

Sound Bites

Success breeds success

~Marcel LaVergne

A+ = A+

There is nothing so discouraging as failing the first test of the year. It often causes students to give up immediately or to drop the course. Because the teacher's role is not to weed out those who fail (thereby reducing one's class size and purging the class of those who can't make it), but to train all students to succeed. That can be achieved if you make sure that the students will pass the first test that you give, and then, as the year progresses, if you gradually increase the difficulty level of the tests. Student motivation and self-esteem will definitely increase as the students try to hold on to their success and try to improve upon it.

Self Evaluation (no right or wrong answers)

Do your tests count more than your quizzes?

Do you believe that some students are poor test takers?

Do you believe that frequent daily quizzes are as good an indicator of student progress as the unit or chapter test?

What else besides tests and quizzes do you factor into the student's grade?

Do you believe that everything that goes into the student's grade should have equal value?

Do you believe that tests measure what the student knows and can do or what the teacher did or did not teach?

Do you give the students an opportunity to retake a similar test to improve their grade?

Do you ever discard the poorest grade that a student received?

Are you certain you are testing what you are teaching?

TIP

Instead of your normal grading system, try for one month to give equal value to everything that the students do for a grade, i.e., tests, quizzes, oral presentations, compositions, lab reports, homework, classroom participation, etc. Which system is more beneficial to the students?