

Getting Grading Right: Practical Tips for Making Grading Practices More Equitable

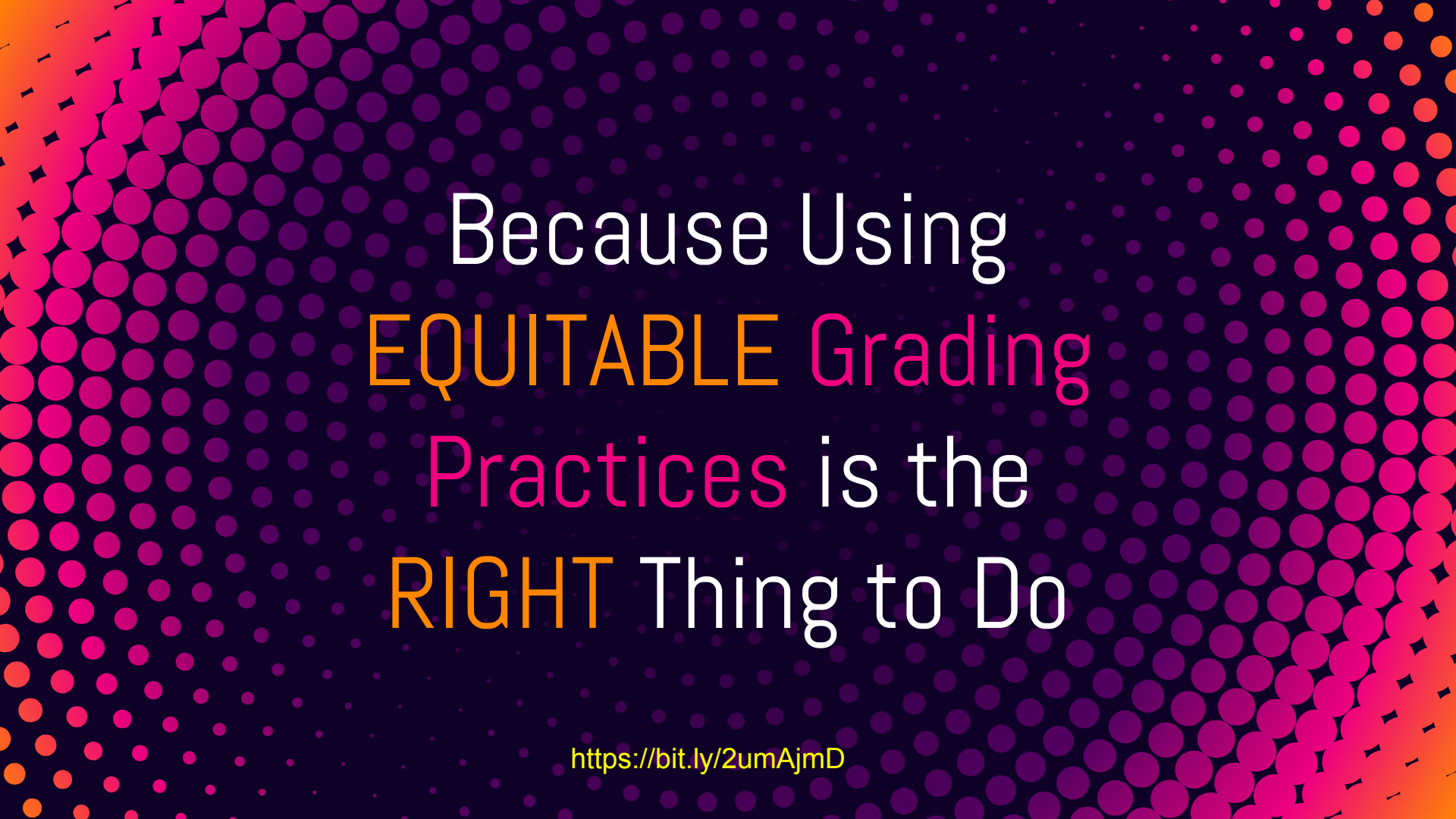


<https://bit.ly/2umAjmD>



Evaluate and rank me! I'm good, good,
good and, oh, so smart! Grade me!

<https://bit.ly/2umAjmD>



Because Using
EQUITABLE Grading
Practices is the
RIGHT Thing to Do

<https://bit.ly/2umAjmD>

Mindy Montanio

I am here because I am driven by the innovation of the teachers in my district.

