GRADING FOR LEARNING & INCLUSION

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Boston College

INCLUSIVE TEACHING

Inclusive teaching involves deliberately cultivating learning spaces where all students can learn, feel known, and are valued. Inclusive teaching recognizes the classroom as a site where systemic inequities can be (re)produced *and* dismantled — through course design, pedagogical practice, and community norms.

While inclusive teaching seeks to improve all students' access to learning, it privileges the needs of those from historically marginalized social groups. In Jesuit contexts, it also seeks to prepare students — implicitly or explicitly — to act justly in the world.

GOALS FOR TODAY

1. Identify areas where **grading practice** can be at odds with our goals for **inclusion & equity**.

2. Introduce **frameworks** that can be useful when **problem solving** to address those discrepancies.

THE STORY GRADING TELLS

Professor X

Participation 10%

Midterm 45%

Final 45%

Professor Y

Participation 10%

Problem sets 15%

Weekly responses 10%

Midterm 25%

Final 40%

What story of learning (and learners) is being told by these different grading scales?

What story of learning (and learners) do you see your own grading approaches telling?

What story would you like to tell?

Goal Orientation

Performance-based

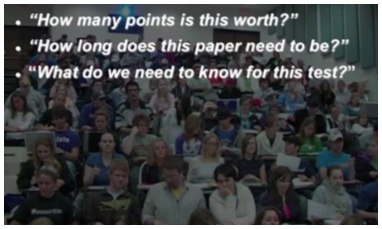
Mastery-based

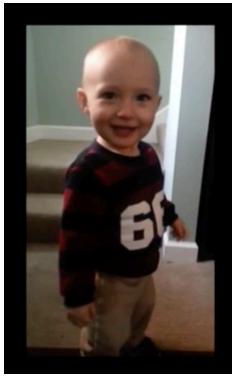
Performance-based

Mastery-based

Performance-based

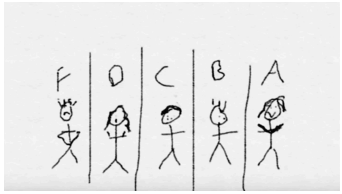
Mastery-based

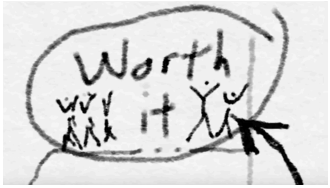




Performance-based

Mastery-based





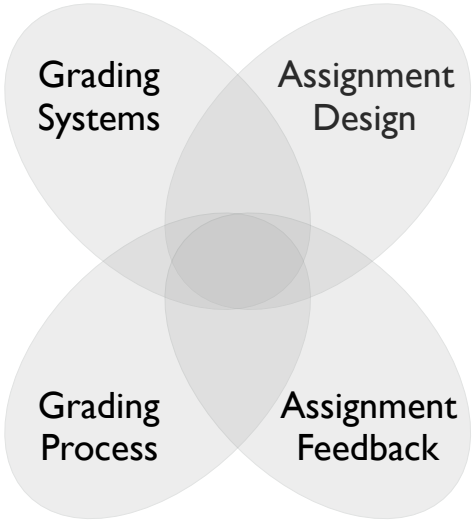
HOW MIGHT BIAS IMPACT . . .

Types of Bias

Explicit/ Conscious

Implicit/ Unconscious

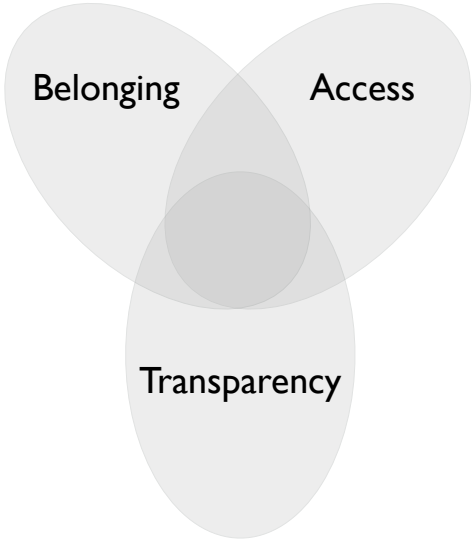
Systemic/ Institutional



HOW MIGHT BIAS IMPACT . . .

