The Case Against Grades (##)
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"I consider the first lesson that a grading system requires is a point to be kept in mind. By grading students' work, one is in effect saying to the students: 'I am the final judge of the worth of your efforts.'"

- Edward J. Eisner

Eisner's quote highlights the fundamental issue with grading systems: they assume the authority of the teacher or examiner to determine the quality of a student's work. This can stifle student creativity and critical thinking, as students might be inclined to work solely for grades rather than for personal growth and understanding.

### The Effects of Grading

Grading can have several negative effects on students, including:

1. **Stress and Anxiety:** Students are under constant pressure to perform, which can lead to stress and anxiety.
2. **Motivation:** Grades can sometimes undermine intrinsic motivation, as students might focus on external rewards rather than on the joy of learning itself.
3. **Performance:** Students who feel the pressure of high grades may become more risk-averse, avoiding challenges that might lead to failure.

### Teaching without Grades

Drier's system, which focuses on self-assessment and reflective writing, provides a stark contrast. By eliminating grades, the focus shifts from external evaluation to internal reflection, allowing students to learn at their own pace and in their own way.

### The Value of Feedback

Feedback is crucial for learning, but the nature and quality of feedback can vary widely. In a grade-free environment, feedback is more likely to be constructive and aimed at improving learning outcomes rather than justifying grades.

### The Role of Portfolios

Portfolios can be effective tools for assessing student progress, especially in a grade-free context. They allow students to reflect on their own work and progress over time, providing a more comprehensive picture of their learning.

### Quantification

The quantification of learning often fails to capture the qualitative aspects of student growth. Grade-free environments, such as those described by Drier, offer a more nuanced approach to understanding student progress.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, grading systems can be limiting and counterproductive. By adopting alternative approaches, such as using portfolios and self-assessment, educators can create learning environments that are more conducive to student growth and development.

### Further Reading


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