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Josh Kunnath, EdD

I am here because I'm passionate about grading & equity in education

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Kern High School District

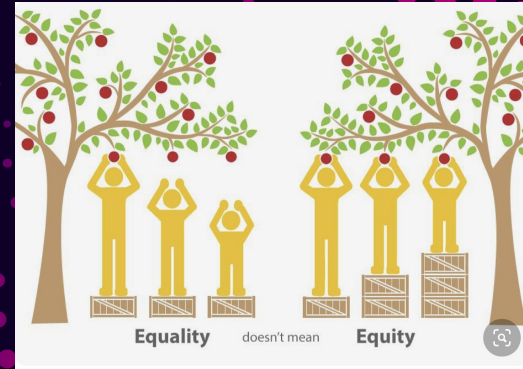


- ⊗ Students: 40,000+
- ⊗ Grades: 9-12 +
- ⊗ Sites: 18 comprehensive, 5 continuation, 2 CTE, and 4 Special Education Centers
- ⊗ Free and reduced lunch/SES varies greatly



Overview of Our Time

- ⊗ Discussion of problems w/ some common *traditional* grading practices from an equity lens
- ⊗ Practical solutions to address these problems
- ⊗ Case study of reforms



Educational Equity

The educational policies, practices, and programs necessary to:

- (a) eliminate educational barriers based on gender, race/ethnicity, national origin, color, family income level, disability, age, or other protected group status
- (b) provide equal educational opportunities and ensure that historically underserved or underrepresented populations meet the same rigorous standards for academic performance expected of all children and youth.

-modified from [NAPequity.org](https://www.napequity.org)



Grading Premises

The primary purpose of grading is to:

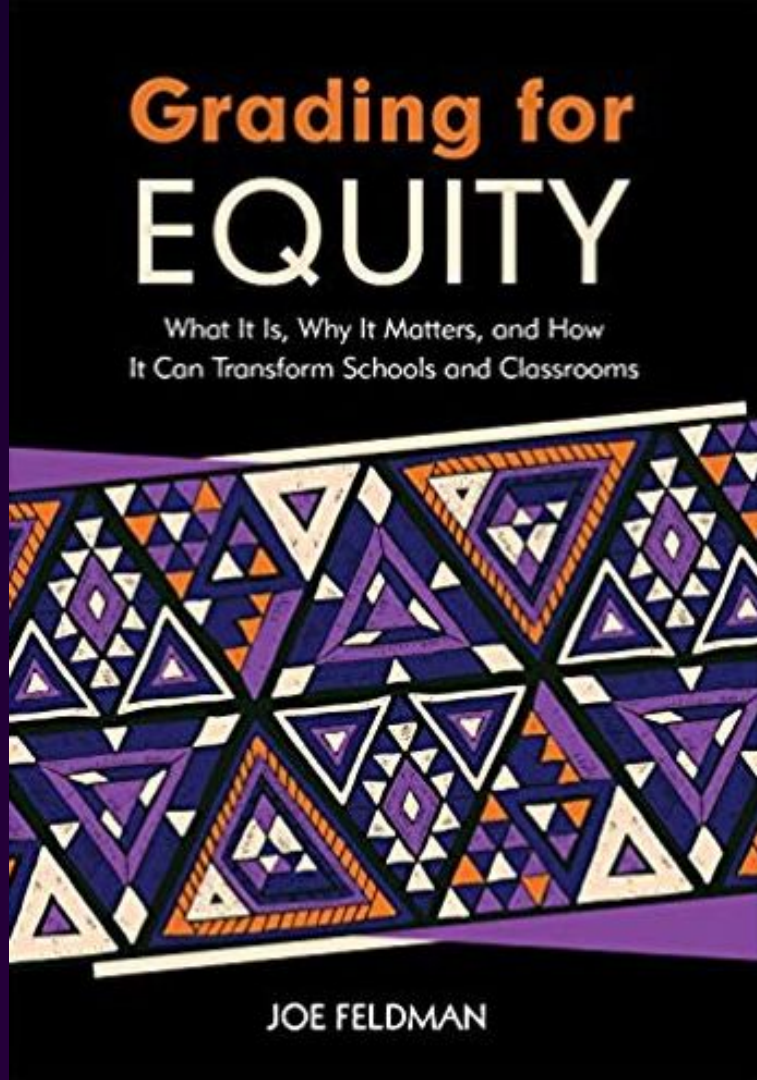
- ⊗ Communicate student learning of prioritized learning targets or standards
- ⊗ to students and parents (Guskey & Brookhart, 2019)