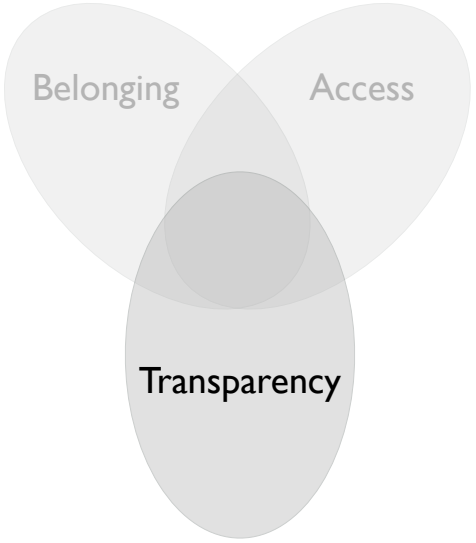
- **Personal (implicit) bias** can influence our evaluation of and feedback to students
- **Disciplinary biases** privilege certain kinds of knowledge production over others
- **Unspoken norms & assumptions** are easier for some students to decipher
- In striving for "fairness," we create rigid systems that **ignore student differences**

DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION



DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION . . .

TILT: Explain task, purpose, & criteria for assignments



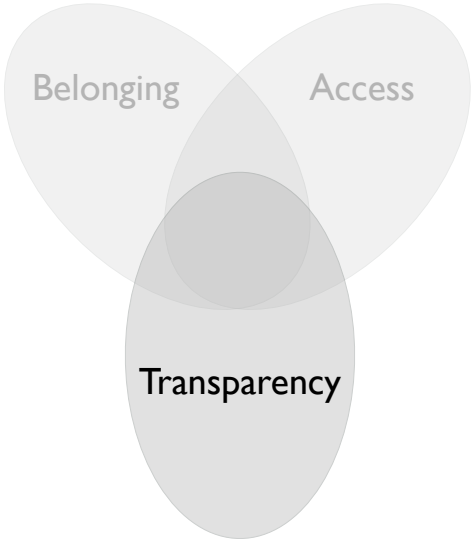
"If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, **being told explicitly the rules** of that culture makes acquiring power easier."

- Lisa Delpit (1988)

DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION . . .

TILT: Explain task, purpose, & criteria for assignments

Explain class-room culture (e.g. how to get help)



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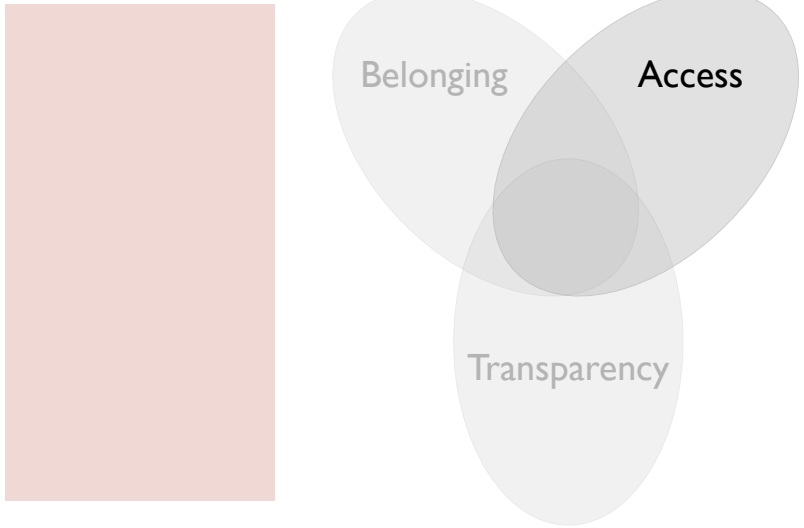

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

"Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design."

