



MTI 692: Standards Based Learning and Grading

DISTANCE COURSE FOR DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY

MTI Contact Information:	
MTI Email:	info@midwestteachersinstitute.org
Instructor	Garth Larson
Instructor Background:	Garth Larson (Ed. D, M. Ed) is the Co-Founder and CEO of FIRST Educational Resources. He began his career as a high school English teacher and Associate Principal, later serving as an elementary principal and the Director of Learning for the Winneconne Community School District in Northeast Wisconsin. In 2015, he co-founded FIRST Educational Resources, aiming to enhance student achievement across the United States. Since then, over 2500 school districts worldwide have partnered with his company. Garth consults globally, providing customized professional development on topics such as Professional Learning Communities, Learning-Centered Grading Practices, Leadership, and School Improvement. He is the co-author of six books, including <i>Collaborative Systems of Support</i> , <i>PLC 2.0</i> , <i>Grading for Impact</i> , <i>The STAGR Process Roadmap</i> , <i>Extinguishing the Fires Within Assessment and Grading Reform</i> , and <i>Simplifying School Improvement: A Framework for Impact in Today's Schools</i> .
MTI Grading:	grades@midwestteachersinstitute.org

Course Information	
Course Format (distance learning, online, webinar, experiential onsite courses):	Distance Course Once you have registered for this course, you can immediately begin working. This is the syllabus for the course, and all materials needed can be found at the bottom of this syllabus under "Course Materials" or via

	your own research on the topic. Approximately 45 hours of instructional time is devoted to this course. Please see rubrics below for assessment and grading criteria. MTI Instructor will evaluate, grade, and process your final work within 7-10 business days of receiving it. Grades will be posted within 14 days and a grade report via email will be sent to the student. ALL questions, customer service, grades and transcript questions are to be directed to MTI, NOT Dominican University, for this course. All distance courses allow you to work at your own pace as your schedule permits. All coursework is due within one year of the registration date. If you need more time due to unforeseen circumstances, please contact MTI at the address provided above to request an extension.
Formatting Requirements	All assignments should be included in the same document. Please do not submit separate documents for each portion of the course. The first page of your submission should include the following information: • Name • Home address • Email address • School district name, address • Date of submission All following assignments must be submitted in the same order as they appear on the syllabus. Please name your document with your course number and full name (ex. 500JohnSmith). You may submit a Microsoft Word document or a Google document (if using Google, please make sure to allow the grader to comment on the assignments). Any missing assignment will be treated as a zero. Once you have completed all of your assignments, please submit them to grades@midwestteachersinstitute.org to be graded by your instructor.
Prerequisites and Credit Limits	All MTI courses are designed for educators who have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and professional educator license. Prior to beginning the course, check with your district office to ensure that credit will be accepted for salary increase and professional development. All courses are for 3 graduate semester hours (credits).
Course Materials	Resources provided for this course can be found towards the bottom of this document in the section labeled Course Materials.
Learning Outcomes/Competencies: Following the completion of this course, the student should be able to:	

1. Analyze traditional and standards-based grading practices and evaluate their impact on student learning, motivation, and equity. InTASC 2,6,9
2. Apply principles of standards-based grading to design grading practices that accurately reflect student learning and progress. InTASC 1,6,7
3. Reflect on their current grading and assessment approaches and identify areas for improvement aligned to standards-based practices. InTASC 9,10
4. Design or revise grading and assessment systems that align with standards, support student growth, and improve communication with stakeholders. InTASC 6,7,10
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of standards-based grading practices and their impact on student outcomes and instructional decision-making. InTASC 3,6,9

Course Description: This course is designed to support educators in developing a deeper understanding of standards-based grading and assessment practices. Grounded in research-based principles of assessment and grading, participants will engage with keynote presentations, breakout sessions, and recorded content to explore how grading practices impact student learning, motivation, and equity.

Through structured reflection, application-based assignments, and critical analysis, participants will examine current grading practices and consider shifts toward more accurate, consistent, and meaningful measures of student learning. Emphasis will be placed on aligning grading practices to standards, improving communication of student progress, and using assessment data to inform instruction.

Learning Strategies: Professional literature analysis, personal reflection, project-based learning.

Experiential Learning Opportunities: Students will be reflecting on the assessments and tools that they develop/learn about in class and measuring/estimating the intended impact on student learning in the classroom. Students will learn by doing while completing a variety of activities throughout the course.

Assessments		Approximate contact hours for each assessment
Reflection questions	90 points	12 hours
Application	100 points	8 hours
Seat time, video review time, and study/reflection time		15 hours
Final evaluation essay	100 points	10 hours
Total points possible	290 points	45 hours
Grading Scale: A (90-100%); B (80-89%) <i>*Anything below a B will not receive graduate credit and result in a failing grade of F.</i> If you do not receive a B or higher, your work will be returned to you for further correction and completion.		

