



PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the provisions of the ILLINOIS OPEN MEETINGS ACT, notice is hereby given that the **CURRICULUM COMMITTEE** of the Board of Education of Lyons Township High School District 204 will meet on:

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2020 - 7:00 AM
LYONS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 204
ROOM 140 & VIRTUAL
100 SOUTH BRAINARD AVENUE
LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS 60525**

AGENDA

I. Grading Practices Update

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BY ORDER OF
MRS. MOLLY MURPHY BRUTON, CHAIRPERSON
LYONS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 204
100 SOUTH BRAINARD AVENUE
LA GRANGE, IL 60525

LYONS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL



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SCOTT D. EGGERDING
Director of Curriculum and Instruction

TO: Tim Kilrea
Board of Education Curriculum Committee

FROM: Scott Eggerding

DATE: November 10, 2020

RE: Grading Practices Update

Last November, the Board Curriculum Committee was briefed on the process we went through to review our grading practices. Today, we would like to review where we have been and talk about where we are in the implementation process. The presentation slides are attached for your review.

Last year, in the cover memo to this group, I said:

Over the last five years, there has been a significant shift in instruction through professional development at LTHS. We implemented multiple formative practices, developed curriculum maps linking outcomes to standards and assessments, and shifted to measuring student achievement under the umbrella of the growth mindset. All of these changes have challenged traditional ways of grading and has led to experimentation by teachers and teaching teams leading to multiple work-arounds of our traditional grading system to fit the shifts in teaching and learning.

As we continue to apply the formative practices to our courses, gradebooks are becoming more and more inconsistent and difficult to interpret. Students encounter seven different methods and sets of rules to determine their grades as they go through their schedule each day. In some instances, teachers in the same course have different rules. A Division Chair received a letter from a student that summarizes the issue: "I feel that myself and many others are being cheated and disadvantaged by this difference in policy. I hope that this issue can be resolved promptly, whether that be through a departmental standardization of grading policy, or any other appropriate action." Without making a systemic change to how we report grades and student progress, our grading practices will remain inconsistent and unfair.

To that end, the Curriculum and Staff Development Team initiated a study of grading at LT, best practice in grading, and a review of what other schools (middle school, high school and college) were doing with grades. Following that research, the Grading Practices Task Force reviewed the research and made recommendations for a shift in grading practices at LT.

The resulting Vision and Definitions (see attached) led to the development of a Grading System Improvement Process (attached). In March, before the school closed for the pandemic, we gave a presentation to the community on the changes we were making for the fall.

Obviously, with the shift to Pandemic learning, we did not feel we could make all of the planned changes. We cancelled summer workshops and modified the scope of the changes for the fall. As we worked through the summer to prepare for the fall, the topic of grades also became a part of the discussion about equity and achievement gaps both at LT and throughout the country. Our goals for shifting grading practices took on even more importance so that we could ensure grades measured growth and learning. One of the authors that we used to develop our definitions, Joe Feldman, has written a great deal about “Grading for Equity” (attached) and “Taking the Stress out of Grading” (page 14 of September 2020 issue of Educational Leadership).

Following questions about the shifts in grading practices during first quarter, we have reviewed grades earned, heard from parents during parent teacher conferences, and asked teachers what they need in order to be more successful with the implementation of the shift in grading practices.

The presentation today will track the history of our work and present what we have learned from the first quarter of implementation. As for our method for implementation, we have followed research by Gene Hall and Shirley Hord (attached), which predicts the challenges of bridging current practice to the new practices.

Included in the materials for the Committee is the entire September 2020 issue of Educational Leadership entitled “Grade Expectations.” This issue includes articles from all of the researchers we studied to develop our plan. Hopefully you will find it useful to understand the national conversation about grading practices.

RECOMMENDATION:

No action required. This item is informational.

GRADING TO COMMUNICATE LEARNING

Update for the LTHS Curriculum Committee
November 10, 2020

I. Catalyst for Change

Katie Smith- *Coordinator of Assessment & Research*

The Catalyst

1) Parent & student complaints

summarize, I feel that myself and many others are being cheated and disadvantaged by the differences in policy. I hope that this issue can be resolved promptly, whether that be through a departmental standardization of grading policy, or any other appropriate action.

2) Confirmation of inconsistency & inequity

- Survey data
- Gradebooks
- Teacher readiness

Teacher Survey revealed...

- 66% counting homework toward the final grade
 - 53% grade for completion
 - 49% grade for accuracy*Some do both (greater than 100%)
- 44% were not counting homework toward the final grade
- 42% were allowing work to be turned in at any point;
- 47% penalized late work with point reduction;
- 8% won't accept late work
- 32% do not offer retakes
- 41% provide retakes on all summatives

The Problems we were Trying to Solve

- Grades did not reflect learning
- Grades and grading practices were inconsistent (unfair and inequitable) across the course team
- Lack of teacher clarity regarding grading

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Grading Prior to the Pandemic



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II. The 2020-2021 Grading Changes

Scott Eggerding– *Director of Curriculum & Instruction*
Karen Raino– *Language Arts Div. Chair & EL Pgm. Coord.*

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LTHS Grading Purpose Statement and Vision

A **grade** communicates a student's level of achievement toward identified learning objectives at a point in time.

Process marks communicate a student's demonstrated learning behaviors and will not be included in the academic achievement grade.

VISION: The grading system at Lyons Township High School is consistent throughout the school, equitable and fair to all students, and reflective of student performance. The grading system:

- must reflect growth and learning.
- must value knowledge and understanding.
- must provide a road map for success.

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The Goal & The Adjustments

THE ORIGINAL GOAL FOR THIS YEAR	ADJUSTMENTS (Due to the Pandemic)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 7 Fixes to Grades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 6 Fixes ○ Eliminate averaging ● Create a new report card with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grades ○ Process Marks ○ Attendance ○ Personalized Narrative ● Teaching Teams Consistent ● Teaching Teams decide whether to keep points & percentages or shift A-F. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6 Fixes to Grades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eliminate extra credit ○ Use "M"s to indicate late or missing work ○ Exclude attendance from the academic grade ○ Eliminate group grades ○ Stop curving ○ Exclude practice from the grade ● Teaching Teams Consistent

Why These Fixes?

Our grading system must be...