- Ronald Mace (1985)

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UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Designing spaces with more people in mind.

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Designing *learning* spaces with more people in mind.

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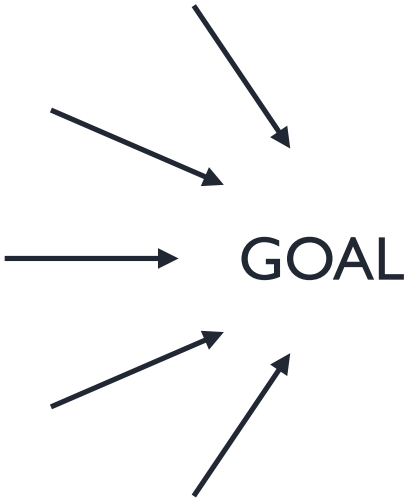
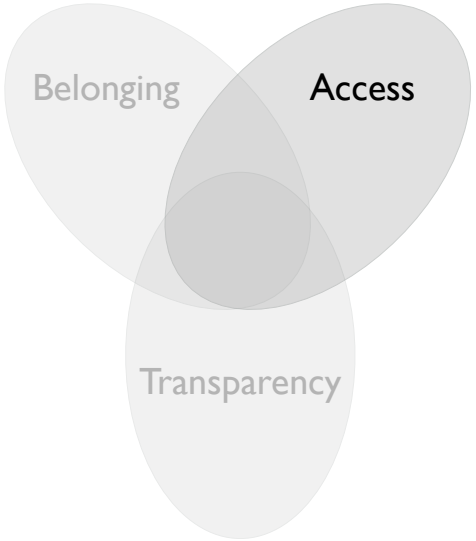


DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION . . .

Allow choice & flexibility

Question construct relevance

Reconsider standards of performance



RETHINK STANDARDS

UMich Sweetland Writing Center

Error Types	Description	Is it likely that a student will be able to correct each of these developmental errors, if the errors are called to his or her attention?
Performance Errors	Any error that is made on a strictly occasional basis is likely to be a performance error. These errors typically include spelling errors, punctuation and capitalization.	Yes, students can correct these errors. We would also encourage you hold L2 students responsible for correcting these errors once they have been offered adequate instruction in class or in your previous assignment feedback.
Interlanguage and L1 Influence Errors (The following pages provide detailed descriptions of these error types and the recommended responding strategies)	Type 1: Verb-form errors	Probably yes
	Type 2: Subject/verb agreement errors	Probably yes
	Type 3: Relative clause errors	Probably not
	Type 4: Incorrect use of determiners	Probably not
	Type 5: Incorrect use of noun forms	Probably not
	Type 6: Incorrect use of prepositions	Probably not
	Type 7: Incorrect pronoun use	Probably yes
	Type 8: Sentence structure	Probably not

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Question construct relevance

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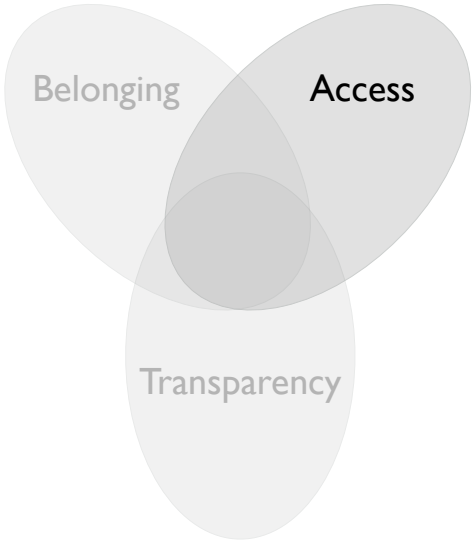

