
How Grading Can Undermine Equity--Crescendo Newsletter Winter 2017



A newsletter designed to provide resources and ideas to the community of educators committed to providing more effective, equitable, coherent, and caring schools and classrooms.

Winter 2017

Equitable grading--assessing and evaluating in ways that are accurate, bias-resistant, and motivational--is challenging work, but an increasing number of schools and districts are accepting the challenge. This newsletter provides resources and ideas so that teachers, administrators, and policymakers keep equitable grading on the "radar".

Enjoy the holidays, and see you in 2018!



Why Grading?

Grading can be the “third rail” of teaching and learning--a topic we dare not touch in schools. It forces us to have disagreements with colleagues and to address fundamental

Good Reads!

["No More Zeros in K-12 Education"](#) by D. Yaffe, published in *District Administration* (Nov '17) [Trends in districts shifting to improved grading

practices]

"Do Your Grading Practices Undermine Equity Initiatives?"

by . J. Feldman, published in *Leadership Magazine (Association of California School Administrators)* (Nov/Dec '17) [The inequities of traditional grading, and more equitable alternatives]

"The Newest Advantage of Being Rich in America? Higher Grades"

by J. Marcus, published online in *The Hechinger Report* (Oct '17) [How traditional grading practices benefit high-resourced students and families]

questions about what we believe about our students.

Maybe we struggle with discussing grading because we have very little experience doing it. Grading and measurement is rarely if ever included in teacher preparation programs or in their in-school professional development. As a result, the majority of teachers are kept in the dark about the research on effective grading practices and end up replicating what they experienced as students or following the habits of their teacher peers (Frary, Cross, & Weber, 1993; Guskey & Bailey, 2001; Truog & Friedman, 1996, cited in Guskey 2009).

So if grading is such an unspoken, unfamiliar, and risky conversation, why should we address it, much less try to make it more equitable?

As a "third rail", the power of grades coarses through every part of our schools, and if we can make adjustments to how we grade to make it more equitable, we can alter how our schools function. How much can improving grading fundamentally improve our schools, reduce the achievement and opportunity gaps, and change how students learn, and what are its limitations? There's no better way to find out than to get started.

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