- ☐ Accurate
 - ☐ Mathematically sound
 - ☐ Easy to understand
 - ☐ Descriptive of a student's level of academic performance
- ☐ Bias-resistant
 - ☐ Reflect valid evidence of a student's content knowledge and not evidence that is corrupted by a teacher's implicit bias
- ☐ Motivational
 - ☐ Support a growth mindset
 - ☐ Provide opportunities for redemption
 - ☐ Be transparent, so students know where they are and where they need to go in their learning
 - ☐ Connect the meaning of practice with the rewards of learning

(Feldman, Joe, *Grading for Equity*. Corwin Press: Thousand Oaks, CA. 2019)

The Fixes

<p>Accurate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Avoiding zeros ☐ No group grades ☐ No curving 	<p>Bias-Resistant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ No extra credit ☐ No penalty for late work ☐ Excluding participation and effort ☐ Grades based on summative performances 	<p>Motivational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Allowing for retakes/revisions ☐ Using rubrics ☐ Creating a community of feedback
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III. Where are we Now

- Paul Houston- *Global Studies Division Chair*
- Brian Waterman- *Principal*
- Leslie Owens- *Student Services Division Chair*
- Scott Eggering- *Director of Curriculum & Instruction*
- Collin Voigt- *Math & Science Division Chair*

Quarter 1 Grade Comparison

QUARTER 1 GRADE DISTRIBUTION (for all marks earned at LTHS): 2016-2020						
OVERALL	A	B	C	D	F	Other
2020-2021	47%	24%	13%	6%	7%	3%
2019-2020	47%	30%	12%	5%	3%	3%
2018-2019	50%	30%	11%	4%	2%	3%
2017-2018	44%	31%	14%	5%	3%	3%
2016-2017	41%	33%	14%	5%	3%	4%

Quarter 1 (2020-2021) Ds and Fs

134 Students **missed 10% or more** of 1st Quarter and received either a D or an F in one or more classes.

- Those 134 students earned 107 Ds and 357 Fs.
- These grades mostly represent work not turned in.
- Changes to Grading Practices will help them recover.

What are Student Support Teams?

Student Support Teams (SST) are a Tier II intervention designed to identify and support general education students who are struggling with academics, attendance, behavior or other school-related issues. The team is composed of three grade level counselors, one social worker, one school nurse and one school psychologist, and is facilitated by the grade level assistant principal. The team meets weekly and regularly monitors progress for identified at-risk students.

SST

What do they do?

- Identify students and discuss options for students who are in need of Tier II support
- Monitor hospitalized students
- Discuss Section 504 requests
- Refer students to Tier III for more intensive interventions (Special Education Case Study, Alternative Program, Ombudsman, 504 plans, etc.)

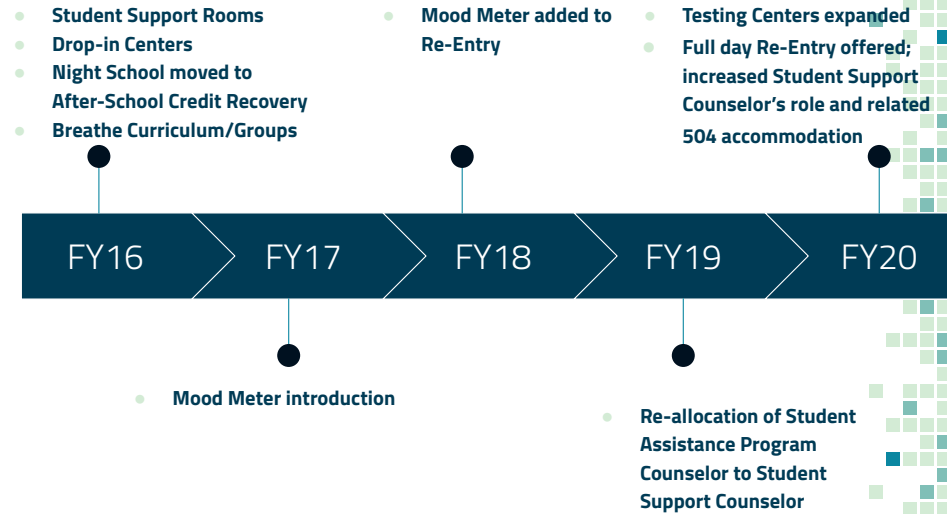
How are students identified?

- Referral from teacher, social worker, counselor, parent, nurse
- DecisionED Report

DecisionED Report

- # of failing classes
- % attendance
- # of disciplinary interactions
- # suspensions

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Student Support - Moving Forward

- Tier 2 Interventions have adapted to remove barriers to support to provide services based on the needs identified through data
- SST's will continue to utilize data to ensure that at-risk and struggling learners are identified and provided supports. Data will evolve along with grading policy
- SST's will work collaboratively with Tier 1 Teams and data to plan for specific, skill-based Tier 2 Interventions

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Trends in Pandemic Grades

Most low grades (D's and F's) are from students who are missing 10% or more of classes.

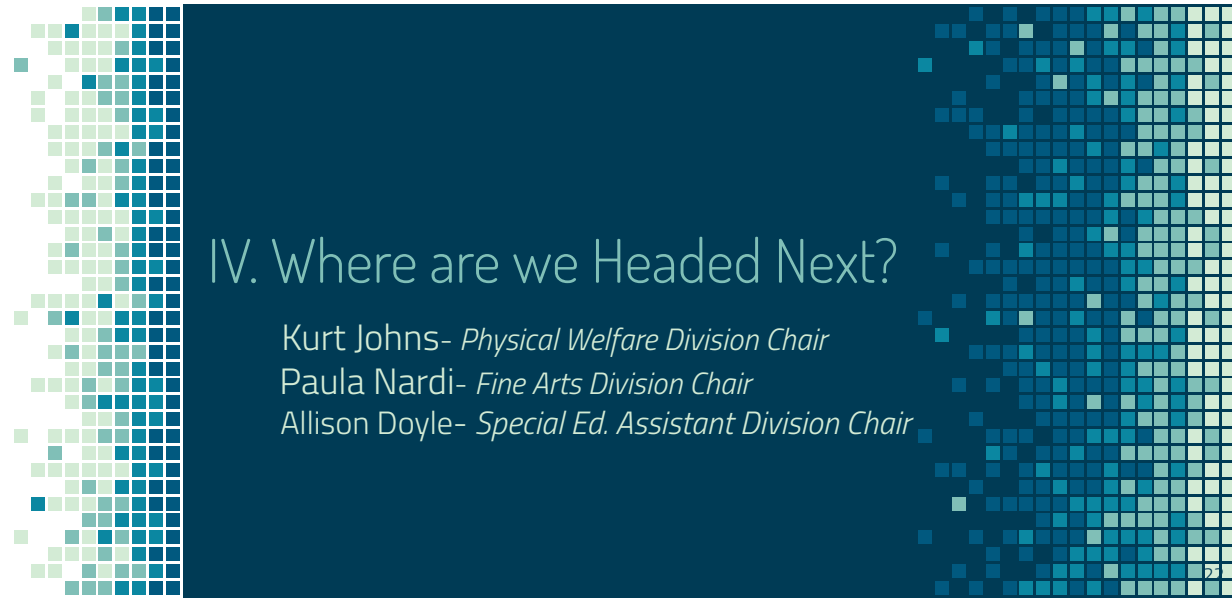
Ability to take and retake tests allows students with low grades to improve those grades.