Grading *from an*

9





Framework for our Grading Reforms

Title:

Grading for Equity: What it Is, Why It Matters, and How it Can Transform Schools and Classrooms

Author:

Joe Feldman

Published:

2018

Feldman's 3 Pillars of Equitable Grading

Accurate

Mathematically sound, clear, correctly describe students' academic performance

Bias-resistant

Grades only from valid evidence of students' learning

Motivational

Support growth mindset, provide opportunities for hope & improvement; transparent practices





4 Big Problems w/ Traditional Grading Practices

DISCLAIMER

We've made all of these mistakes in the past!



Problem 1: The “Hodgepodge Grade”

What is it?

Combining HW, participation, effort, behavior, quizzes, and/or tests into a single grade

What's the problem?

- These are all different types of information
- Leads to unclear & inaccurate grades
- Equity issue: Measuring behavior & effort invite implicit biases; HW completion can depend on student home life

Problem 2: The Points-based System

What is it?

Allocating points to each assignment and assessment; calculating grades from these points.

What's the problem?

- Deemphasizes learning in favor of point collection; incentivizes cheating
- "The Shopping Mall High School"
- Grading classwork/homework for completion provides a grade for effort/behavior
- Grading for correct work sends the message that mistakes in practice aren't OK
- Equity issue: Points = power

Problem 3: The Percentage Scale

What is it?

The 0-100% scale traditionally used in grading; ex: A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F=0-59

What's the problem?

- ⊗ Too many performance levels (101)
- ⊗ Imprecise: What's the difference between 71% & 73%?
- ⊗ Equity issue: Disproportionately favors failure (60 levels)

Problem 4: The Zero

What is it?

The assigning of a 0 when a student fails to turn in an assignment or complete a test; assigning a 0 because of cheating

What's the problem?

- ⊗ A zero indicates zero learning—not simply zero evidence of learning
- ⊗ **Equity issue:** Zeros are harsh punishment—especially in the 100-point percentage scale
- ⊗ **Equity issue:** Grades are not meant to be a tool for teaching behavior



Case Study

Case Study Overview

- ⊗ 4 teacher teams
- ⊗ English & math
- ⊗ Grading practices from each of the 3 pillars
- ⊗ Collective commitments
- ⊗ 6 PD sessions (including 3 book study sessions in April-May 2019)

Research Questions That Drove the Work

1. How can grading practices and policies be used to increase equity & accuracy of student grades?
2. How can grading practices and policies be used to increase the communication of student learning to students and parents?

My 14 Grading Practice & Policy Reforms

Accurate

- 1) **Avoiding zeros**
- 2) **4-point scale**
- 3) Weight more recent performance
- 4) Grades based on an individual's performance, not the group's

Bias-resistant

- 5) Grades based on required content, not extra credit
- 6) Alternative consequences for cheating
- 7) **No late grades**
- 8) **No participation and effort grades**
- 9) **All summative assessment**

Motivational

- 10) **Unlimited retakes**
- 11) Rubric use
- 12) **Eliminate points**
- 13) Standards-based grade book
- 14) Creating a community of feedback



4 Solutions* to Grading Problems

Solution 1a: Create grades only from summative assessment

Benefits

- ⊗ Ensures grades *only* communicates student learning
- ⊗ Puts student emphasis on learning
- ⊗ Helps teachers focus all aspects of the class on learning
- ⊗ Equity connection: *Pair share*

Challenges

- ⊗ Test validity
- ⊗ High pressure on tests
- ⊗ Students who do poorly on assessments

Problem 1: the hodgepodge grade



Solution 1b: Unlimited retakes

Benefits

- ⊗ Provides a safety net
- ⊗ Reduces test anxiety
- ⊗ Equity connection: *Pair Share*

Challenges

- ⊗ Use a strategic system
- ⊗ Continue student learning after the original assessment event



Solution 1c: No effort, behavior, participation grades

Benefits

- ⊗ Ensures grade only communicates student learning
- ⊗ Puts student emphasis on learning
- ⊗ Forces teachers to properly address classroom management

Challenges

- ⊗ Struggling students
- ⊗ Motivating students to complete HW & classwork; participation
- ⊗ Developing permanent solutions to classroom management

Problem 1: the hodgepodge grade

Late Work Reflection Page

Directions: Complete this reflection page before turning in your late assignment. Be detailed, specific, and honest. Staple this to the top of your late paper when turning it in.

