



MASA Assessment & Grading, 3-19-21

These topics represent the Way, the Truth and the Life of teaching, particularly at the HS. What are you doing as a Superintendent to ensure that grading is done more thoughtfully and accurately?

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What is the purpose of grading?

- We have emerged from the era of assessing merely to rank students based on achievement to asking the key question: **“Who has and has not met standards?”**
- To do this, of course, you need to know the standards (**WHAT**) and the process of teaching them (**HOW**).



“What” we teach . . .

What is a "Concept"?

- Centered on what is truly important
- Clearly and completely integrated into learning progressions within / across grades
- Qualified educators consistently interpret them to mean the same thing
- Within developmental reach of students
- Manageable in number so they may be taught, measured and learned
 - *If these criteria are not met, then both quality assessment and effective instruction will not happen.*



What role can you play?

- Think about the feedback we receive as an athlete, and the words that an excellent coach gives a team. That is the model that most can identify with. We simply do not provide good enough feedback in most instructional activities.
- How many of our teachers are grading consistently within our district framework?
- What is the true inventory of our current practices? [Several times, we ran a gradebook chart for each teacher in the district in each class and spent the next six months interviewing each teacher about our observations.]
- What types of feedback do your teachers provide for your students based on what their course objectives are? Is the feedback more than numeric or symbolic? Is this feedback specific to the objective?
- How qualified are your principals, or you, to recognize bias that can be inadvertent and unplanned. [It usually is!]

Seven Big Ideas

Schmoker references

1. Concepts and Assessment are related.
2. **What** we teach & **How** we teach it are two emphases.



3. We need a better balance in assessment between learning and work ethic principles of grading (effort, participation pts)

a. Research indicates there is a 15:1 ratio between stuff to reading/writing

b. Stuff definition -- Games, worksheets, posters, presentations, movies, cut/paste, designing brochures, skits, collages

c. The CRAYOLA CURRICULUM quote -

"I can only summarize the findings by saying that we've been stunned...kids were given more coloring assignments than math or writing assignments...I want to repeat that, because I'm not joking, nor exaggerating." -- Haycock

4. To improve our instruction, we need to amend this ratio -- WRITE MORE / GRADE LESS [Schmoker]
 - “Writing aids in cognitive development to such an extent that the upper reaches of Blooms taxonomy could not be reached without the use of some form of writing.”
5. Assessment practices are basically flawed. There are very few examples of teachers who know exactly how their assessment practices are clear, coherent and aligned with their intentions. [This is a later topic.]



6. Traditional vs. "New" Assessment

Traditional vs. Authentic Assessment. (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.cssvt.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Traditional-vs-Authentic-Assessment.pdf>

Traditional Assessment

- Classroom activities guide grading
- Grades for attitude/effort/participation
- Check status
- Focus on tests/assignments
- Snapshot

"New" Assessment

- Standards guide assessment and learning
- Assess on what you know and understand
- Individualize and Personalize
- Monitor student learning
- Panoramic view

7. Grading DOES NOT EQUAL Assessment

8. Assessment FOR learning instead of
Assessment OF learning (Stiggins)



Effective Communication - 15 Fixes for Broken Grades

Ken O'Connor Webinar

- What do grades mean in your classroom?
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BL7bRbGGI0Q> [Ken O'Connor Webinar] A must watch for anyone interested in assessment and grading. It is still probably the best resource I've ever come across.

Mistakes in grading

I have compiled a set of grading reports for a student at our high school of which I am still the *de facto* Principal. There will be some redundancy, but I do want to show you that nearly every grading “scheme” has its bias that your teachers, and you, as the Chief Leader, need to be aware of.

[Grading Examples](#)

Summarized

1. Each concept, day, week, quiz, exam, etc. may have the same value. In unit planning with teachers, I typically will start with something simple and concise like 10 points per day per term. If you have 85 days of instruction, you now have 850 points to plan out. Where do you want these points to go? How can you ensure quality assessments and equality between the above?

2. Assessments that include both formative and summative assessment should have the equivalent value to their worth for a term. Points-based systems rarely equate to what the teacher wanted, or the student deserved. For instance, 60% exams, 20% projects and 20% daily work. When doing this, you also have to ensure that these values occur with intent.

Summarized

3. Learning activity descriptions should reflect the concept that was taught. Give a clear description of the activity.
4. On a particular unit that looks like another, there should be consistency of points, or weights, to ensure that one unit of assessment doesn't end up being more important.
5. Do you provide qualitative feedback on each major assessment whether it was a project, test or study?
6. Do the points you assign actually reflect the importance of the conceptual framework for the course.
7. What is your overall distribution between formative and summative? Do you even know the true difference and reflect this in your teaching?

Unit Planning

1. Start with a fixed number of points per day. 850 as an example.
2. Decide what % of these points will be accorded to Product (summative), Process (formative) and Progress (growth).
3. Can you replicate a unit, an assignment, a rubric, a plan? This can really make the process easier.]
4. If you can plan a 15 day unit, you can plan several on end.
5. What are the most important activities you want to include. If inquiry is a goal, can you include an inquiry type of activity on Day 7 of each unit.
6. Changing even one day of instruction out of 15 will change 12 days per year.
7. Changing even five minutes per day will change your classroom by 10%. Small changes can have large impact!

Influences / Links

[Thomas Guskey](#), Five Obstacles to Grading

[Dylan Willam](#), The Bible of Assessment Webinars

[Ken O'Connor](#), Fifteen Mistakes Webinar

[Mike Schmoker](#), Results Now book

[Rick Stiggins](#), Grading FOR vs. OF

[Wiggins and McTighe](#), Backward Design/UBD

[Danny Hill](#), ICU Concept

[Myron Dueck](#), Grading Smarter, not Harder

Influences / Links

[Thomas Guskey](#), Five Obstacles to Grading

[Dylan Willam](#), The founder of modern Formative Assessment

[Ken O'Connor](#), Webinar

[Mike Schmoker](#), Results Now book

[Rick Stiggins](#), Assessment through student's eyes

[Wiggins and McTighe](#), Backward Design/UBD

[Danny Hill](#), ICU Concept