

Reimagining How We Grade and Report Student Learning

Learning Targets



- Explore why there is a need for changes in grading and reporting practices.
- Review the shortcomings of traditional grading practices.
- Discuss the first step of grading and reporting reform: *Forming a Coalition for Change in Grading and Reporting*.



***We do what was
done to us!***

Reimagining How We Grade and Report Student Learning

- Why is there a need for changes in grading and reporting practices?
 - A negative learning identity is reinforced through non-equitable practices and policies that make students feel dismissed, marginalized or mistreated. An example of systemic non-equitable practices is found in traditional grading.

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- Important Questions to Consider:
 - Why do we assign grades to students' work and use report cards?
 - What evidence should be used in determining students' grades?

Educators Identify Six Purposes for Grading

1. Communicate achievement status to parents/families
2. Provide information to students for self-evaluation
3. Select, identify, or group students for instruction
4. Provide incentives for students
5. Evaluate effectiveness of instructional programs
6. Document students' effort or responsibility

Guskey, T.R., & Bailey, J.M. (2010). *Developing standards-based report cards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Evidence Used to Determine Grades

- ✓ Major exams or compositions
- ✓ Formative assessments
- ✓ Reports or projects
- ✓ Student portfolios
- ✓ Exhibits of students' work
- ✓ Laboratory projects
- ✓ Students' notebooks or journals
- ✓ Classroom observations
- ✓ Oral presentations
- ✓ Homework completion
- ✓ Homework quality
- ✓ Class participation
- ✓ Work habits and neatness
- ✓ Effort
- ✓ Class Attendance
- ✓ Punctuality of assignments
- ✓ Class behavior or attitude
- ✓ Progress made

A young girl with blonde hair is sitting at a desk in a classroom. She is looking thoughtful, with her hand resting against her face. A laptop is open on the desk in front of her. The background is a blurred classroom setting with bookshelves.

What are parents' and students' greatest concern about fairness in grading?

Inconsistency in grading practices among teachers in the same school.

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Consistency requires agreement on purpose!

- We must first clarify our purpose in grading.
- Next, we must decide what evidence best reflects that purpose.
- Then we must decide how best to communicate a summary of that evidence to students and families through the grades and marks on report cards.

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- Review the shortcomings of traditional grading practices.
- **Traditional Grading Practices Are Not Bias-Resistant**
 - Grades should be based on valid evidence of a student's content knowledge, and not based on evidence that is likely to be corrupted by a teacher's implicit bias or that reflects a student's environment.
 - Practices that allow our bias to operate include:
 - Penalizing for lateness (submitting work after a deadline)
 - Including formative assessments such as homework within the grade
 - Evaluating student behavior (participation/effort) with a grade

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- Review the shortcomings of traditional grading practices.
- **Traditional Grading Practices Are Not Mathematically Sound**
 - Our grading must use calculations that are mathematically sound, easy to understand, and correctly describe a student's level of academic performance.
 - Practices that are not mathematically sound include:
 - The Use of Zeros
 - The 100-point scale's disproportionality toward failure
 - Averaging Scores to Determine a Grade
 - Student achievement should be described according to a student's most recent performance

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- Review the shortcomings of traditional grading practices.
- **Traditional Grading Practices Do Not Encourage a Growth Mindset**
 - The way we grade should motivate students to achieve academic success, support a growth mindset, and give students opportunities for redemption.
 - Retakes and re-dos available for all students to have additional opportunities to demonstrate their understanding.
 - How could offering redemption via retakes and weighing more recent performance throughout the term affect motivation?

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- **Why is there a need for changes in grading and reporting practices?**
- Students are constantly asking, “If I make a mistake or reveal that I don’t know something, what will I gain or lose? If I disclose a weakness – academic or otherwise – will the teacher respond with understanding, care, and support, or with ridicule, punishment, and indifference?”
- Traditional grading practices send the opposite message: Mistakes are unwanted, unhelpful, and punished.

“No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it.” - H.E. Luccock



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Forming a Coalition for Change in Grading and Reporting.

- The Coalition for Change in Grading and Reporting will include dedicated individuals united for the specific purpose of planning and leading the implementation of more effective grading policies and practices.
- **Members should be:**
 - Excited to take on the work and understand the difficulties involved in challenging long-held grading traditions
 - Aware of the need and urgency for change
 - Open to new ideas and willing to seek out strong evidence that supports change
 - Prepared to publicly advocate for recommended reforms
 - Eager to take action that will ensure high-quality implementation of those reforms

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Forming a Coalition for Change in Grading and Reporting.

- The Coalition for Change in Grading and Reporting will include dedicated individuals united for the specific purpose planning and leading the implementation of more effective grading policies and practices.
- **Members will include:**
 - Central Office Administration
 - Principals
 - Teachers
 - Student Services Staff
 - Parents
 - Students

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- **Why is there a need for changes in grading and reporting practices?**
- Grading and reporting changes are more about communicating better, more accurate, and more meaningful information to families and students ***in order to provide the basis for improving student learning.***
- Grading and reporting changes are about ***providing students with increased opportunities to learn*** to create a responsive ***System*** to support school improvement and student success.