was published
- the type of article.

(5 points)

Mapping the article (17 points)

2. According to the "**Introduction**", what will the article discuss?

(2 points)

3. Give a main idea presented in the section "**Why Do Educators Engage in Grade Inflation**". Write 1-2 sentences.

(3 points)

4. Give a main idea presented in the section "**Why Institutions Engage in Grade Inflation**". Write 1-2 sentences.

(3 points)

5. Give a main idea presented in the section "**How Students Are Affected**".
Write 1-2 sentences.

(3 points)

6. Give a main idea presented in the section "**How Institutions Are Affected**".
Write 1-2 sentences.

(3 points)

7. Give a main idea presented in the section "**Conclusion**". Write 1-2 sentences.

(3 points)

Article 2:

Grade inflation is just plain bad. Right? Maybe not.

Evaluating the article's reliability (5 points)

- ❖ *The Washington Post* is regarded as one of the leading daily American newspapers. It is rated as "mostly credible". The newspaper does fact checking and if a mistake is made, they print a retraction.
- ❖ The author, Zachary Bleemer, is a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University and a research associate at the University of California at Berkeley. Next fall, he will join the Yale School of Management as an assistant professor of economics. Yale and Harvard are among the pre-eminent universities in the USA.
- ❖ The article was published in 2021.

8. Do you think this article is reliable? Justify your answer by relating to any relevant information, such as:

- where the article was published
- the credibility of the author
- when the article was published
- the type of article.

(5 points)

Mapping the article (13 points)

9. According to the "**Introduction**", what will the article discuss?

(2 points)

10. Give a main idea presented in the section "**Latest research**". Write 1-2 sentences.

(3 points)

11. Give a main idea presented in the section "**Grade inflation: a problem?**". Write 1-2 sentences.

(3 points)

12. Give a main idea presented in the section "**Grade inflation in School**". Write 1-2 sentences.

(3 points)

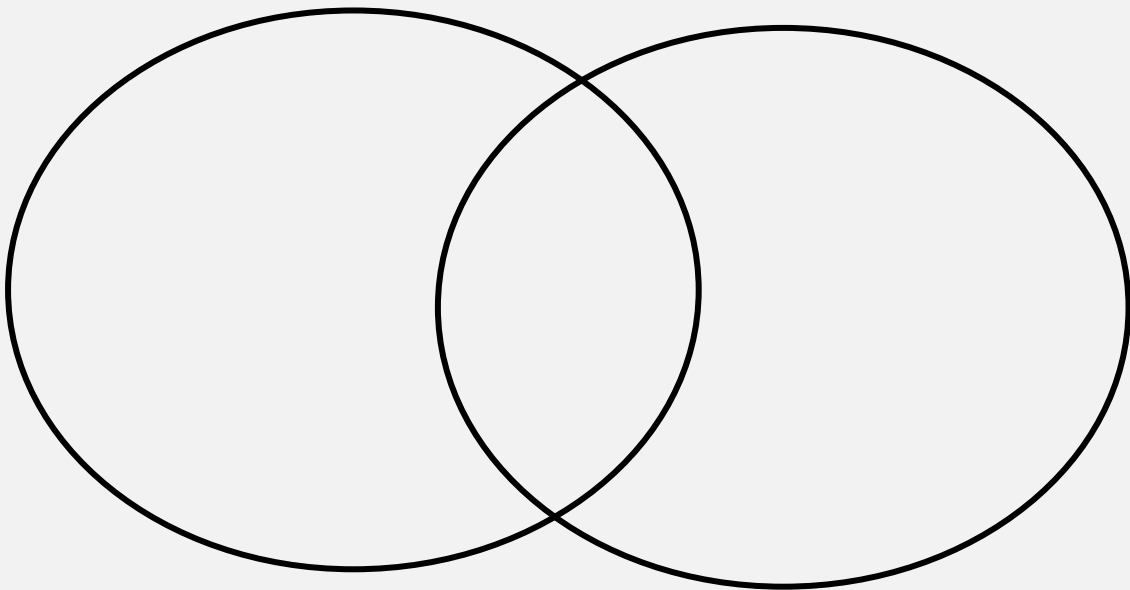
13. Give a main idea presented in the section "**Conclusion**". Write 1-2 sentences.

(2 points)

Synthesis (40 points)

The following questions relate to both articles.

You may use the Venn diagram to compare and/or contrast ideas that appear in both articles. It will not be graded.



(not graded)

14. What issue do both articles address?

(4 points)

15. Write a one paragraph synthesis of the two articles.

Your paragraph should include:

- **an introduction:** The first 2-3 sentences. Describe the issue both articles address and how their ideas are similar or different.
- **supporting ideas:** The next 2-3 sentences. Discuss the evidence.
- **a conclusion:** The last 2-3 sentences.

Write in English and use your own words. Add citations where appropriate.

Note: The synthesis rubric is in appendix 1.

(36 points)

Personal Opinion (20 points)

16. What is your opinion of the issue discussed in the articles?




Justify your answer based on the information you have read. Write a short paragraph in English (3-4 sentences). Use your own words.

Note: The personal opinion rubric is in appendix 2.

(20 points)

Good Luck!




APPENDIX 1

Synthesis Rubric			
	Very Good 	Fair 	Poor 
Structure (essay components)	8 Points	4 Points	0 points
	Essay has a clear introduction, supportive evidence from two sources, and a conclusion.	Related to some of the major essay components: introduction, supportive evidence, and conclusion.	Did not relate to any of the major essay components.
Content (accuracy of information)	8 Points	4 Points	0 points
	Accurately and coherently synthesizes the content from both sources dealing with a single issue. Adds citations whenever necessary.	Attempts to synthesize the content from both sources dealing with a single issue but paraphrasing demonstrates limited or partially inaccurate comprehension. Citations might not be given correctly.	Demonstrates minimal or inaccurate synthesis of information. There are no citations.
Cohesion (flow of ideas)	8 Points	4 Points	0 points
	Ideas flow logically	Some of the ideas are not logically connected	Ideas seem randomly ordered or have an unclear progression
Vocabulary (word choice and expressions)	4 Points	2 Point	0 points
	Appropriate vocabulary	Some of the vocabulary is inappropriate	Vocabulary is mostly inappropriate
Grammar (tenses and sentence structure)	4 Points	2 Point	0 points
	Correct grammar	Partially correct grammar	Incorrect grammar
Mechanics (paragraph format, punctuation and capitalization)	4 Points	2 Point	0 points
	Correct use of line spacing and mechanics.	Partially correct use of line spacing and mechanics.	Incorrect use of line spacing and mechanics

Students will receive 0 points if -

- The synthesis is not in English
- The whole synthesis is copied from the text.

APPENDIX 2

Personal Opinion Rubric			
	Very Good 	Fair 	Poor 
Structure & content	14 Points	7 Points	0 points
	The opening sentence gives the student's opinion clearly. The following sentences give relevant and accurate supporting arguments from either or both articles.	The opening sentence gives the student's opinion, but the supporting arguments are somewhat irrelevant or inaccurate.	There is no clear statement of opinion. There are no supporting arguments from the text.
Language	6 Points	3 Point	0 points
	Uses appropriate vocabulary, correct grammar and mechanics.	Partially correct vocabulary, grammar and mechanics.	Incorrect vocabulary, grammar and mechanics.

Students will receive 0 points if -

- The opinion is not in English
- The whole answer is copied from the text.