Help with Grading: Developing a Grading Key to Save You Time
Teresa Dawson, UVic Learning and Teaching Centre, 2006

Helpful Hints
1. Give the grading criteria to your students when you give them the assignment. Be as specific as possible. Criteria might fall into different categories—for example, regarding specific content, as well as the general nature of an A, B or C answer.
2. Once the assignments are in, start by scanning a sample of student papers/answers and identifying common errors you would have to address in many of them.
3. Make your Grading Key by typing these errors into your template (see sample below). Refer to lecture notes or text pages for supporting help. Be sure to relate errors/suggestions to the previously identified criteria. Leave room for specific comments at the bottom, so you can individualise your remarks for each student.
4. Make copies of the Grading Key (several will fit on one page).
5. As you grade, put the student’s name on the key and attach a copy to each assignment.
6. Simply check the items students have missed and then make a comment particular to each student at the bottom. A balance of “positive reinforcement” with a “suggestion for improvement” is the most effective approach.
7. For maximum impact, photocopy the Grading Keys for students and keep them. Refer back to them in subsequent assignment grading, so that you can comment if a student has taken your suggestions to heart, or if he/she needs to refer back to what you said last time. In this way, students will be amazed that you can remember from one assignment to the next and will take your comments much more seriously.

Sample template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course:</th>
<th>Assignment:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criteria/common errors in this assignment:
- Aaaa
- Bbbb
- Cccc
- Dddd

Comments/Suggestions for next time:

Creating a Grading Key Tip Sheet
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