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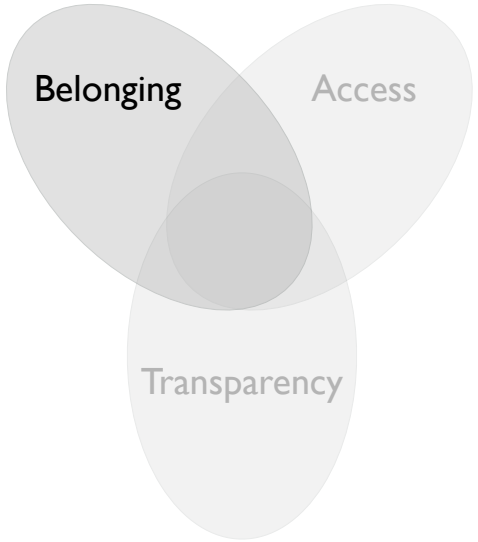
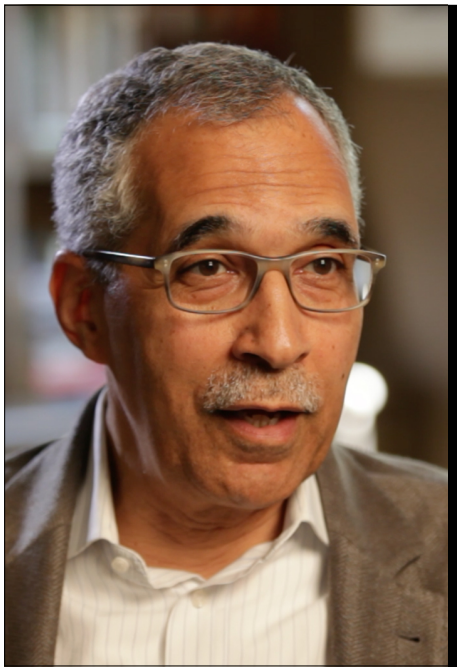
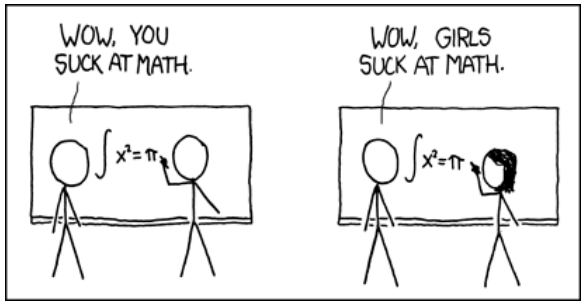




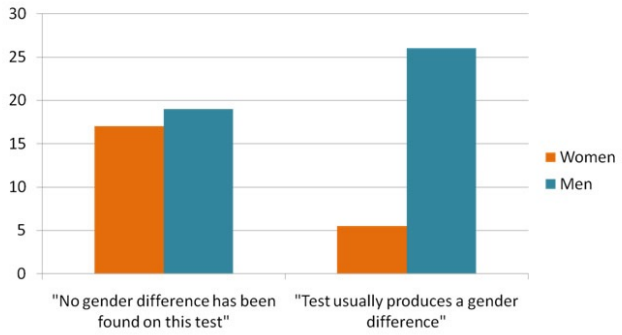
Stereotype threat is "the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype"

- Claude Steele (1999)