1) What happened? Why is this late? I did not have access to a computer or internet during fair and I got home very late so where I was unable to accomplish this task. Whenever I tried to I was called away so I was resorted to writing it out.

2) How might turning in this assignment late have a negative impact on your learning? This assignment is a assessment so it will negatively impact my grade which will have a negative impact on my C.P.A. And I am not somebody who usually falls behind.

3) How might turning in this assignment late have a negative impact on your teacher or the class as a whole? It will cause my teacher to have to grade a assignment that has passed which will make him work more than he has to.

4) What can you do to make sure you finish and submit things on time in the future (be specific)? Scheduling, I will not let work pile up and stress me out and instead use scheduling to better myself and get things done on time.

Late Work Reflection Page

Directions: Complete this reflection page before turning in your late assignment. Be detailed, specific, and honest. Staple this to the top of your late paper when turning it in.

1) What happened? Why is this late? My assignment could've been on time but I procrastinated. Also, I didn't use my time wisely. For example, I could've gone to the library to use the computers, instead I complained that I didn't have access to a computer at home, so I waited 144 minutes to use my cousin's laptop.

2) How might turning in this assignment late have a negative impact on your learning? This could negatively impact on my learning because I could get into a bad habit of turning stuff in late, and it's not a good habit to fall into.

3) How might turning in this assignment late have a negative impact on your teacher or the class as a whole? It could have a negative impact on my teacher because he could become annoyed with me. He has high expectations for his students and it negatively affects him because we've practiced this for a long time.

4) What can you do to make sure you finish and submit things on time in the future (be specific)? In the future, I'll be a lot more prepared for sure. I will not procrastinate and I'll use my time wisely.

Solution 2: Eliminate points; deemphasize numbers, emphasize descriptors

Benefits

- Puts student emphasis on learning
- Allows for “thick description” of learning
- *Equity Connection: Pair share*

Challenges

- Clarity
- Time
 - Ex: performance levels
 - i. Exceeds
 - ii. Proficient
 - iii. Developing
 - iv. Beginning
 - Ex: Conference, discuss, engage in dialogue

Problem 2: the points-based system



Criteria	Exceeds	Proficient	Developing	Beginning	N/S
Line of Reasoning (LOR) (REO6A)	Logically organizes claims to support the thesis statement, demonstrating sophisticated thought and/or a complex understanding of the issue.	Logically organizes claims to support the thesis.	Claims may overlap or unclearly support the thesis.	Claims do not logically support the thesis.	*Unintelligible *Copied text *Off purpose *Too brief to evaluate *Not present
Commentary (REO6A)	Explains all connections between evidence and LOR in a consistent and well-developed way; explains the importance of the evidence in a sophisticated way.	Explains most connections between evidence and LOR in a logical way; explains the importance of most of the evidence.	Explains how some of the evidence supports the line of reasoning; may lack clarity or depth.	Makes an attempt at explanation of evidence, but adds no new information; may rely on summary.	*Unintelligible *Copied text *Off purpose *Too brief to evaluate *Not present
Transitions (REO6B)	Transitions effectively connect parts of the essay (within and between paragraphs) and add to the flow of the writing.	Transitions consistently used within and between paragraphs that adequately connect ideas; may be predictable or formulaic.	Transitions are inconsistently used within and/or between paragraphs to connect ideas.	Some transitions are present, but they are confusing or inaccurate.	*Unintelligible *Copied text *Off purpose *Too brief to evaluate *Not present
Tone/Style (STL8A)	Strategically uses precise word choice, comparisons, and varied sentence types to convey a specific and convincing tone or style.	Uses clear word choice, comparisons, and varied sentence types to convey a specific tone or style.	Uses limited word choice, comparisons, and repetitive sentence types to convey a tone or style; may convey an inconsistent tone or style.	Uses confusing word choice, comparisons, and confusing sentences that do not convey an identifiable tone or style.	*Unintelligible *Copied text *Off purpose *Too brief to evaluate *Not present

Solution 3: Employ a 4-pt scale

Benefits

- Increase accuracy and precision of grades
- Rubric scores can go directly into the gradebook w/o translation to %
- Smaller failure zone
- Equity connection: *Pair share*