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Adjustments for Pandemic Learning

- Course teams implement flexibility with:
 - Pacing
 - Retakes
- Course teams find ways to encourage
 - Student appointments during VP time

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IV. Where are we Headed Next?

Kurt Johns- *Physical Welfare Division Chair*

Paula Nardi- *Fine Arts Division Chair*

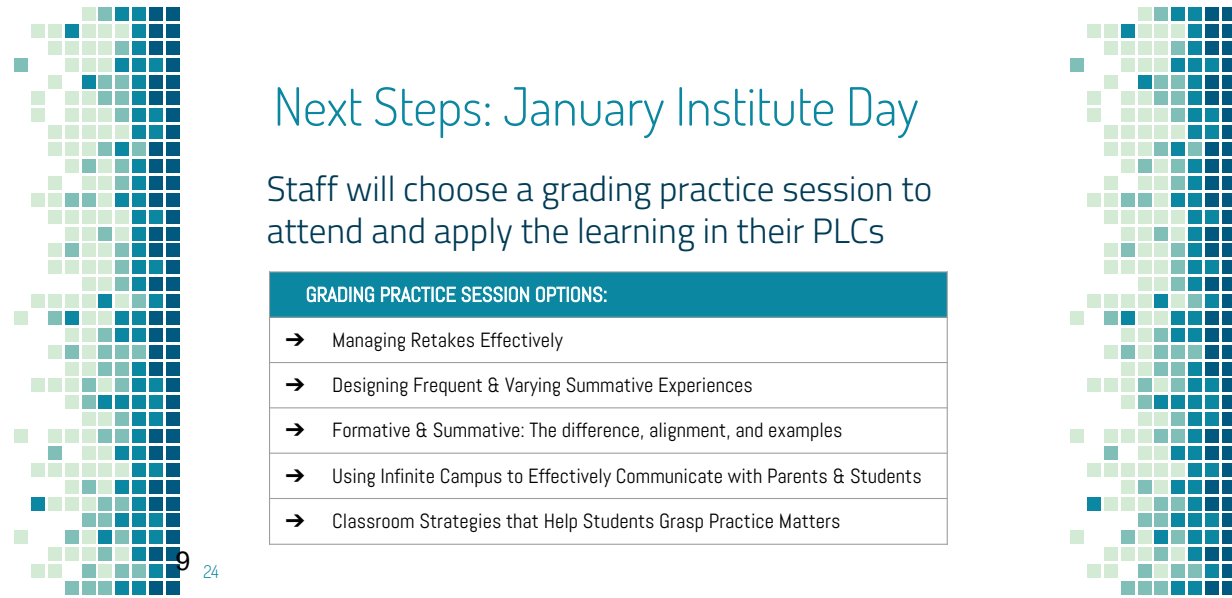
Allison Doyle- *Special Ed. Assistant Division Chair*

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Next Steps by Division

- Reviewed data from 2016-2020 for quarter 1
- Conducting audits to ensure fidelity
 - Course Team Syllabi
 - Individual teacher grade books in IC
- Addressing issues & making adjustments through Individual or course team meetings

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Next Steps: January Institute Day

Staff will choose a grading practice session to attend and apply the learning in their PLCs

GRADING PRACTICE SESSION OPTIONS:

- | | |
|---|--|
| → | Managing Retakes Effectively |
| → | Designing Frequent & Varying Summative Experiences |
| → | Formative & Summative: The difference, alignment, and examples |
| → | Using Infinite Campus to Effectively Communicate with Parents & Students |
| → | Classroom Strategies that Help Students Grasp Practice Matters |

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The LTHS Grading System:

- **must reflect growth and learning.**
Teachers should use a more proportionately structured 0-4 scale instead of a 0-100 point scale, stop assigning a zero for missing work, and weight recent performance and growth instead of averaging performance over time. By allowing students to retake tests and projects (with the ability to replace previous scores), teachers can reward learning, support a growth mindset, measure learning that occurs when a student is ready, and level the playing field for students who enter classrooms with weaker academic backgrounds.
- **must value knowledge and understanding.**
Instead of grading subjectively interpreted behaviors such as a student's "effort" or "participation," teachers should focus grades on required skills, content or standards. Grades should not be used to reward compliance or homework completion, both of which invite implicit and institutional biases.
- **must provide a road map for success.**
Standards-aligned rubrics, simplified grade calculations, and standards-based scales and gradebooks make teacher expectations explicit and facilitate student understanding, ownership, and power over their grades.

The LTHS Grading System:

- **must not include behavior or soft skills.**
Teachers can give students feedback on their behavior and teach soft skills. That feedback should not be included in a grade unless the course has specific outcomes focused on a specific behavior or soft skill.
- **must not include zeroes for missing assignments.**
Scores in a gradebook should only estimate a student's knowledge status for a particular topic at a particular point in time.
- **must not measure effort, punctuality or attendance.**
If a student demonstrates understanding, the grade should not also measure the degree to which they tried, whether or not they came late to class or if they missed multiple classes prior to demonstrating learning. Feedback and consequences for behaviors should and must still occur; however, they should not be included in a measure of student achievement.
- **must not reward or punish for participation.**
Grades need to measure the skills and outcomes of the course. In courses requiring participation, feedback can still be given. The final summative grade should indicate mastery of outcomes, not compliance or participation.
- **must not measure personal organization or executive functioning.**
Feedback for organization and executive functioning is an important part of helping students to develop habits that lead to improved mastery of outcomes. Teachers should definitely give this feedback to student, but organization and executive functioning should not be a part of the measure of attainment of learning outcomes.
- **must not "give" points for extra credit or compliance.**
Reward students for demonstrating new mastery of skills and outcomes. Extra Credit implies that points are not tied to learning and that they can be "given" based on work not often tied to the outcomes of the course.

UNDERSTANDINGS AND DEFINITIONS

Assessment Philosophy

Assessment is the systematic process of gathering a variety of information over time, demonstrating what students know and can do. Course curriculum maps explicitly indicate the essential knowing and doing outcomes that are aligned to assessments. Assessments provide meaningful feedback designed to improve student learning and instructional practice.