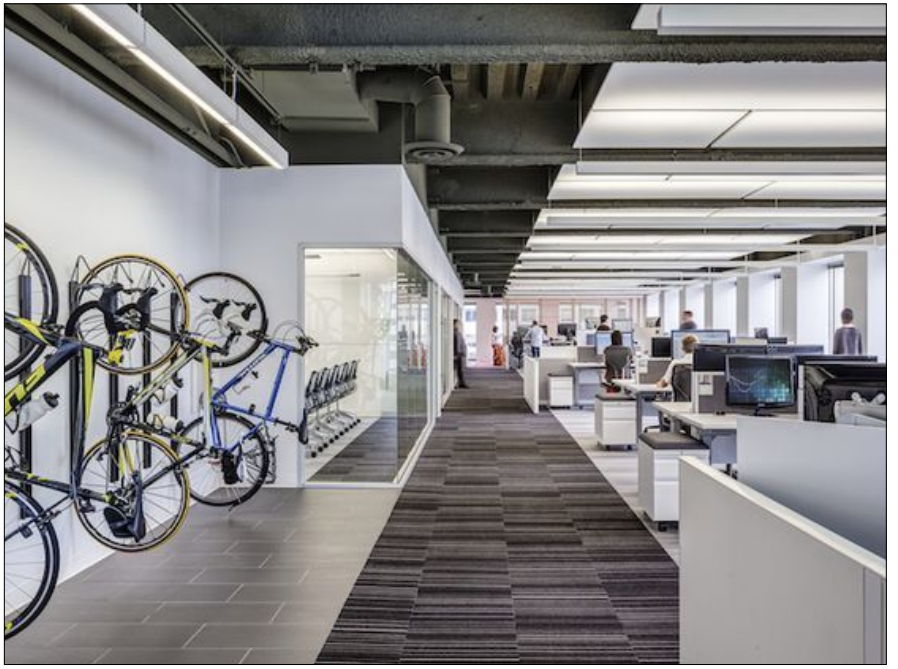
STEREOTYPE THREAT

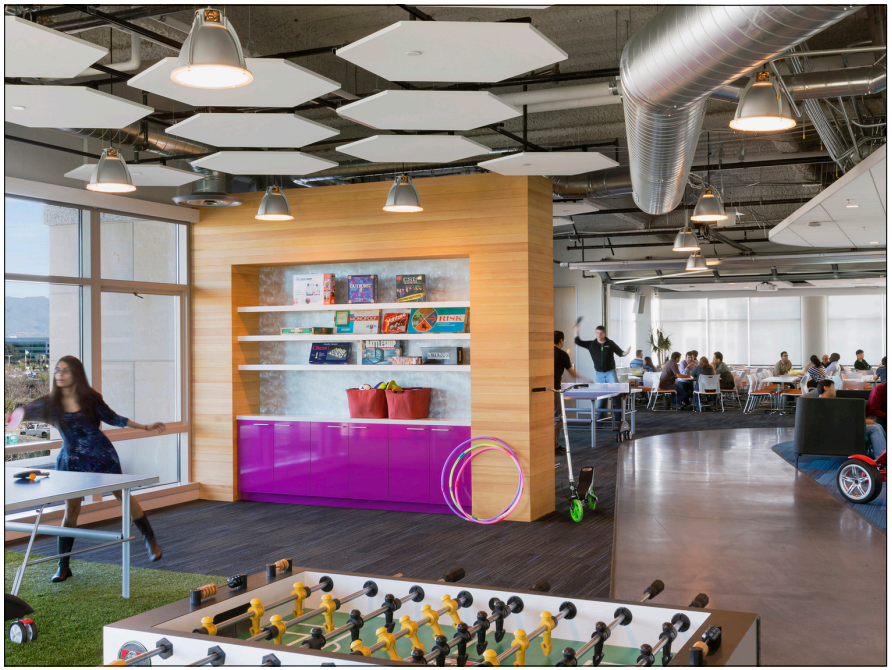


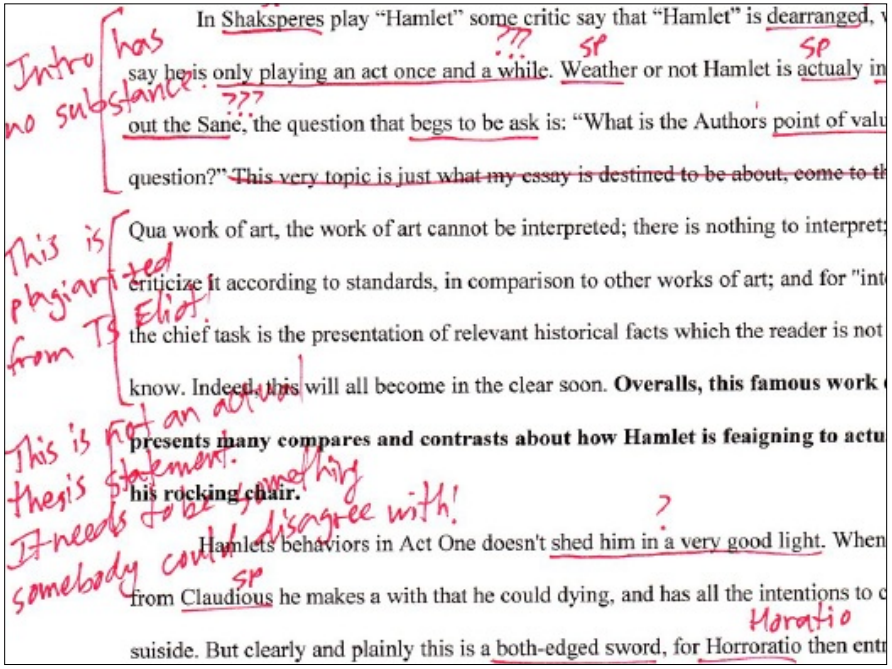
STEREOTYPE THREAT



--Spencer, Steele & Quinn, "Stereotype threat and women's math performance (1999)







In Shaksperes play "Hamlet" some critic say that "Hamlet" is dearranged, v
say he is only playing an act once and a while. Weather or not Hamlet is actualy in
out the Sane, the question that begs to be ask is: "What is the Authors point of valu
question?" This very topic is just what my essay is destined to be about, come to th
Qua work of art, the work of art cannot be interpreted; there is nothing to interpret;
criticize it according to standards, in comparison to other works of art; and for "int
the chief task is the presentation of relevant historical facts which the reader is not
