The Dangerous Myth of Grade Inflation (**)
Complaints about grade inflation have been around for a very long time. Every so often a flurry of publicity pushes the issue to the foreground again, one example being a series of articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

The main idea of many of these articles is that today’s students are receiving higher grades than their predecessors. This is often presented as evidence of grade inflation, and the implication is that this is a problem that we need to address. However, there are several reasons why we should be cautious about making this claim.

First, we need to be clear about what we mean by “grade inflation.” This term is often used to describe a situation in which the average grade in a class is higher today than it was in the past, even when the quality of the work remains the same. This is sometimes called “grade inflation,” but it is more accurate to say that we are seeing a trend towards higher grades.

Second, we need to consider how grades are used in the educational system. Grades are often used as a form of feedback to students, and they can also be used to determine whether a student is eligible for certain opportunities, such as scholarships or graduate programs. Therefore, it is important to be careful about how we interpret changes in grades, and to consider whether they are due to genuine improvements in student performance or simply a change in the way grades are assigned.

Third, we need to consider the context in which grades are used. Grades are often used in different ways in different contexts. For example, grades in K-12 schools are often used to determine whether a student is eligible for certain opportunities, whereas grades in higher education are often used to determine whether a student is eligible for certain opportunities.

In conclusion, we need to be cautious about making claims about grade inflation. We need to be clear about what we mean by “grade inflation,” and we need to consider how grades are used in the educational system. We also need to consider the context in which grades are used.

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To get a more accurate picture of whether grades have changed over the years, we need to look at official student transcripts. The data demonstrate that “today’s students are at least as well informed as their predecessors, if not better, and are certainly aware of the past.” The bottom line: No one has ever demonstrated that students today get A’s for the same work that used to receive B’s or C’s. We simply do not have the data to support such a claim.

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The fact is that it is hard to ascertain when the simple claim that grades have been rising. Depending on the time period we’re talking about, that claim may well be false. In their book *What Does Relative Success Signal About Student Performance?*, the authors argue that the claim that grades have been rising is not supported by the data.

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