

Hot Button Issues When Moving to More Effective Grading Practices

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When Moving to More Effective Grading Practices

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“Terms (are) frequently used interchangeably, although they (should) have distinct meanings.”

McTighe, J., and Ferrara, S., “Assessing Learning in the Classroom”, *Journal of Quality Learning*, December 1995, 11

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What Do These Terms Mean?

MARK(S)/SCORE(S) (marking/scoring)

the number (or letter) "score" given to any student test or performance	7/ 4
	10 3
	2
	1

GRADE(S) (grading)

the number (or letter) reported at the end of a period of time as a summary statement of student performance	A 91 4 E
	B 78 3 G
	C 64 2 S
	D 57 1 N
	F 42

O'Connor, K., *How to Grade for Learning*. Fourth Edition. Corwin. 2018. 2

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The Essential Question

How confident are you that the grades students get in your school are:

- accurate
- consistent
- meaningful, and
- supportive of learning?

If grades do not meet these four conditions of quality they are “broken,” i.e., ineffective.

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“(Grading) practices are not the result of careful thought or sound evidence, ... rather, they are used because teachers experienced these practices as students and, having little training or experience with other options, continue their use.”

Guskey, T. R. [Ed.], *Communicating Student Learning: The 1996 ASCD Yearbook*. 1996. 20

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Purpose

- Communicate the achievement status of students to parents, (students), and others.
- Provide information that students can use for self-evaluation.
- Select, identify, or group students for certain educational paths or programs.
- Provide incentives to learn. (reward/punish)
- Evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs.

Guskey [Ed.], *Communicating Student Learning: The 1996 ASCD Yearbook*, 1996

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Purpose

“The primary purpose of ... grades ... (is) to *communicate student achievement* to students, parents, school administrators, post-secondary institutions, and employers.”

Bailey & McTighe, “Reporting Achievement at the Secondary School Level: What and How?” in Guskey [Ed.] *Communicating Student Learning: ASCD Yearbook 1996*, p. 120

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Purpose

“... the primary purpose of classroom assessment is to *inform teaching and improve learning*, not to sort and select students or to justify a grade.”

McTighe, J. and Ferrara, S. “Performance-Based Assessment in the Classroom”, Pennsylvania ASCD

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Hot Button Issues

- **Zeros**
- **Reassessment**
- **Late Work**
- **Academic dishonesty**
- **Formative assessment**
- **Homework**
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
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Zeros

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Problems with zeros



- **Philosophical**
- **Mathematics**
- **Motivation.**

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The Effect of Zeros

	<u>5 pt scale</u>		<u>101 point scale</u>	
4	(A)	90-100	11	95
3	(B)	80-89	10	85
2	(C)	70-79	10	75
1	(D)	60-69	10	65
<u>0</u>	(F)	<60	60	<u>0</u>
<u>2</u>	(C)			<u>64</u> (D)
				<u>74</u> (C)

O'Connor, K., *How to Grade for Learning*. Fourth Edition. Corwin. 2018. 179

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“The use of an I or “Incomplete” grade is an alternative to assigning zeros that is both educationally sound and potentially quite effective.”

Guskey, T. R. and Bailey, J. *Developing Grading and Reporting Systems for Student Learning*, Corwin Press, 2001, 144

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The Consequence for Not Doing Your Work . . . Is Doing Your Work

“Whom do you owe?”

“What do you owe?”

“What is your plan?”

“What do you need?”

“How can I help?”

From Sherri Nelson's Educator Contribution in
O'Connor, K. *How to Grade for Learning*, Fourth Edition. Corwin, 2018, 181

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“A zero has an undeserved and devastating influence, so much so that no matter what the student does, the grade distorts the final grade as a true indicator of mastery. Mathematically and ethically this is unacceptable.”



Rick Wormeli quoted in O'Connor, K., *A Repair Kit for Grading*, Second Edition, Pearson/ATL, Portland, 2011, 101

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The Real Issues with Zeros

Percentages

Averaging

**Both need to be ELIMINATED
from assessment and grading.**

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Reassessment

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I once asked a colleague what he thought he was teaching his students who expressed remorse when failing a test or a project, requested a chance to learn the material properly, and re-do the assessment, but were denied doing so because of his, “No Re-do’s,” policy. He said that he was teaching them to meet deadlines, thus preparing them for the working world.

I asked him, “Did the student learn the content you were hired to teach him?”

My colleague shook his head, “No,” so I continued, “When did incompetence become acceptable to us?”

My colleague pushed back: “He needs to learn time management.”