know. Indeed, this will all become in the clear soon. **Overalls, this famous work**
presents many compares and contrasts about how Hamlet is feaigning to actu
his rocking chair.
Hamlets behaviors in Act One doesn't shed him in a very good light. When
from Claudious he makes a with that he could dying, and has all the intentions to c
suiside. But clearly and plainly this is a both-edged sword, for Horroratio then entr

Intro has no substance.
This is plagiarized from T.S. Eliot.
This is not an actual thesis statement. It needs to be something somebody could disagree with!

WISE FEEDBACK

Steele, Cohen, & Ross (1999), Yeager et al (2013)

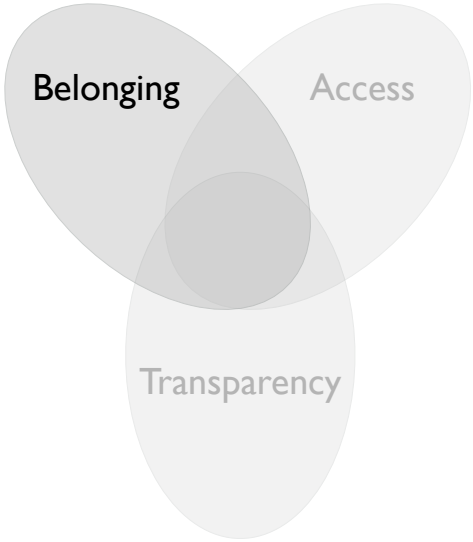
Wise feedback "discourages expectations and attributions of racial bias and [thus] minimizes stereotype threat":