Core Beliefs

ASSESSMENT

- The primary purpose of formative assessment is to improve learning by providing feedback to students.
- The primary purpose of summative assessment is to determine the amount of learning at a particular point in time.
- A system of formative and summative assessments provides the most accurate profile of a student's abilities. A variety of assessment tools must be used to ensure this.
- Assessment based on outcomes evaluates the process as well as the products of learning while not measuring student behavior or compliance.
- To assess performance and progress, it is critical to develop standards-based criteria based on benchmarks.
- Formative assessment provides an opportunity for the teacher to reflect on his/her instructional effectiveness and differentiate prior to a summative assessment.
- Self-assessment provides an opportunity for students to reflect on and evaluate their performance.
- Performance is evaluated from the assessment information collected.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is the process by which a teacher makes sense of all the information collected, determining whether standards of achievement have been attained. The teacher assigns a letter grade that is symbolic of the amount and degree of learning that has occurred.

REPORTING

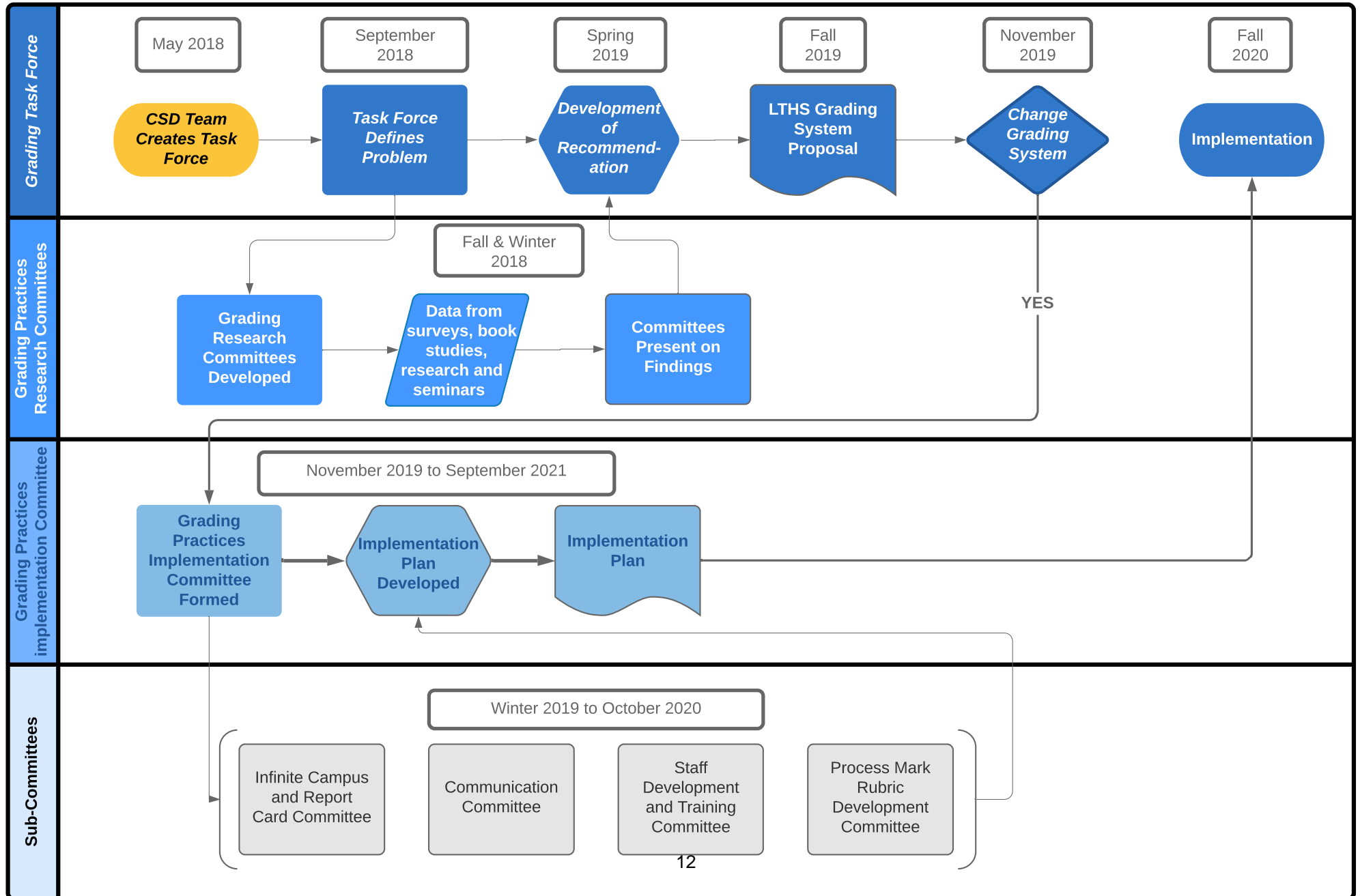
Reporting is the process by which we communicate learning and achievement on a systematic basis to students and parents.

GRADING

Grading is the use of symbols to provide a summary of the learning accomplished during a semester.

Understandings and definitions adapted from **Elements of Grading, Second Edition** © 2016 Solution Tree Press, "What Traditional Classroom Grading Gets Wrong" by Joe Feldman and **On Your Mark** by Thomas Guskey.

Grading System Improvement Process



Harvard EdCast: Grading for Equity

Encouraging teachers to reassess their grading practices and make the adjustments that can guide their students toward academic success.

BY [JILL ANDERSON](#)
DECEMBER 11, 2019

When Joe Feldman, Ed.M.'93, author of *Grading for Equity*, looked closer at grading practices in schools across the country, he realized many practices are outdated, inconsistent, and inequitable. Today he helps educators develop strategies that tackle inconsistent grading practices. In this episode of the Harvard EdCast, Feldman discussed how shifting grading practices can change the landscape of schools and potentially the future for students.



TRANSCRIPT

Jill Anderson: I'm Jill Anderson. This is the Harvard EdCast. Joe Feldman believes how teachers grade students today is often outdated, inconsistent and inequitable. He's a former educator who's been examining grading practices, and believes there's better ways to do it. He's been working with schools to develop strategies that reimagine how we grade students. Some of these strategies go beyond common practices like using extra credit, to really assessing how well a student is mastering the content. When I spoke with Joe, I asked him why grading hasn't changed very much?



Joe Feldman: Most teachers have never really had an opportunity to think very critically about grading. It's not part of our credentialing work, it's not part of our professional development often. Even when we're given some new curriculum or new instructional strategies, grading is really pushed outside the conversation. Most people think it exists almost outside teaching, and that it's just this sort of calculation, this sort of bean counting, but it's actually interwoven into every pedagogical decision that teachers make, because whenever they make a choice about an activity, or some work, or some assessment, they have to decide whether or not to grade it. And if so, with what weight? With what consequences? All kinds of things like that.

We really are using an inherited grading structures and practices that date back to the industrial revolution, when we had different ideas about what schools were for, and what learning should look like, and what we believed about kids, and which kids we believe those things, and which kids we sort of dismissed.