You will be allowed one (1) re-submit to your instructor to achieve a grade of B or higher. If after your re-submit, you still do not achieve a B or higher you will receive a failing grade of F and therefore forfeit the 3 graduate credits.

Reflection Question Rubric- 10 questions @ 9 points each

Category	Superior (3 pts)	Sufficient (2 pts)	Minimal (1 pt)
Supporting Evidence in Practice ___/3	Response shows strong evidence of ideas and insights from this course and how they are applied to the classroom.	Response shows evidence of ideas and insights from this course and how they are applied to the classroom.	Response shows some evidence of ideas and insights from this course and how they are applied to the classroom.
Accuracy ___/3	All supporting facts and statistics are accurately represented.	Almost all supporting facts and statistics are accurately represented.	Some of the supporting facts and statistics are accurately represented.
Grammar and Spelling ___/3	Response includes 0-1 mistakes in grammar or spelling.	Response includes a few grammar and spelling mistakes.	Response includes several grammar and spelling mistakes.

Application Rubric- 1 application @ 100 points

Category	Superior (40-36 pts)	Sufficient (35-31 pts)	Minimal (30-26 pts)	Below Standard (25 to 0)
Supporting Evidence in Practice ___/40	Response shows strong evidence of ideas and insights from this course and how they are applied to the classroom.	Response shows evidence of ideas and insights from this course and how they are applied to the classroom.	Response shows some evidence of ideas and insights from this course and how they are applied to the classroom.	Response shows little evidence of ideas and insights from this course and there is little evidence they are applied to the classroom.
Accuracy ___/40	All supporting facts and statistics are accurately represented.	Almost all supporting facts and statistics are accurately represented.	Some of the supporting facts and statistics are accurately represented.	Many of the supporting facts and statistics are inaccurately represented.
Grammar and Spelling ___/20	Response includes 0-1 mistakes in grammar or spelling.	Response includes a few grammar and spelling mistakes.	Response includes several grammar and spelling mistakes.	Response includes numerous grammar and spelling mistakes.

Evaluation Rubric- 100 points

Category	Superior (20-18 pts)	Sufficient (17-16 pts)	Minimal (15-14 pts)	Below Standard (13 to 0)
Supporting Evidence in Practice ___/20	Response shows strong evidence of ideas and insights from this course and	Response shows evidence of ideas and insights from this course and how they	Response shows some evidence of ideas and insights from this course and how they	Response shows little evidence of ideas and insights from this course and there is little evidence they are

	how they are applied to the classroom.	are applied to the classroom.	are applied to the classroom.	applied to the classroom.
Accuracy ___/20	All supporting facts and statistics are accurately represented.	Almost all supporting facts and statistics are accurately represented.	Some of the supporting facts and statistics are accurately represented.	Many of the supporting facts and statistics are inaccurately represented.
Grammar and Spelling ___/20	Response includes 0-1 mistakes in grammar or spelling.	Response includes a few grammar and spelling mistakes.	Response includes several grammar and spelling mistakes.	Response includes numerous grammar and spelling mistakes.
Sequencing ___/20	Response is written in a clear, concise, and well organized manner. Thoughts are presented in a coherent and logical manner.	Response is mostly clear, concise, and well organized. Thoughts are presented in a coherent and logical manner.	Response is somewhat unclear and/or disorganized. Some thoughts are presented in a coherent and logical manner.	Response is mostly unclear and/or disorganized. Many thoughts are presented in an incoherent and illogical manner.
Reflection ___/20	Response demonstrates an in-depth reflection on, and personalization of, the theories, concepts, and /or strategies presented in this course.	Response demonstrates some reflection on, and personalization of, the theories, concepts, and /or strategies presented in this course.	Response demonstrates a minimal reflection on, and personalization of, the theories, concepts, and /or strategies presented in this course.	Response demonstrates no reflection on, and personalization of, the theories, concepts, and /or strategies presented in this course.

Course Assignments

Reflection Questions (90 points)

Each question is designed to get you thinking about the concepts explored in the institute. Use the questions to help you reflect on what you learned, apply the concepts, and evaluate how the information can be related to your current work. Each response is expected to be one paragraph or more.

