

Grading Practice Continuum

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Grading practice:	Traditional	Standards-based	Outcomes-based	Competency - based
Definition	Assigning students numerical or letter grades based on their performance in assignments, tests, and overall participation throughout a course.	Evaluating students using grades or performance indicators against specific and discrete learning objectives or standards, focusing on their mastery of essential skills and knowledge rather than overall performance.	Evaluating students using grades or performance indicators based on the overall achievement of predetermined outcomes emphasizing observable and measurable indicators of proficiency.	Evaluating students using performance indicators based on broader competency areas that are applicable across a wide variety of contexts inside and outside of classrooms.
Role of Assessment and Grading	Assessment and grading is something that is “done to students” at the end of the unit or course of study.	Assessment and grading is done with students’ knowledge of what they are supposed to learn and how to demonstrate it.	Assessment and grading is done with students’ understanding of what ‘success’ looks like, ideally with their participation in defining it, and multiple non-assessed opportunities to	Assessment and grading is driven by students’ participation and agency and their ability to answer “big questions” about a discipline, define measures of success, and

			practice achieving it.	transfer their learning to new or unexpected contexts.
Use of Formative Assessments	Rarely, though graded practice work may be weighted less.	Used occasionally to practice discrete knowledge and skills and feedback is usually binary ('right/wrong', 'acceptable/unacceptable').	Used frequently to allow for multiple, low-stakes practice attempts to achieve outcomes and receive descriptive feedback related to levels of performance.	A core practice that includes significant descriptive feedback for students that is meant to foster risk-taking and exploration while learning new skills.
Use of Self-Assessments	Rarely, and never in the development of a final grade.	Used occasionally to self-check discrete knowledge or skill standards.	Used frequently to self-assess progress against exemplars and rubrics that help determine next steps for improvement.	A core practice that is used to develop students' metacognitive and reflective skills, increase the dispositions for learning, as well as guiding their own progress in improving knowledge or skills.
Summative Assessments Mostly Consist of:	Tests, quizzes, worksheets, and classwork (often 'busy work' or drill) specific to the topic or unit of study.	Tests, quizzes, worksheets, and classwork are closely linked to mostly discrete knowledge-based standards.	Producing products that allow teachers to observe students demonstrating skills as much as showing their knowledge.	Producing products that allow teachers to observe students demonstrating skills and knowledge in new or unique contexts.
High Grades are More Likely to Predict:	Future success in a structured single-subject classroom environment	Future success in environments where the specific skills and knowledge are well defined	Future success in environments where the expected outcomes are	Future success in variable, interdisciplinary contexts in school, work, or life.

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