Objective: To discuss **related grading areas and language** that can encourage students to stay on a path of content mastery without reducing content rigor.

Warm-Up

Faculty grading and feedback are crucial components for instilling and supporting a growth mindset in students.
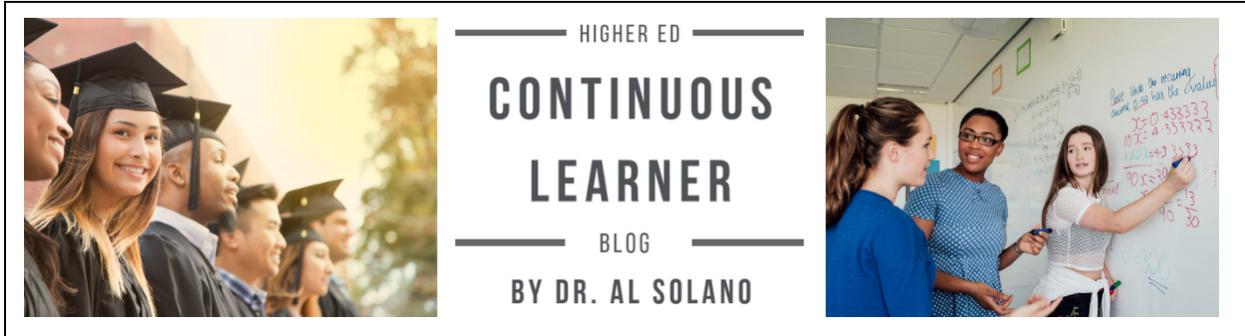
Scenario:

You just gave a high stakes assignment and 50% of your class failed it. What do you do?

Related Grading Areas for Today's Session:
1. Determination of the Overall Score in a Class
2. Philosophy around major assignments
3. Language around Assessments

Determination of Overall Score

Activity and material inspired by "Student Success Strategies: Equity in Grading" by Dr Al Solano on Continuous Learner Blog

"What does it mean when two students with the same academic performance and socioeconomic background receive different grades from two different instructors when the quality of instruction is relatively the same? How can it be that these same students have a 30% chance of getting a C or D with one instructor, but a 0% chance with a different instructor despite very similar instructional quality? This is when equity in grading becomes an issue.

First, consider what it means to be a resource-poor or a resource-rich student. Resource-rich means opportunities during the K-12 journey to participate in academic summer camps, ongoing tutoring, after-school music enrichment, internships, etc.—these students for the most part can handle any quality of instruction and grading policies. Resource-poor tends to mean those students about whom some open access college and university educators say, "I wish they would have come to me better prepared." We don't have control over how they arrive, but we definitely have control over which of our practices can help them succeed without compromising rigor."

Activity:

For each of the following situations, brainstorm challenges with this grading policy a resource-poor student would have while transitioning into college.   Assume each of the x% are high-stakes assignments.

In class presentation constitutes x% of the course grade.	
Challenges (potential) challenges facing a resource-poor student transitioning into college	**Opportunity for Faculty** to insure success is equitable for all students without reducing the rigor of the class

Significant weight is placed on a final paper (or cumulative exam).	
Challenges (potential) challenges facing a resource-poor student transitioning into college	**Opportunity for Faculty** to insure success is equitable for all students without reducing the rigor of the class

Late work is not accepted or make ups are not available	
Challenges (potential) challenges facing a resource-poor student transitioning into college	**Opportunity for Faculty** to insure success is equitable for all students without reducing the rigor of the class

Philosophy around major assignments

How can a course be structured to promote growth mindset in students, allowing students to grow and master concepts before "high stakes" assessment?

Some things to consider:
- Progression of difficulty in assignments (or points increase) over the semester.
  - Example: Hardest problems are not solely on the exam, but opportunities to engage in the challenging problems of equal difficulty are in class (lecture, labs) and on homework completed prior to the exam.
  - Example is increasing the value of exams (50-100-150 vs 3 at 100)
- Include lots of low-stakes assignments that are collected and feedback is given that emphasizes growth and the importance of learning from mistakes.
  - Distributed learning
- Incorporate tasks into larger assignments where these tasks are embedded into the course, providing clear scaffolding for the assignment.
- Successful learning strategies can be learned before through short scenarios discussed in class.
- Make up, late work or revision is accepted with a "failure is not permanent" discussion
  - Example: Late work is accepted with a % penalty for each late day
  - Example: Cumulative Final Exam score can replace your lowest exam score
  - Example: Corrected/revised work is accepted for partial or full credit
- Self Reflection or Self Evaluation is regularly incorporated into the class
  - Post Test Survey on specific success factors - how did they prepare, test taking strategies used, time management for studying, etc.
  - Reflect on the exam, correct mistakes and communicate in their own words what strategies/steps they used for each problem.

Language around "Mastery" and "Mistakes"

How can our language inspire students to embrace challenges when learning new material and celebrate mistakes as learning opportunities. Brainstorm statements that can be used in class to keep the focus on learning and rising to the challenges.

- **For Communicating a Learning Goal**
  - Today, I want you to challenge yourself as we learn a new concept.
  - We will be learning new material, and I want you to stretch your thinking to learn this.

- **For Communicating High Expectations**
  - I know you all have the ability to do this, so the bar is set high and it is achievable with hard work.
  - This is challenging but rewarding!

- **For Communicating Learning from Mistakes**
  - We are in the learning zone today. Mistakes are expected!
  - Mistakes are opportunities to learn!

Scenario: You just gave a high stakes assignment and 50% of your class failed it. What do you do?
- Did your strategies for how to address this situation change? How?