“Show me the research,” I countered, “that says F’s and zeroes build executive function, time management, and self-discipline – the skills you’re seeking for this student.”

From Rick Wormeli's Educator Contribution in
O'Connor, K. *How to Grade for Learning*, Fourth Edition, 2018, 158

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Hot Button Issues When Moving to More Effective Grading Practices

Formal Reassessment

Avoid by - informal assessment and feedback
- spiraling assessments

IF STILL NECESSARY

Always - evidence of 'correctives'
- full credit
- available to all

Optional - opportunity cost



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Reassessment Request

Personal Information

Name : _____ Date : _____

Subject : _____ Concept : _____

Reflection

Grade obtained : _____

Reason : _____

Three things I have done to improve my understanding of these concepts

1. See teacher at lunch or at arranged time (date : _____)

2. Assessment analysis and correction

3. Choice : (Please specify) _____

Date of reassessment : I will be ready by this date : _____

Request

I request the opportunity to resubmit this assessment in order to confirm

understanding of the concepts covered. I have worked hard and have

completed all the required steps to improve my understanding.

Signatures

Student _____

Parent _____

Teacher _____

Please attach

→ The first assessment (test, quiz, project...)

→ Evidence of completed tasks

From Denine Laberge's Educator Contribution in

O'Connor, K. *How to Grade for Learning*, Fourth Edition, 2018, 162

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"At Parent-Teacher Conferences this week nearly every parent made a point to mention how much their child loved my grading system (SBG) because the availability of retakes took the pressure off performance and allowed the kids to focus on learning. I can't tell you how many times I heard "I wish every teacher graded the way you do." That's how I know we're doing the right thing."

Barry Fuller, physics teacher at Byram Hills High School, Armonk, New York, posted on the Standards Based Learning and Grading Facebook Group page, December 16, 2016

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Late Work

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Problems with penalties

Distortion of:-

- Achievement
- Motivation

and

- most often Ineffective, i.e., they don't change behavior.

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"Warm demanders first establish a caring relationship that convinces students that the teacher believes in them and has their best interests at heart. . . .

On the basis of this relationship, warm demanders relentlessly insist that all students perform required academic work and treat the teacher and their peers with respect."

Abstract of Bondy, E, and D. D. Ross. "The Teacher as Warm Demander," *Educational Leadership*, September 2008. Available on line at www.ascd.org/

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Dealing with Late Work

1. Make expectation of meeting timelines clear.

BUT when they don't meet the timelines

2. Provide support, not penalties.
3. Include lateness in behaviors/learning skills.
4. Communicate clearly about timelines and performance.
5. Use consequences—communication (parent contact) and time for time.

O'Connor, K. *How to Grade for Learning*. Fourth Edition. 2018. 108

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Our flexible grouping period is known as the *Focused Learning Period* at Sanborn Regional High School, and it operates in a forty-minute time period each day. The Focused Learning Period is time for our students to engage in the following activities:

Intervention: Small groups of students work with the teacher on content support, remediation, or proactive support.

Extensions: Whole-class groups in which the teacher extends the current curriculum beyond what can be completed during a class period.

Enrichments: Above-and-beyond activities that go outside of the curriculum to expand the experiences of our students.

From Brian Stack's Educator Contribution in
O'Connor, K. *How to Grade for Learning*. Fourth Edition. Corwin, 2018. 111

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Academic Dishonesty

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Dealing with Academic Dishonesty

1. Educate/Communicate
2. Behavioral consequences
3. Do it again, honestly

O'Connor, K., *How to Grade for Learning*. Fourth Edition. Corwin, 2018. 179

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School Staff Responsibilities are to:

- Use the Academic Integrity Practices to set classroom expectations.
- Lead a discussion within the first week of each course identifying expectations with regard to academic honesty and include this information in the course syllabus.
- Continue to educate students and offer guidance regarding acceptable and unacceptable behavior in areas that shall include but are not limited to test taking, researching, writing, and using library and computer resources.
- Promote circumstances in the classroom that reinforce academic honor and promote self-expression.
- Enforce the Academic Integrity Practices in a fair and consistent manner.
- Use and continually revise forms of assessment that require active and creative thought and that promote learning opportunities for students.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of efforts and make necessary changes to promote academic integrity.

Source: New Berlin School District

<http://www.nhexcellence.org/parents/academic-honesty.cfm>

O'Connor, K. *How to Grade for Learning*. Fourth Edition. Corwin, 2018. 102

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“Prevention is better than cure” is an old but true saying, and it certainly applies here. Tom Solyom, an assistant principal, and teacher-librarian Dawn Keer at Archbishop MacDonald High School in Edmonton, Alberta, have led the development of a policy aimed at decreasing cheating.