Because there hasn't been a lot of good research and attention to grading, we've just been replicating how we were taught. You know, we'd say, well, it seems like a good idea to drop the lowest grade if kids have done all their homework. That seems like a reasonable thing to do. And we just are all kind of winging it, or doing it based on what our mentor teacher did, or our department may have shared an idea, but we just haven't had the

opportunity to critically examine it. I hope that the work that I'm doing gives teachers and schools a license, and vocabulary, and a space to start to really interrogate the grading practices that we use.

Jill Anderson: I mean, I was struck by how inconsistent grading can be across the same school. Why do you think that inconsistency is so problematic?

Joe Feldman: If you look at it from the viewpoint of the student, so in a typical day in middle school or high school, students are seeing five, six, even more teachers each day. Every teacher is usually doing their own approaches to grading, and many of them become idiosyncratic. Although every teacher has deep beliefs that they're trying to imbue in their grading, and send certain messages and values to students, and trying to build a certain kind of learning community, every teacher is doing it differently. From the student, it adds to my cognitive load. I not only have to understand the content and try and perform at high levels of the content, but now I also have to navigate a grading structure that may not be totally transparent, and may be different for every teacher, and particularly for students who are historically underserved and have less education background, and fewer resources and sort of understanding of how to navigate those really foreign systems to a lot of our students, it places those additional burdens on them, which we shouldn't do.

Jill Anderson: Talk to me a little bit about this idea of inequity and grading.

Joe Feldman: When I first started doing this work, I had been a teacher for years, and a principal of a couple of different high schools, and worked as a district administrator in New York city, and in Northern California as a director of curriculum and instruction, supervised principals and coach teachers. Through all of that work, grading had always nagged at me because there was no way to address these inconsistencies. I began interviewing more teachers and principals, and everyone was frustrated with grading. As I did more research, I found that the traditional practices that we use actually perpetuate disparities that have been going on for years by race, income, education, background, language. The frustrating part I think, is that so many of us go into education to try and disrupt and counteract these cycles of disparities over generations, and do great work and thinking about culturally responsive pedagogy and diverse curriculum, and really trying to listen to our students, and yet we are using practices that undermine those things and actually work against all of the great equity work that we've been doing.

Jill Anderson: Can you tell me some of the strategies that you propose for changing grading in schools?

Joe Feldman: I'll start with talking about a common practice that perpetuates inequities and what to do instead. One example is the traditional idea that we average a student's performance over time. And actually grade book software does this by default. If you imagine students do some homework, and then they do a quiz or two, and then there's some summit of assessment or test at the end of some unit.

The way that we traditionally grade those things is that we assign point values for all those things, and students score a certain number of them out of a certain number of possible. Then we add up all those numbers and divide the number earned by the number possible. What that is doing is it's averaging all of the performances together into a single grade.

The problem with that, is that for the student who does well from the very beginning and gets A's on everything, their performance is fine, their average is an A, but for the student who struggles at the beginning and gets very low grades, D's and C's and even F's as they are in the process of learning, and even on early quizzes when they demonstrate mastery on the test and let's say they get an A on the test, because they have those earlier grades that ostensibly were for assignments and assessments that were on the path to learning, that they were supposed to learn from, and that they weren't even supposed to have learned everything yet, when we include those early scores, it pulls down the final grades, so it actually misrepresents the level of mastery that a student has ultimately demonstrated.

The reason why that's so inequitable, is that for the student who, before coming to class, attended summer workshops or had parents who gave them a much richer educational environment because they had the time, and the education, and the money, or the students who had a great teacher the year before, they're going to come in at the beginning of that unit and do much better, and the student who hasn't had those resources and privileges is going to start lower. When you average a student's performance over time, you are actually perpetuating those disparities that occurred before that student came into your class. The alternative then, is that you wouldn't include earlier performances. You would only include in the grade how a student did at the end of their learning, not to include the mistakes they made in the process.

Jill Anderson: Do you see that as the biggest change a school or teachers could make in the process of grading?

Joe Feldman: It's only one of, like a dozen. That's just one example, and that really is just about how you calculate the grade. What's hard about that for teachers to get their head around, is that that's all they've ever known is, I put the numbers into my software, and the software does the calculation, and then poof, out comes a number. What I try and get teachers to recognize and own, is that if they allow the software to do that, that is an affirmative decision that they're making, that averaging a student's performance is the most accurate and equitable way to describe that student, and it's not. Just helping them recognize that they have a choice in how grades are calculated, is a huge step toward really empowering teachers and giving them a greater sense of ownership and responsibility over how they grade. But there are many other practices.

Jill Anderson: Right. Some of the things I was reading about, doing away with extra credit, making homework not something that counts toward the final grade, and really reevaluating how teachers look at class participation, all these sort of extras that usually play into a student's grade. Can you talk a little bit more about some of those items, because that's big, to do away with some of that stuff, or look at it completely differently?

Joe Feldman: Yeah, and I think what you sense, is that this can be very disorienting to teachers and cause a lot of disequilibrium, because it is helping them see that the practices that they believed were right may actually be hurting students and giving inaccurate information. This is often very difficult and exciting work for teachers.

One category is to not include a student's behavior in their grade. In many classrooms, teachers use grades as a classroom management strategy, and as a way to incentivize students to do behaviors that the teachers believe will support learning. An example is, in middle school we want to teach students that they need to bring their materials every day. What we will do is we will give them five points, up to five points each day if they bring their notebook, their pen, their calculator, et cetera. Teachers do this, because they believe that those kinds of skills are really important for students to be academically successful. The teachers are absolutely right that those skills are critical.

The problem is that when you include student behaviors in the grade, you start to misrepresent and warp the accuracy. An example is a student every day brings their notebook and pen and they get five points every day, but they do poorly on the quiz or the test. What happens is, is even though they may have gotten a C or a D on the test, because they brought the materials every day, or because they've raised their hand and asked a question every day, or because they are respectful, or turn things in on time, they're getting all these points that are then lifting that C test grade to a B or even an A minus.

The big problem with that, well, there are several, one of which is that you're miscommunicating to the student where they are. You're telling the student that they're at a B level in your content, and they're actually at a C. So they don't think there's a problem, the counselors don't think there's a problem, the parents don't think it's a problem, and the student goes to the next grade level and gets crushed by the content, because they have no idea that they weren't prepared for the rigor of that class because they kept getting the message that they were getting B's.

A second big problem with including behavior in the grade for things like participation, is that often the way that teachers interpret student behaviors are through a culturally specific lens. Like whose norms are the teachers applying when they are grading students on their participation? We have to recognize that students learn in a variety of ways, many of which are not the ways that we learn. Just because a student isn't taking notes doesn't mean that they're not learning. And conversely, just because a student is taking notes doesn't mean they're learning. What we are doing is that we are grading a student on acting as if they are learning. They are going through the motions of learning, whether or not they actually learned or not, and we're rewarding or punishing them. The only way to know whether a student has actually learned is to assess them, not to examine and try and subjectively evaluate a behavior. That's sort of one category.

