

HIGH LIFE

Grimsley Senior High School
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Traditional Grading Unfair; A Look At Alternatives

By Trisha Houser

By the time this paper is published, everyone will have probably received his/her report card. Few of us are really happy with our grades. Some students just try to slide by, while others slave over that homework only to get a C.

We have all taken the A-F grading system pretty much for granted ever since the seventh grade. Perhaps it is time we take a closer look at it.

This scale has no logical basis, if you consider it. Different teachers take different points into consideration. Some teachers are more lenient than others, and there are often different expectations for different courses. But most importantly, does a grade really tell how much you have learned? When you ask your classmate what he got in chemistry, he will tell you his grade, not what particular concepts he learned, nor what insights he gained from the course.

The grading system is basically a convenience for colleges and some teachers, although a few teachers consider it a nuisance. (For example, English teachers may feel limited discussing a novel just on the basis of its literary merit for fear that someone will ask, "Is this gonna be on the test?")

The A-F grading system encourages cheating, and creates alienation between the teachers and students and among the students. A grade is no judge of creativity, character, or initiative. If Jane's grade point average is 4.4 and Jill's is 3.0, this does not necessarily mean that Jane has a better understanding of the material, nor does it tell anything about the student's other qualities.

In summary too, much emphasis is placed on grading. In answer to those who say that grading provides initiative, studies show that students who do well are those who are most motivated by grades. In other words, it helps those who need the least help. Also, a person's grades become tied to one's sense of self-worth; one who gets low grades may think badly of himself.

So, what is the solution? There are many possibilities. One is a pass/fail option, which takes much of the pressure off the student. A teacher would give guidelines, and those meeting them would pass. Variations include an honors grade and the P/F option in certain classes. Other possibilities include credit/no credit (which eliminates the "fail" concept), teacher and self-evaluations, and contracts.

The decision to change would not be easy or quick. Every aspect of every plan would have to be explored. Students could perceivably "slack off" under such a system as P/F, but one must look at a human's basic curiosity.

In any case, it is time to take a serious look at the alternatives and find a way to encourage creativity and individualism, bring out a student's full potential, and to have a relaxing and fun learning experience.

In The Spotlight -- SSBAG

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|----------------------|----------------|
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Under The Willow Tree, Telling Our Own

Viewpoint

By Marty Leary and Tonie Goldstein

And so here I sit, under the willow tree, singing the twilight songs;
*Look here kid, there they are, basking in the sun, someday you'll be one.
Dinosaurs in the Garden of Eden, dinosaurs in time.*

And so here I sit, under the willow tree, singing the morning songs:

*Butterfly-bats hover
In rhymeless time
Children take cover
In brilliant sunshine*

"I don't want to know about your bio-chemical super-nuclear space-based mort-o-matic warfares and hard-wares and big bad bears at whom you flex your macho-ness."

Come now little Hamlet, there they are, scratching out their eyes, burning down the skies.

Dinosaurs in the Garden of Eden, dinosaurs in time.

"Won't you listen to me? There's more to living than accepting death. There's more to man than man."

*I have apple sauce eyes.
While yours are blue.
Apple sauce eyes, apple sauce eyes.
Your eyes see truth.
But my eyes see true.
I have apple sauce eyes.*

"I don't want to know 'bout your Reaganomics and superatomics, your ranks and tanks and west-banks, your spies and lies and economic ties. Don't even talk to me about life, as if you could live one under the shadow of your bomb. I'm just holdin' my breath like everybody else."

*Reptilian Monday, be here one day, Mother
Reptilian Monday, be here one way or another.
Presimian Tuesday, oh what a bluesday, Father
Presimian Tuesday, tell me should I even bother?*

"If you celebrate the sky you will find rainbows and stars and love. Don't let the cobwebs in your mind and in your books cast shadows over your life."

*Look to the green skies
And the blue grass,
See the cloud sighs
Have the last laugh.*

"Get me away from the stench of your sulfurous, sepulchral silos as you raze and blaze, fuse and confuse, as you ploy and deploy and destroy with your blundering, plundering, thundering Adam's hands. Don't smile at me as if you had the power to see me under the shadow of your bomb. You all look like a bunch of dinosaurs to me."

*Afterall:
I've seen Jewish Nazis,
White knights wearing clown white faces,
I've seen the white dove stained
And bludgeoned in the white rat races.
I'm Chicken Little and I've seen it all
And I tell you the sky, she's gonna fall.
I've seen white berets
And big white houses burned to the ground
White on red, red on white
Whollotta crazy white people runnin' 'round.
I'm Chicken Little and I've seen it all
And I tell you the sky, she's gonna fall.
I've heard white screams
As the white dreams whimper and die
In the grocery stores and in the pool halls
As the white gluttons run out of pie.
Yum, yum, yum, finger lickin' good.
Yum, yum, yum, finger lickin' good.*

"Create a gift to stop this destruction, if you've had enough. Give the world a child, a book, a poem, a smile. You're only piling your words onto theirs."

*Our hearts must be
Free to fly.
What use is Earth
If there's no sky?
Our hearts must be
Free to stay.
Cause at least
We've got today.*

"Willow tree, who could play your fronds back on the wind to that place in time when he cursed ourselves to live with knowledge? Anger now has abated and there is a strange calm wherein we sit and wait and stare at nature's lingering countenance, her streams and brooks and mountains and plains and seas that somehow defied us; and hope, that great human folly, does not forsake us, even in these blinking times when each sunset seems final, for we are not helplessly human. For us there is no sadness, but for you, oh weeping willow, who will explain? You did not have a mother to tell you in her sweet way, "Yes dear, you are going to die. We are all going to die someday." What right have we with our precocious science and our myopic perception of time, with our instruments and deathly counterments with our mere materials, mighty nothings, for a backdrop to action-what right have we, oh weeping, weltering willow to tell your tale?"

And so here we sit, telling our own.

College Column

By Trisha Houser

Many students have already selective, and they can usually have been accepted to a school. If you have not been accepted at your "first choice," be patient; waiting for acceptances can be nerve-racking. There are, however, a few things you can do to help insure your acceptance.

An interview, especially at the smaller, private schools, is almost a must. Often, these schools are very selective, and they can usually have their choice of students. To stand out, remember that they have seen many well-dressed, well-groomed hopefuls; be interesting, be well-informed, and ask questions. Make sure you know about what you wrote on your application. It might be a good idea to check up on current events before

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