**Managing Grade Expectations in Large Classes**

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*Class no. 1: introductory lecture and survey of initial beliefs (twenty questions):*

3. What grade do you think you are most likely to end up with in this class?

(A)   A

(B)   B

(C)   C

(D)   D

(E)   F

4. Based on your impressions of your own background and abilities, and your impressions or preconceptions about students at KU, think about what percentage of the students in this class you think you will do *at least as well as* or *better than* (in this class), as opposed to those who you think will do better than you (in this class). Which of the following comes closest to accurately representing what you think?

(A)   I think I will do at least as well as, or better than, 90 percent of the students in this class.

(B)   I think I will do at least as well as, or better than, 70 percent of the students in this class.

(C)   I think I will do at least as well as, or better than, 50 percent of the students in this class.

(D)   I think I will do at least as well as, or better than, 30 percent of the students in this class.

(E)   I think I will do at least as well as, or better than, 10 percent of the students in this class.

19.   Suppose that, when this semester is over, a person were to look at the ARTS forms of all the students in this class and write down the grades they earned in this class. Then suppose they computed the average—a course GPA, in effect, as opposed to a student GPA. What do you figure the average would be?

(A)   I would predict the course GPA to be an A.

(B)   I would predict the course GPA to be a B.

(C)   I would predict the course GPA to be a C.

(D)   I would predict the course GPA to be a D.

(E)   I would predict the course GPA to be an F.

*Class no. 2: second lecture, prefaced by results from the survey (six Powerpoint slides):*

Slides 1 and 2:

[pre-course comprehension of material, motivations for taking class, etc.]

Slide 3:

- The most striking results of the survey had to do with your expectations about grades.

- When asked (1) to say what grade you think you are most likely to end up with in this class and (2) to predict the average of the grades earned by all of the students in this class at the end of the semester (a course GPA, in effect, as opposed to a student GPA), your responses yielded some interesting results:

Slide 4:

- 187 of you predicted that you would get a letter grade *higher* than what you predicted for the course average.

- Only 2 of you predicted that you would get a letter grade *lower* than what you predicted for the course average.

Slide 5:

- You were also asked to predict what percentage of the students in this class you will do at least as well as, or better than. This, in effect, asks you to specify some number *n* such that you would predict that you will end up in the top *n* percent of the class. And here's the astounding thing:

Slide 6:

- *More than 98 percent of you predicted that you would end up in the top half of the class.*