The other is around homework. First of all, I want to clarify, it's not that homework is optional. Homework should still be required and expected, but it's just we wouldn't include the student's performance in their grade. The way I like to think about equitable grading is that we want it to have three pillars. The first is that the grades are accurately describing a student's academic performance. The second is that the grade is bias resistance, so it counteracts institutional biases and protects grades from being infected by our implicit biases, so institutional and implicit biases. Thirdly, we want it to be motivational, to build student's intrinsic motivation, not extrinsic.

All right, so I'm going to walk through homework, and talk about why our traditional use of incorporating a student's performance on homework and their grade violate each of these. The first is around accuracy, so we don't know who did the student's homework, frankly. Many students particularly, well actually across all spectrums, they copy, as part of the partnerships I have with schools when we do this work is I interview students, and I have never had a student tell me that they have not copied homework. It happens and when I ask them why, they say, well, if I don't know how to do something, I need help, or I forget and I need help. The bottom line is if I don't do this, I won't get the points. Students are copying other people's homework. When we include a student's performance on homework in the grade, we may be including other students, or tutors, or parents performance in a grade. We just never know. So it challenges the accuracy.

It also does what I mentioned before. Many teachers will say, well, I don't want to grade the homework for accuracy. I'll grade it for completion. Just if the kid tried, I don't care if they got answers wrong. Then what you're doing is the same thing I mentioned earlier, which is if a student doesn't know the answers on the homework but they try every day and they don't know it on the test, then all those completed homework assignments that gave them five points for each one is going to inflate the test grade. So you're going to again, warp the accuracy.

Okay, so bias resistance. Well, we know that homework is often a filter for privilege, that students who have resources at home, whether they be internet access, or caregivers who have a college education or who have time to help them, settings that have a quiet space to do work, students who don't have other responsibilities like taking care of siblings or having jobs, those students are more likely to complete homework compared to the students who don't have those resources. When we include a student's performance on homework in the grade, we are rewarding students who have those resources and punishing those who don't.

The third part is around motivation, the third pillar is motivation. The reason we assign homework in the first place is because students need practice. If they do this practice, they will then be able to perform on the test, and we actually want them to make mistakes on homework, because if there's any place that you should make mistakes in your learning, you should do it when you're practicing like on homework. If we say to students, you should make mistakes on homework, that's where you should make them, and we include their performance on that homework in the grade we're telling them make a lot of mistakes and we're going to punish you for it, which is totally confusing and undermines our messaging.

We also have to recognize that students understand the relationship between practice for no points or no reward, and then being able to perform later for the reward. If I 36 out and shoot free throws for two hours because I'm practicing, I know that I'm not getting any points for that, it's that I do those practices so that when I get to the

game I can make the points. Students understand it on video games, I go to these sandbox areas and I'm just playing and practicing and making a lot of mistakes and I'm not getting any points, but I do it so that when I go and fight the boss monster, I can beat the boss monster, right? They understand means and ends of practice perform. Every student in performing arts get to too.

But we in our traditional thinking about grading have detached the purpose of homework from its outcome. So we say don't do homework for you, do it for me, because I'm the teacher, I'm going to give you points for doing it, and then later you'll be able to do well on the test. Instead we can reconnect the relationship and say, the reason you do homework is not for me, you do it for you, because when you do the practice, you do better on the performance.

Teachers initially are very worried about this and say, oh, I don't give students points for homework, they won't do it. Sometimes that happens, and there's an initial dip, but then teachers start spending time helping students see the relationship between the homework and the tests. They will give them a quiz, and if students don't do well on it, they will say, well, let's look at which homework you did and, oh, I'm going to put up a little chart on the board that shows that of the students who did the three homework preceding the quiz, their average grade was a B plus or A minus, and the students who didn't do it, their average grade was a D. What do you think is going on students? Then they can even say to students, let's look at the quiz and look for where there were examples in the homework that showed up on the quiz, right. Helping students recognize the connection between the two.

What teachers find is that students then do their homework for no points, because students have internalized the relationship between the homework and the test, and teachers are shocked that students do homework and they cannot believe that they had for years and years been essentially managing students' behaviors and rewarding them little chits for doing what they asked. And frankly, it's a much more empowering and 21st century skill to recognize when I need to practice something, and only do the amount of homework that I need so that I'm ready for when the test comes, because after all in post secondary education and in the professional world, nobody is giving you any value for the work you do outside of class. It's all up to you to decide how much you need.

Jill Anderson: I mean, you hit on something about teachers struggle with these changes a lot. Why do you think grading is such a sensitive topic for teachers?

Joe Feldman: It's funny. When I was a principal, grading was the most difficult conversation to have with a teacher. Administrators I talked to all over, whether they be at the elementary, middle, or high school, or district level, they're all frustrated with how grading is addressed, and the inconsistency and the problems that that generates. But it's so difficult for them to broach the subject. I think what it's about is that especially today, there are so many demands placed on teachers, and expectations and mandates from multiple layers, right? The school districts, state, federal and all kinds of roles they have to serve. I think grading is really the last island of autonomy that teachers have. That it is the one place where they can bring their full professional judgment and expertise in a formalized way, and in a way that perseveres and stays with students. I mean, it is the sort of the kind of core of their power, for many teachers their identity.

When people start to push against that, it can be very hard for teachers to hear it, and teachers justifiably get very defensive oftentimes. You know, when a principal comes up and says to a teacher, I'd like to talk to you about grading, the teacher's reaction is not, oh, let's have a good intellectual discussion. It's what teacher called you? Or what parent called you? Or what grade do you want me to change? Or that kind of thing. The way that I encourage principals, school leaders, and district leaders to do this work, is to create areas for teachers to explore the practices on their own. Not to come in and say to teachers, hey, you know what? Starting next year we're not going to include homework in the grade anymore. It's too jarring, too much of a power play for the school leader. Instead, there have to be ways that teachers can explore and better understand these practices themselves because when they start trying them, they find great results.

Jill Anderson: This isn't a case of, go in as a principal and say, we're going to do it differently next year. This is ease into type of change.

Joe Feldman: Well, and I think it really should be teacher driven. Some teachers will start to look at these ideas and examine their practices and run a hundred miles an hour, and other teachers will be much slower to it, for all kinds of reasons. I think that the job of a school leader is to create those spaces, and that energy, and that tailwind, to say that this is a big enough issue for us. If we are committed to equity as we are in our school, this is perhaps one of the last frontiers that we have to tackle if we're really serious about this.