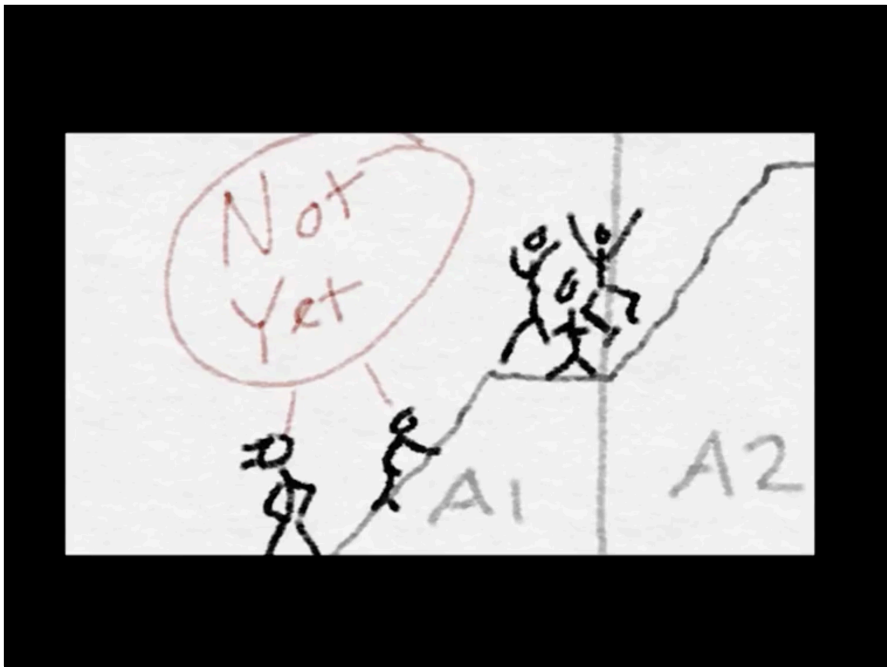
- Conveys **high standards**
- Expresses **confidence** in student's ability to meet those standards
- Supports students in **taking action** to meet those standards

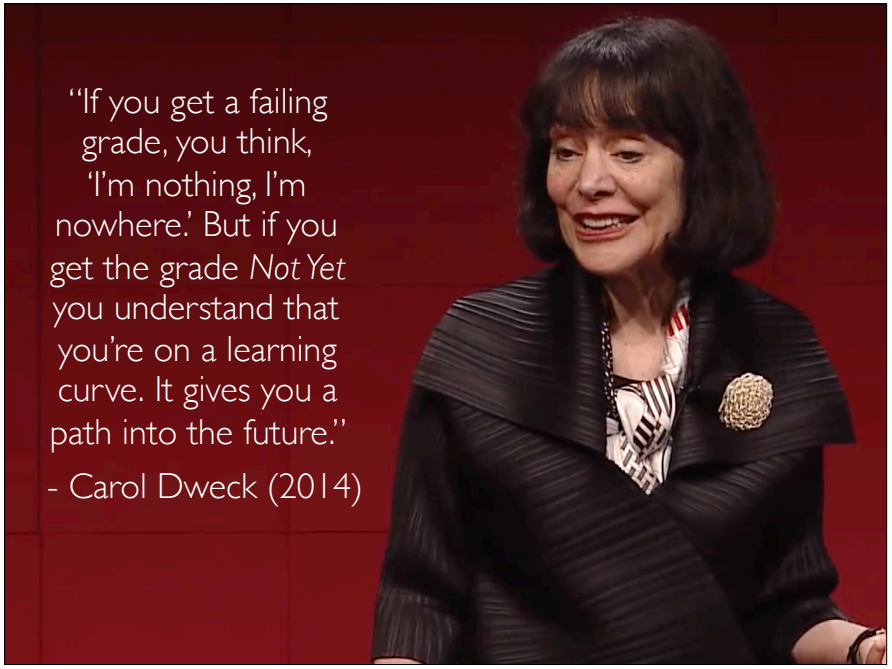
DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION . . .

