The Case Against Grades (##)
Motivation

based on state standards, there’s particular reason to be concerned since those standards are often too specific, ... 2001). In my experience, the best teachers tend to be skeptical about aligning their teaching to a list imposed by

To talk about what happens in classrooms, let alone in children’s heads, as moving forward or backward in specifiable ... of what is going on, but also destructive because it may change what is going on for the worse. Once we’re compelled

Most of the criticisms of grading you’ll hear today were laid out forcefully and eloquently anywhere from four to eight ... & Napier, 1971; Linder, 1940; Marshall, 1968), and these early essays make for eye-opening reading. They remind us

It follows that all assessment must be done carefully and sparingly lest students become so concerned about their ... their performance compares to others’) that they’re no longer thinking about the learning itself. Even a well-meaning

Indeed, research suggests that the common tendency of students to focus on grades doesn’t reflect an innate predilection ... due to having been led for years to work for grades. In one study (Butler, 1992), some students were encouraged to think

Why Grading Is Inherently Problematic

What if we could teach students to be less concerned about how their performance compares to others’? It seems like a

..."I remember the first time that a grading rubric was attached to a piece of my writing….Suddenly all the joy was taken away. I was writing for a grade — I was no longer exploring for me. I want to get that back. Will I ever get that back?"

Life is not giving us students grades to do in their best or worst light, but rather...it is giving them a test of how

evaluation. And sure enough, the rate at which the children in the “success group” were motivated by grades was

It follows that all assessment must be done carefully and sparingly lest students become so concerned about their... grades... changes in the intellectual lives of students” [Milton, 1999, p. 94].

...accompanied by comments) promote a fear of failure even in high-achieving students (Pulfrey et al., 2011), and the ... substantial benefits with no apparent disadvantages in medical school (White and Fantone, 2010). More important, no

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Extrinsic motivation, which includes a desire to get better grades, is not only different from, but often undermines,

...than to ask "Is this going to be on the test?" In one experiment, students told they’d be graded on how well they

They may skim books for what they’ll "need to know." They’re less likely to wonder, say, "How can we be sure that’s true?" than to ask "Is this going to be on the test?"

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In one study (Butler, 1992), some students were encouraged to think...when they do well...on-line is a significant step backward because it enhances the salience of those grades and therefore their destructive effects on learning.

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