When that happens, I think teachers start to get some energy, and buy in, and start to see the relationship, and are motivated to push for changes in their practice. What we've seen when we partner with schools, and usually we go through a series of workshops over the course of the year, and teachers get a lot of chances to try lots of things, but at the end there is this body of evidence that is in a school context or a district context, where teachers have found that with our students, when we use these practices, we get better results. The idea is that there starts to be this groundswell and consensus around, yes, we have enough evidence now, that we need to not average performance over time or other practices.

Jill Anderson: Is one of the results of this, the evidence that you see about students beginning to not be obsessed with the grade?

Joe Feldman: You're right. Many students, most are very concerned with their grade. Parents and caregivers put a lot of pressure on a lot of students around the grade, and it holds a lot of currency and social status for some groups. Grades are one of the primary elements in some of the major decisions that we make about students, including college admissions, scholarships, financial aid, whether they get certain opportunities in school, whether they're athletically eligible, even in some States the insurance rates are based on the grades that students get, and work permit eligibility, and so even family income can be implicated by grades that students get. There is a lot of pressure to get grades.

What this work does is it helps students understand and get more ownership over their own grade. And it's not about amassing as many points as possible. It's not just trying to just do whatever you're asked to do, and if you jump through all the right hoops, by whatever means possible to get as many points as possible, you'll get the higher grade. The grade is really based on what you know, not all the stuff you do.

When teachers start using these practices, the ones we've talked about, and some others, students start to A, relax more in class. They don't have to perform perfectly every day and do every activity, because every activity is counted and do every homework perfectly. And teachers talk about how the rooms feel less stressful.

It also helps students, one of the things we haven't talked to them, which is how teachers can then be more transparent with their expectations. Instead of saying if you want an A, you have to get 80 points out of the 94 on the test. They say in order to show an A on this particular standard or this skill, it looks like this, and a B looks like this in a C level looks like this. Which then makes it very clear to students and explicit, of what do I have to know and be able to do to earn a particular B or A? What level of mastery must I demonstrate?

Students will then start to use, instead of the language of points, which is what we've taught them since fourth grade and fifth grade, is that school is about amassing points. Instead of saying, I'm two points away from an A, they will say, if I can just apply negative exponents to the quadratic formula, I'll be able to get the A, which is music to teacher's ears, right. They want students to talk about their learning in the language of the subject. When we stop using a lot of these traditional practices, we make it so that students feel like the grade is something that's so clear to them, and the path to getting the grade they want is right in front of them. There's a great quote that is, "a student could hit any target that it's clear to them and doesn't move." What equitable grading is, is setting these targets so that they're clear and don't move.

Jill Anderson: What has the response been from parents, and some of the schools where you've been working to help implement these strategies?

Joe Feldman: Teachers are nervous that parents won't like these ideas, because after all, parents have grown up in the traditional system too and they know the rules of the game. When you suggest, particularly for higher income and higher educated, and more active parents, when you say you're going to start changing the rules of the game for their children, teachers are nervous that the parents will get very upset. Initially parents are skeptical, like I figured out the rules there's a lot at stake here and so don't change the rules.

Teachers have found when they start to have these conversations, and part of the work I do with schools also, is to have parent presentations or caregiver presentations, is that they love these ideas, because they know that their kids are overly stressed, and they know that kids who struggle get demotivated very early because their grade becomes un-salvageable, because all the early grades count because we're averaging performance over time or we're collecting the performance over time. They love that homework now is not included in the grade, because it gives the student more responsibility. I mean they think these ideas are wonderful.

When I first started this work, I actually wasn't sure it would work. I hired an external evaluator very early to look at the grades that teachers were assigning before and after using these practices. What we've found consistently across schools, whether they be middle schools, or high schools, or schools that serve lots of low income kids, and kids of color, or suburban predominantly white students and high income, is that the percent of A's that teachers give decreases because there's not so much inflation going on around doing all the homework and everything. Interestingly, the decrease in A's occurs most dramatically for white children and higher income children. The A rate of kids of color and low income actually increases a little bit. And conversely, the DNF rate goes down, and it goes down most dramatically for kids of color and low income kids and kids with special needs.

What that illuminates is that the traditional system is weighted against historically underserved and more vulnerable populations. When parents first get lower grades, they get really nervous because, oh my child has been an A forever, and now they got a B in your class, and the teacher's response is, well I'm being honest with you, your child may have actually been at the B level before, but because they were doing all the stuff, and all the extra credit, it was miscommunicating to you what their level of mastery is, and I believe that they still can get an A, but now it's much clear to them of what they have to know and do.

Jill Anderson: What do you say to people who are just against this and say, my kid needs to learn to be adaptable, needs that life skill of figuring out what's going to make one teacher happy over another one, that this will help them as an adult with bosses, all people are different. What do you say to that?

Joe Feldman: I think when parents, and even some teachers say that kids need to be able to shift gears for lots of different people, and the differences among teachers is really important, and we don't want teachers to be all in lockstep. I think that sort of pushes the argument way past where I'm going, and I don't think that every teacher needs to be in lockstep, and in fact teachers doing all kinds of different things, and students are having to shift gears all the time because every teacher has different ways that they have learning in their class, and different ways that they are assessing, and different codes of conduct about how we behave in our class. I'm just saying we don't need to add the additional cognitive load of students having to figure out grading systems as well, particularly when the import of grades is so high on student outcomes and students self image. I mean that's how I would respond to that.

I also think, that when I work with teachers, they tell me, ones that have taught for five or 10 years, or 15 or 20, that learning these things and trying them out and seeing the positive results, creates a whole wave of very powerful emotions for them, from excitement and optimism, to sadness, and shame, and guilt because they think about all the students who they've served before ~~the~~ where they've used practices that may have not been

to their benefit and may have actually harmed them and prevented them from being as successful or misleading them. My response to that is that that is totally normal to feel that way, and that's okay.

We as teachers I think, have to forgive ourselves and give ourselves the license, to when we learn new information, to now be okay with being smarter than we were yesterday and trying these new practices, because we will actually see that adolescents aren't what we thought they were. We thought that they were lazy and couldn't be motivated unless we gave them points. Now we find that actually they're not like that. They can see the relationship between doing homework and doing well on assessments, and they then do their homework without points. Teachers talk about how it sort of reconnects them to why they went into teaching in the first place. They didn't go into teaching so that they could be bean counters and manage every student behavior with assigning or subtracting points. They went into teaching because they want to empower students over their learning, and help students see the path to success that each one of them can have.

Jill Anderson: Joe Feldman is the author of *Grading for Equity*, what it is, why it matters, and how it can transform schools and classrooms. He is also the CEO of Crescendo Education Group, which helps schools improve grading and assessment practices. I'm Jill Anderson. This is the Harvard EdCast produced by the Harvard graduate school of education. Thanks for listening and please subscribe.