They believe that:

*teachers must make their expectations clear and explicit and that

*teachers should talk about academic integrity with their students to help them understand why it is so important in a learning community. They also believe that


*we should not assume that students understand exactly what you mean you say plagiarism is cheating.

O'Connor, K., *How to Grade for Learning*, Third Edition, Corwin, 2009, 93-94

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“Words such as lying, dishonesty, misrepresenting, deception, and morality appear in the literature on cheating and may be applied to situations in which students do not realize that they are “wrong” in school terms. *The line between helping (an ethical behavior) and cheating (an unethical behavior) is culturally marked and variable.* Where the line is drawn is related to cultural differences in the purposes of schooling, notions of how knowledge is constructed, the nature and meaning of assessment, and the relationship between the individual and the group.”

Rothstein-Finch, C. and Trumbull, E. 2008 *Managing Diverse Classrooms*, 158
in O'Connor, K., *How to Grade for Learning*, Third Edition, Corwin, 2009, 95

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“No studies support the use of low grades or marks as punishments. Instead of prompting greater effort, low grades more often cause students to withdraw from learning.”

Guskey, T. R. and Bailey, J., *Developing Grading and Reporting Systems for Student Learning*, Corwin Press, 2001, 34-35

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Consequences of Academic Dishonesty (New Berlin School District)

1st Incident: The teacher will notify the student prior to contacting the parent.

- The teacher will notify the counselor and grade level administrator
- The counselor will arrange a meeting with the student and student's parent/guardian and notify administration.
- The administration will record the incident in the school data system.
- The administration and organization advisors will review the student's eligibility for honor societies and academic awards as well as their eligibility for student privileges.
- The student will complete the assignment/assessment/work OR an alternate assessment/assignment as assigned by the classroom teacher at a time arranged by the staff member.
- The student will be administered at minimum an administrative detention yet allow for increases up to and including an in-school suspension dependent upon the severity of the situation (NOTE: a suspension would be reported to the Athletic/Activities Director as a violation of the SDNB Co-Curricular Code of Conduct).
- 2nd – 1st plus suspension, ineligible for school-based scholarships, not allowed to take AP exam, reported to Athletic Director
- 3rd – 2nd plus report violations to scholarship committees, excluded from graduation/end-of-year ceremonies
- 4th – all of third plus pre-expulsion conference

O'Connor, K., *How to Grade for Learning*, Fourth Edition, Corwin, 2018, 102-103

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Formative Assessment

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Formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students' status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics.

Popham, J. *The ABC's of Educational Testing*, Corwin, 2017, 95 in
O'Connor, K. *How to Grade for Learning*, Fourth Edition, Corwin, 2018, 123

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The standards movement . . . precipitated a renewed interest in what might be the most favorable course of action to prepare students to meet the expected standards. . . . What emerged was *an almost unified belief that formative assessment practices were the most effective and efficient way to increase student achievement.*

—Schimmer (*Grading from the Inside Out*, 2016, p. 10)

You must learn to fail intelligently . . . one fails forward towards success.

—Thomas Alva Edison, as quoted in Fullan (*Leadership and Sustainability*, 2005, p. 22)

Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.

—Stan Wawrinka, professional tennis player

—Samuel Beckett phrase on his left forearm

Introductory quotes for Chapter 4 in
O'Connor, K. *How to Grade for Learning*, Fourth Edition, Corwin, 2018, 122

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“The ongoing interplay between assessment and instruction, so common in the arts and athletics, is also evident in classrooms using practices such as non-graded quizzes and practice tests, the writing process, formative performance tasks, review of drafts and peer response groups. The teachers in such classrooms recognize that ongoing assessments provide feedback that enhances instruction and guides student revision.”

McTighe, J., “What Happens Between Assessments,”
Educational Leadership, Dec. ’96-Jan. ’97, 11

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“The research indicates that improving learning through assessment depends on five, deceptively simple, key factors:

- **The provision of effective feedback to students**
- **The active involvement of students in their own learning**
- **Adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment**
- **A recognition of the profound influence assessment has on the motivation and self-esteem of students, both of which are crucial influences on learning**
- **The need for students to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve”**

Source: Black, P. and Wiliam, D. “Inside the Black Box,” *Kappan*, October 1998

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Impact Story – Rutherford High School

In a panel discussion of how the grading system has impacted them, the students made the following points:

1. We have to actually learn the material now since there is no extra credit work to bring up the grade in the end. I like it better when I didn't have to work so hard to learn the material.
2. **The tests are less stressful because we have practiced the material until we know it, and we know we know it before the test. (Confidence)**
3. **We have more fun in class because there is no grade attached to the formative exercises. We are expected to mistakes that help us learn. (Relax and learn)**
4. The formative assessments show us the format the test will take so there are no surprises.
5. Knowing that I can retake the test if I do poorly takes some of the stress away.
6. **It is obvious that the teacher wants us to learn. (Wow!)**
7. I like the points that are added on at the end as if they are free, even though we earned them ahead of time with the practice work.
8. I always know what I have to do to make my grade better.