Wise feedback:
high standards
+ confidence

Design for
growth







GRADING FOR GROWTH

Process-oriented → marks individual progress
guides future efforts
validates effective effort

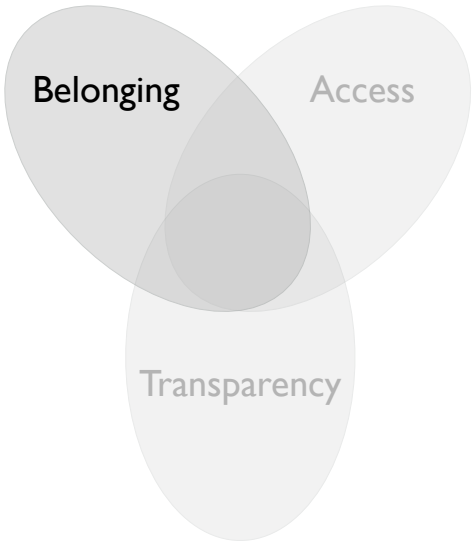
Normalizes error → anticipates stumbling blocks
discourages competition
rewards risk-taking
allows second chances

DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION . . .

Wise feedback: high standards + confidence

Design for growth

Reconsider norm-referenced grading



NORM-REFERENCED GRADING

Crooks (1988)

"Norm-referenced evaluation tends to undermine the learning and motivation of students who regularly score near the bottom of a class, while posing much less risk to the top students. [. . .] All students can improve their knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and have this verified through evaluation, but only some can score above the class median on a measure."

DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION . . .

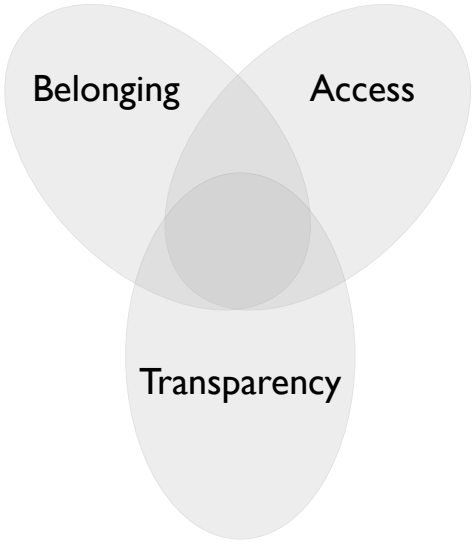
Value effort, process, & error

Unpack norms

Explain how & why

Provide flexibility & choice

Signal belonging



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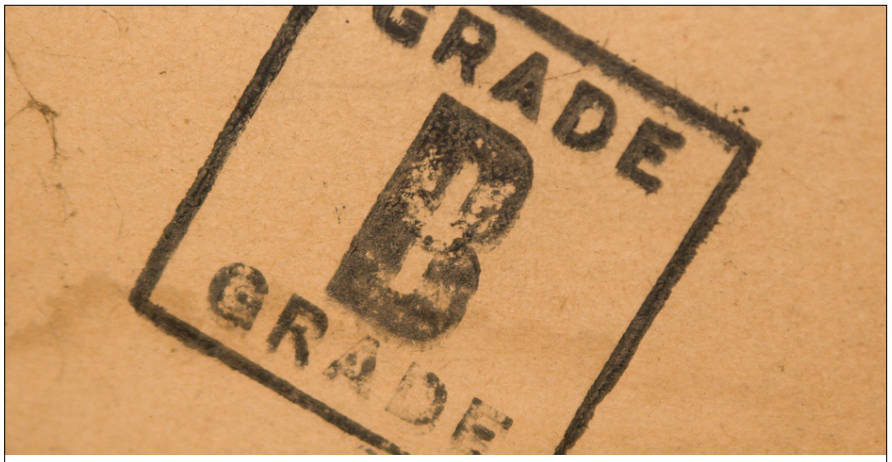

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