



### High Scoring Class

This figure presents an altogether different situation. This class has done well in comparison to the previous two classes (note the higher average score). Whereas in the last class the cut-offs were much lower than a normal class, in this class they are higher in the three systems which use a comparative rather than an absolute base. We have produced a bell-shaped curve of grades, but once again note how different an A in this class is in comparison to the previous class if we use comparative systems. Only under the criterion-referenced system would an A be identical in all three classes.

### In Summary

These three class distributions illustrate some of the problems an instructor faces in the selection of a grading philosophy. The selection of norm- versus criterion-referenced grading should depend on:

- a. the objective of the grades (to identify absolute skill levels or relative performance);
- b. the type of content (general information which is non-critical or content which fits into a sequence or is critical);
- c. the type of students (large normally distributed population or select sample);
- d. the philosophical bias of the instructor.

Figure 5c: High Scoring Class