1. What key ideas or shifts in thinking about grading and assessment were most impactful during the conference, and why?
2. How did the presenters challenge your current grading practices or beliefs about what grades should represent?
3. In what ways do your current grading practices accurately—or inaccurately—reflect student learning? Provide specific examples.
4. How does standards-based grading address issues of equity and fairness in assessment? What implications does this have for your practice?
5. What role should behavior, effort, and participation play in grading, based on what you learned? How does this compare to your current approach?
6. How can assessment practices be used more effectively to guide instruction and support student growth?
7. What challenges or resistance might arise when transitioning to standards-based grading, and how can they be addressed?

8. How can grading practices better communicate student learning to families and stakeholders?
9. What is one grading or assessment practice you are currently using that needs to change, and why?
10. How has your perspective on grading evolved as a result of this conference, and what are your next steps?

Application (45 points) Standards-Based Grading Implementation Plan

In this assignment, participants will analyze their current grading and assessment practices and design a plan to implement or improve standards-based grading within their classroom or school. The focus is on creating a practical, actionable system that more accurately reflects student learning.

Step 1: Identify Current Grading Practices

Describe your existing grading system.

Include:

- What is graded (tests, homework, behavior, etc.)
- How grades are calculated
- Strengths and concerns

Step 2: Identify a Problem of Practice

Select a specific issue related to grading.

Examples:

- Grades inflated by behavior or effort
- Lack of alignment to standards
- Inconsistent grading practices
- Student confusion about grades

Step 3: Connect to Conference Learning

Identify 2-3 key SBG principles or strategies from the conference.

Requirements:

- Explain each concept clearly
- Reference sessions or ideas
- Connect directly to your problem

Step 4: Redesign Your Grading Approach

Develop a revised grading system.

Include:

- How grades will be aligned to standards
- What will (and will not) be included in grades
- How student learning will be measured

Step 5: Assessment Plan

Explain how you will assess student learning.

Include:

- Types of assessments (formative/summative)
- Opportunities for reassessment
- Use of feedback

Step 6: Implementation Strategy

Explain how you will implement changes.

Include:

- Timeline
- Communication with students/families
- Collaboration with colleagues
- Addressing potential resistance

Step 7: Measurement and Evaluation

Explain how you will determine success.

Include:

- Indicators of improved accuracy or equity
- Student outcomes or engagement
- Data collection methods

Final Evaluation Assignment (100 points)

Write a 3-5 page essay (APA format) answering the following: How effective is standards-based grading in improving the accuracy, fairness, and impact of assessment on student learning, and what conditions are necessary for successful implementation?

Make sure to include the following:

Evaluation of Standards-Based Grading

- Identify 2–3 strengths (accuracy, clarity, equity, etc.)
- Identify 1–2 challenges or limitations
- Support with examples

Application to Practice

- Connect to your classroom/school
- Reference your application assignment
- Provide concrete examples

Analyze factors such as:

- Teacher understanding
- Consistency across classrooms
- Communication with stakeholders
- Administrative support

Evidence-Based Conclusion

- Take a clear stance on SBG
- Justify with evidence and reasoning
- Address implementation recommendations

Course Resources

This course is built around immersive professional learning provided through the SBG Conference offered by FIRST Educational Resources. The primary instructional content will be drawn directly from participation in this conference experience, which focuses on developing effective standards-based grading and assessment practices grounded in research-based principles of grading, feedback, and student learning.

Participants will engage with:

- Live or recorded keynote sessions and breakout presentations from the Spring SBG Conference
- Presenter-led training focused on grading practices, assessment design, and equitable evaluation of student learning
- Core standards-based grading frameworks and strategies provided during the conference (including alignment to standards, reassessment practices, and grading for accuracy)
- Guided reflection and application activities designed to connect grading and assessment concepts to participants' professional contexts

All course assignments are designed to help participants analyze, apply, and evaluate grading and assessment practices within real educational settings. No additional textbook is required, as the conference serves as the primary instructional resource, supplemented by participants' professional experiences and instructional contexts.

End of Course Survey

Now that you are finished with this class, please take the time to help us improve our product. In order to make sure that we are providing the best possible service, please take our [survey](#). We appreciate your help and your commitment to the profession.

The ten INTASC standards are listed below. Specific standards for knowledge, dispositions, and performances accompany each principle, but space does not permit listing them below. For a complete copy of the INTASC standards, contact Jean Miller, Director of INTASC, Suite 700, One Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington DC 20001-1431.

The InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards (April 2011)

The Learner and Learning

Standard #1: Learner Development

The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Standard #2: Learning Differences

The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Standard #3: Learning Environments

The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Content Knowledge

Standard #4: Content Knowledge

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

Standard #5: Application of Content

The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

Instructional Practice

Standard #6: Assessment

The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.

Standard #7: Planning for Instruction

The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

Standard #8: Instructional Strategies

The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

Professional Responsibility

Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet

the needs of each learner.

Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration

The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.