Grading Formulae: What Grade Do Students Deserve?

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The table below shows the performance of seven students over five instructional units. Also shown are the summary scores and grades for these students calculated by three different methods: (1) the simple arithmetic average of unit scores, (2) the median or middle score from the five units, and (3) the arithmetic average, deleting the lowest unit score in the group. Consider, too, the following explanations for these score patterns:

Student 1 struggled in the early part of the marking period but continued to work hard, improved in each unit, and did excellently in unit 5.

Student 2 began with excellent performance in unit 1 but then lost motivation, declined steadily during the marking period, and received a failing mark for unit 5.

Student 3 performed steadily throughout the marking period, receiving three *B*'s and two *C*'s, all near the *B – C* cut-score.

Student 4 began the marking period poorly, failing the first two units, but with newfound interest performed excellently in units 3, 4, and 5.

Student 5 began the marking period excellently, but then lost interest and failed the last two units.

Student 6 skipped school (unexcused absence) during the first unit, but performed excellently in every other unit.

Student 7 performed excellently in the first four units, but was caught cheating on the assessment for unit 5, resulting in a score of zero for that unit.

Summary Grades Tallied by Three Different Methods

Student	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Average Score	Grade	Median Score	Grade	Deleting Lowest	Grade
1	59	69	79	89	99	79.0	C	79.0	C	84.0	B
2	99	89	79	69	59	79.0	C	79.0	C	84.0	B
3	77	80	80	78	80	79.0	C	80.0	B	79.5	C
4	49	49	98	99	100	79.0	C	98.0	A	86.5	B
5	100	99	98	49	49	79.0	C	98.0	A	86.5	B
6	0	98	98	99	100	79.0	C	98.0	A	98.8	A
7	100	99	98	98	0	79.0	C	98.0	A	98.8	A

Grading standards:
90% – 100% = A
80% – 89% = B
70% – 79% = C
60% – 69% = D
– 59% = F

Questions: Which grading method is best? Which is fairest?

What grade does each student deserve?