

## STANDARDS-BASED GRADING

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**Motivation.** Tired of looking at your gradebook and not really knowing what your students know? This is the starting point. I teach calculus in large lectures and because of how we structure things it is entirely possible for a student to pass (or better) and not really know much of the material. This leads to problems in subsequent math classes, but also in other disciplines when students are asked to apply the mathematics they've ostensibly learned.

Standards-based grading breaks things down into smaller pieces that can be assessed with low-stakes quizzes. This works particularly well in objective, quantitative courses, but it can be integrated into more subjective disciplines as well.

### **Exercise.**

- Identify core standards your students *must* master to pass the class. If you have a list of student learning outcomes, that may be a good place to start.
- Identify advanced standards you would *like* your students to master. These will help you differentiate among those who meet minimal standards.
- How can you assess these?
- How many attempts do you want to allow? Will each attempt be all-or-nothing or can students add up results over time?

### **Nuts and bolts.**

- Canvas has a Learning Mastery Gradebook you can use to keep track.
- This can be a logistical challenge. How often will you allow reassessment? When will you do it?
- Can you do some assessment online?
- Is it appropriate to have a mix of basic assessments and more complex synthesis?

### **Resources for further reading.**

- *Seven reasons for standards-based grading*, <http://bit.ly/1bmVcZ0>
- *3 peaks and 3 pits of standards-based grading*, <http://edut.to/2nrgtyw>