Challenges

- Setting up your gradebook
- Calculating a final grade



- 4: Exceeds–A
- 3: Proficient–B
- 2: Developing–C
- 1: Beginning–D
- 0: No Learning–F

Score	Low Score	High Score	Value	Sequence	Legend Text
A	3.40	4.00	4.00	1	Exceeds
B	2.50	3.39	3.00	2	Proficient
C	1.70	2.49	2.00	3	Developing
D	0.90	1.69	1.00	4	Beginning
F	0.00	0.89	0.00	5	Not present

Solution 4: Avoid Zeros

Benefits

- Increases accuracy
- Increases student hope & efficacy
- Equity connection: *Pair share*

Challenges

- Finding alternative evidence of learning
- Employing strategies/policies to fill the void of the 0



		Final Pt 1: Reading Rhetorically: MAX:4.00 PTS:1.00 12/20/2019	Final Pt. 2: Explanatory Written MAX:4.00 PTS:1.00 12/20/2019	Unit 4 CSA: Inference MAX:4.00 PTS:1.00 12/13/2019	Unit 4 CSA: Theme MAX:4.00 PTS:1.00 12/13/2019	Not For Grading Unit 4 Theme Independent MAX:1.00 PTS:0.00 12/13/2019	Not For Grading Unit 4 RL1 Group Practice 1 MAX:1.00 PTS:0.00 12/13/2019
Student 	Grade 	RI6: Analyzing Writ 	W2: Write Explanat 	RL1: Inferences (R 	RL2: Analyze Therr 	RL2: Analyze Therr 	RL2: Analyze Therr 
Ga	1.2 D	2.5	3	 .5	 0	Incomple	Complete
Gc	2.9 B	3	3	3	3	Complete	Complete
Gc	1.9 C	2	2	3	 1	Incomple	Complete
He	3.0 B	3	3	3	2	Incomple	Complete
Ja	2.4 C	2.5	3	2.5	2	Incomple	Incomple
Je	2.4 C	3	3	2	2	Incomple	Incomple
Jo	2.0 C	2.5	3	3	3	Complete	Complete
Ju	2.7 B	3	3	3	 .5	Incomple	Complete
Ma	2.9 B	3	2.5	3	3	Incomple	Complete
Ma	2.3 C	2.5	2.5	 1	2.5	Incomple	Incomple
Ma	2.9 B	2	3	3	3	Complete	Complete
Po	2.4 C	3.5	3	2.5	3	Incomple	Complete
Ro	1.8 C	 .5	 .5	3	 1	Incomple	Incomple

One Comment One Question

- 1) What's one practice that makes sense to you & you can envision yourself using (or already do)?
- 2) What's one practice that you still have questions about?





Some Initial Data

Grade Meaning: 2018 v. 2019

2018: Student learning of learning targets (measured through summative assessment); effort & behavior (homework completion, homework correctness); effort for borderline grades

2019: Student learning of priority standards (measured through summative assessment)



My 1st Semester Grades: 2018 v. 2019

	2018	2019
A	13 (8%)	3 (2%)
B	69 (45%)	65 (45%)
C	49 (32%)	61 (42%)
D	13 (8%)	12 (8%)
F	10 (6%)	4 (3%)
Total	154	145

Site A: 1st sem 2018 v. 2019 (11th Grade)

CP	2018	2019	AP	2018	2019
A	31(9.1%)	36 (10. 4)	A	25 (17.9%)	13 (7.1%)
B	114 (33.6%)	153(44.2%)	B	63 (45.0%)	71 (39.0%)
C	111 (32.7%)	118(34.1%)	C	44 (31.4%)	77 (42.3%)
D	50 (14.7%)	26(7.5%)	D	6 (4.3%)	19 (10.4%)
F	33 (9.7%)	13 (3.8%)	F	2 (1. 4%)	2 (1.1%)
Total	339	346	Total	140	182

Site B: 1st sem 2018 v. 2019 (11th grade)

CP	2018	2019	AP	2018	2019
A	35(7.0%)	49 (14.6%)	A	36 (40. 4%)	49 (54. 4%)
B	99 (19.9%)	67 (19.9%)	B	37 (41.6%)	16 (17.8%)
C	125 (25.2%)	130(38.7%)	C	13 (14.6%)	18 (20.0%)
D	122 (24.5%)	72 (21. 4%)	D	3 (3. 4%)	6 (6.7%)
F	116 (23.3%)	18 (3.8%)	F	0 (0%)	1 (1. 1%)
Total	497	336	Total	89	90