Source: Sandy Wilson, Rutherford High School, Bay District Schools, FL

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Sample Assessment Plan

Formal Formative Assessment for Unit 1

TASK	METHOD(S)	STRATEGY(IES)	SCORING TOOL	ASSESSOR
ROLE PLAY Practice(s)	Performance Ass't	Performance	Rubric	self/peer
QUIZ(ZES)	Paper and Pencil	Selected Response	Marking Scheme	Teacher
BROCHURE Draft	Performance Ass't	Product	Rubric	peer
BROCHURE Near Final	Performance Ass't	Product	Rubric	self/peer

Summative Assessment for Unit 1

TASK	METHOD(S)	STRATEGY(IES)	SCORING TOOL	ASSESSOR
ROLE PLAY	Performance Ass't	Performance assessment	Rubric	Teacher
TEST(S)	Paper and Pencil	Selected & Constructed Response	Marking Scheme	Teacher
BROCHURE	Performance Ass't	Product	Rubric	Teacher

O'Connor, K., *A Repair Kit for Grading*, Second Edition. Pearson ATI, 2011. 113

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Homework

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PISA, the international assessment group, with a data set of 13 million students, recently made a major announcement. After studying the relationships among homework, achievement, and equity, they announced that *homework perpetuates inequities in education*. Additionally, they questioned whether homework has any academic value at all, as it does not seem to raise achievement for students. This is not an isolated finding: academic research has consistently found homework to either negatively affect or not affect achievement.

Boaler, J. *Mathematical Mindsets*. Jossey-Bass, 2016. 107 in
O'Connor, K. *How to Grade for Learning*. Fourth Edition. Corwin, 2018. 137

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Sackstein and Hamilton state that “homework is one of the most misused tools in education,” and they pose this question: “Shouldn’t we spend less time assigning and grading homework for the sole purpose of marking a grade in the grade book and devote our energy to improving students’ learning experiences?”

Sackstein, S and C. Hamilton. *Hacking Homework*. Times 10 Publications. 2016.
in O'Connor, K., *How to Grade for Learning*. Fourth Edition. Corwin. 2018. 138

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Purposes of Homework

PREPARATION - introduces material presented in future lessons. These assignments aim to help students learn new material when it is covered in class.

PRACTICE - to reinforce learning and help students master specific skills.

EXTENSION - asks students to apply skills they already have in new situations.

INTEGRATION - requires students to apply many different skills to a large task, such as book reports, projects, creative writing.

Source: NCLB website - *Homework Tips for Parents*

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Other Hot Button Issues

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Grading “Top Seventeen” Reference List

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Brookhart, S. *How to Use Grading for Learning*. ASCD. 2017

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Cooper, D. *Redefining Fair*. Solution Tree, 2011

Dueck, M. *Grading Smarter Not Harder*. ASCD, 2014

Freedman, J. *Grading for Equity*. Corwin. 2018

Guskey, T. R. *On the Mark*. Solution Tree. 2015

Guskey, T.R. “The Case Against Percentage Grades” *Educational Leadership*. September 2013. pp. 68-72

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Grading “Top Seventeen” Reference List (cont.)

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Kagan, S. “Group Grades Miss the Mark” *Educational Leadership*. May 1995, 68-71

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Rinkema, E and Williams, S. *The Standards-Based Classroom*. Corwin, September 2018.

Schimmer, T., *Grading from the Inside Out*. Solution Tree, 2016

Wormeli, R. *Fair Isn’t Always Equal*. Stenhouse, 2nd Edition 2018

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“Assigning fair and meaningful grades to students will continue to *challenge* educators at every level. The process requires *thoughtful and informed professional judgment*, an abiding concern for what *best serves the interests of students* and their families, and *careful examination of the tasks students are asked to complete* and the questions they are asked to answer to demonstrate their learning. only when such examination and reasoned judgment become a regular part of the grading process can we make accurate and valid decisions about the quality of students’ performance.”

Guskey, T.R. 2013. “The Case Against Percentage Grades.” *Educational Leadership*. September. 72

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