Site C: 1st sem 2018 v. 2019 (10th Grade)

40

Gen	2018	2019	CP	2018	2019	GATE	2018	2019
A	19 (13.2%)	6(9.1%)	A	99 (27.2%)	101(38.4%)	A	33 (52. 4%)	51(63.8%)
B	34 (23.6%)	18(27.3%)	B	114(31.3%)	79 (30.0%)	B	19 (30.2%)	26(32.5%)
C	26 (18.1%)	17(25.8%)	C	79 (21.7%)	53 (20.2%)	C	4 (6.3%)	1(1.3%)
D	24 (16.7%)	9 (13.6%)	D	28 (7.7%)	11 (4.2%)	D	5 (7.9%)	1(1.3%)
F	41 (28.5%)	16 (24.2%)	F	44 (12.1%)	19 (7.2%)	F	2 (3.2%)	1(1.3%)
Tot.	144	66	Tot.	364	263	Tot.	63	80

Areas for Growth

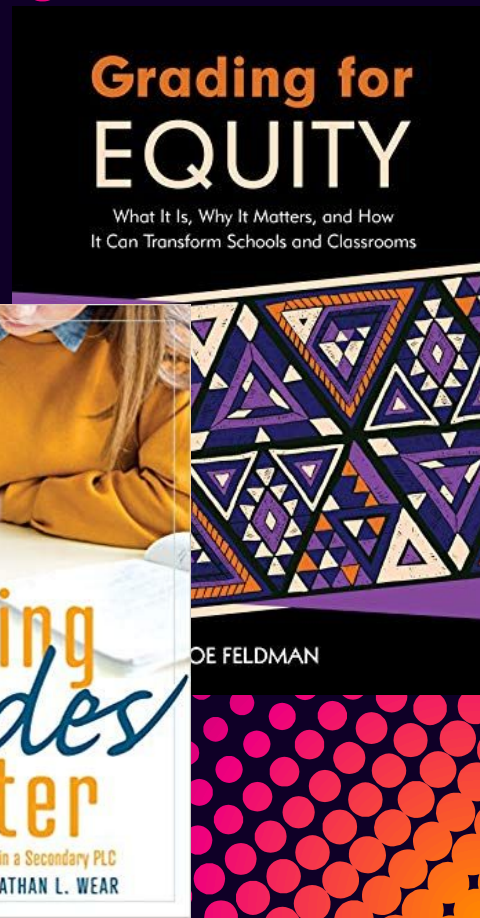
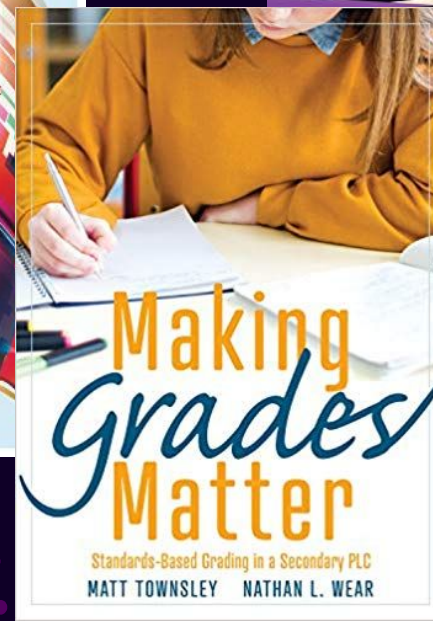
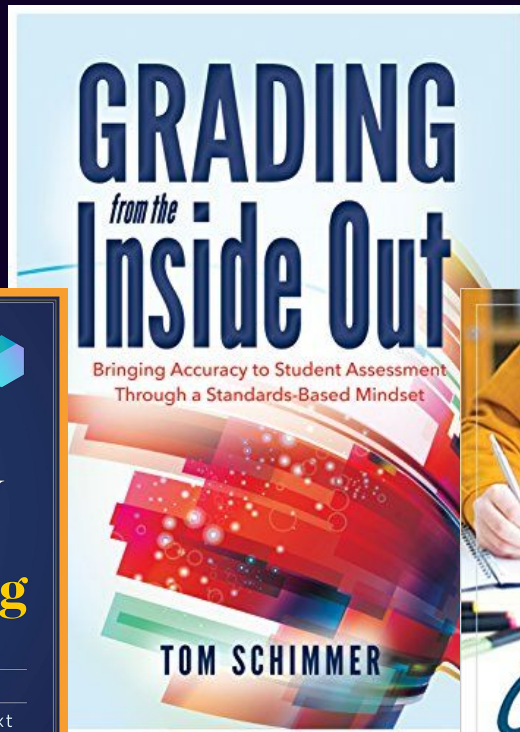
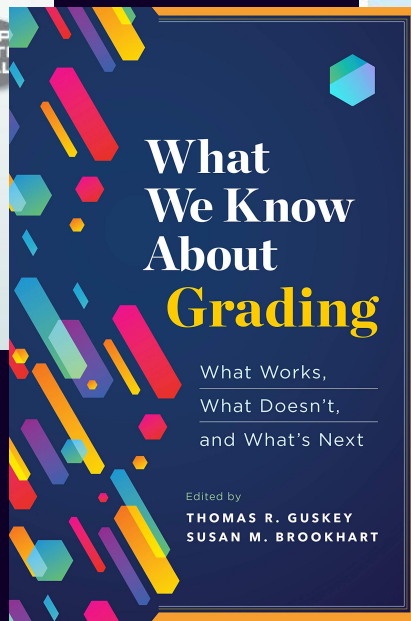
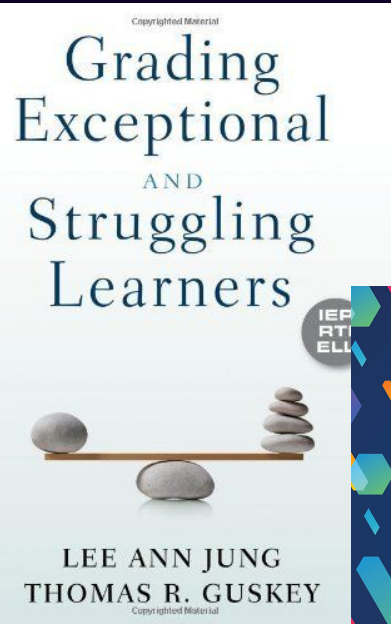
1. Reconsider the “exceeds” performance level
2. Better communicate student learning before and between summative assessments
3. Do away w/ averaging standards to create a single letter grade

Grading Challenge-March 23

- ⊗ What is one grading practice or policy that you can use in your classroom that increases equity?



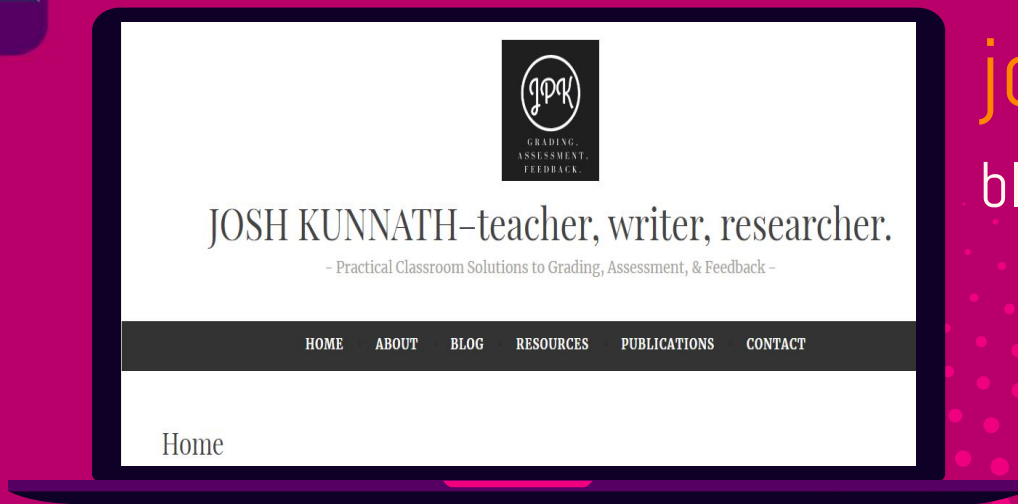
For Further Reading and Learning





JSARD.org

Open-access academic journal:
K-12 school administration &
leadership



joshkunnath.com
blog, resources, links



THANKS!

Any questions?

You can find us at:

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