IMPLEMENTATION

Learning builds the bridge
between research and practice

By Gene E. Hall and Shirley M. Hord



One indisputable finding from our years of research on what it takes to conduct successful change in schools and colleges is this: Introducing new practices alone seldom results in new practices being incorporated into ongoing classroom practices.

For example, we were dismayed at the recent release of two substantive studies of professional development (to support school improvement in mathematics and reading) that concluded that the professional development in each case was ineffective (Drummond et al., 2011; Randel et al., 2011). However, in both studies, the researchers did not assess implementation. It is hard to imagine how professional development can be judged if its implementation has not been documented. Such work, it would seem, is “the appraisal of a nonevent” (Charters & Jones, 1973).

We are happy to join with Learning Forward in recognizing the imperative of implementation. The Implementation standard states: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

ASSURING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

It has only been in the last decade that we have come to understand the reality that change is based on learning. The profession, the press, and the public cry for school improvement, in order that all students learn to high levels. For school improvement to be realized, the first task is to identify and delete those programs and practices that are not supporting students in learning well. The next step is to find the best solution having the potential to promote quality teaching and successful student learning. After specify-



Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students **applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.**

ing the new practice(s), teachers and administrators must learn what the new practices are and how to use them, and transfer the new way into classroom practice. See diagram on p. 55.

“Change is learning. It’s as simple and complex as that.” This is the first principle in our beliefs and assumptions about change (Hall & Hord, 2011, p. 6). Change cannot occur without professional learning. When educators adopt new and more effective practices, the next step is to develop new understandings and acquire new skills. These new practices, in turn, enable students to reach high levels of successful learning. The seven Standards for Professional Learning are intended make high-quality professional learning a reality.

APPLYING CHANGE PROCESS RESEARCH

Within the Implementation standard is the explicit acknowledgement that findings from change research, including its constructs and measures, can inform efforts to implement the standards. The explicit purpose of the Implementation standard is to ensure that educators address implementation and apply evidence-based strategies. Change research constructs and measures can be used to develop implementation strategies and assess progress.

In many ways, today’s innovations and initiatives represent major change. These changes are complex, subtle, and more sophisticated than we think. Symbolically, it is as if implementers were expected to back up, get a running start, and leap across the Grand Canyon. What is needed is an

Implementation Bridge (Hall, 1999; Hall & Hord, 2011). See diagram on p. 57.

As with real bridges, different change efforts require varying lengths, degrees of stability, and combinations of supports. It takes time to move across a bridge. By assessing how far across the bridge each participant, group, and school has progressed, formative evaluations can inform change leaders of participants’ needs. Formative evaluations are important for assessing progress. Summative evaluations, which assess the effectiveness of the innovation, should only include those participants who have made it all the way across the bridge.

When change is assumed to be an event, there is no bridge. Implicitly, adopters of the new approach are expected to make a giant leap across a chasm. With today’s complex innovations, the chasms are likely to be deep and wide. Attempting to jump across these chasms is most likely to result in injury and failure. This is true for individuals, schools, school districts, and larger systems.

The diagram on p. 57 presents the Implementation Bridge, a metaphor for moving from the earlier or less advanced stages to the later or more advanced stages of the three diagnostic dimensions of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM): Stages of Concern, Levels of Use, and Innovation Configurations. Each of these CBAM elements is an evidence-based construct with related measuring tools that can be used to assess how far across the bridge each individual, school and/or district has progressed. Each can be used alone or in various combinations to measure imple-

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School Improvement

Change

Learning

mentation progress and as diagnostic information for planning next action steps to facilitate moving further across the bridge. Each also is important in summative evaluations. These three tools, individually and collectively, can be applied to implementation of the Standards for Professional Learning.

The following are brief descriptions of each of these diagnostic dimensions. More can be learned through the study of key texts (Hall & Hord, 2011), various technical documents, and related training resources.

Stages of Concern addresses the personal/affective aspects of change. There is an array of feelings, perceptions, worries, preoccupations and moments of satisfaction for those engaged with implementing new approaches. This personal side of change is important to understand because failing to address concerns can lead to resistance and even rejection of the new way. A set of categories, or “stages,” of concern has been identified. As a change process unfolds, these different Stages of Concern can increase and decrease in intensity.

At the very beginning of a change, most participants will be **unconcerned**. Their attention will be on getting through the school year and planning for summer. These participants are not on the bridge. They may be aware that they are approaching a bridge — “I heard something about some sort of new standards, but I am really concerned about . . .” — but it is not something that needs to be thought about currently. However, the change process leaders should be doing things to address this concerns stage — for example, providing general information about what will be happening.

As participants begin to step out on to the Implementation Bridge, **self** concerns become more intense. “What do these new standards mean for me?” This, too, is a time when more

information should be provided. It also is important to be reassuring: “You can do this. We are here to support you.”

As implementers move fully onto the bridge, **task** concerns become most intense: “I am spending all my time organizing materials and trying to schedule everything.” These concerns should be anticipated and addressed in the implementation plan. How-to supports, including coaching and timeline projections, should reflect the understanding that these concerns can last several years.

When implementers make it across the bridge, **self** and **task** concerns should decrease while **impact** concerns should increase. “I am seeing how my use of the these standards is making a big difference in the knowledge and skills of teachers and school leaders. You can now see the results in what students are doing.” How leaders address the potential arousal of impact concerns can make all the difference in ultimate implementation success and effectiveness.

There are two other CBAM constructs and measures that can be applied with the Implementation Bridge metaphor.

Innovation Configurations (IC) address the well-documented fact that each implementer does not necessarily use the same operational form of the change. Those involved may say they are using “it,” but what is in operation within each classroom and school can be significantly different. In our first study of this phenomenon, teachers in different states claimed that they were team teaching. But the configurations of teaming were quite different. The number of teachers (two to six), the

When implementers make it across the bridge, self and task concerns should decrease while impact concerns should increase.

grouping of students (fixed, heterogeneous, homogenous), and what teachers taught (all subjects, one subject) were components that varied. Each combination of these variations results in a different Innovation Configuration — what the innovation looks like in practice — with different teachers and in different schools.

In recent years researchers have become very interested in fidelity of implementation. Innovation Configurations is a way to describe and contrast different implemented forms of an innovation. With the Implementation Bridge metaphor, there should be increasing fidelity in terms of Innovation Configurations as implementers move further across.

Levels of Use is the third construct from change research to consider. Traditional research and program evaluation designs assume a dichotomous population: treatment group and control group, or users and nonusers. Levels of Use describes a set of behavioral profiles that distinguish different approaches to using an innovation. Three different nonuser profiles have been described and five different user profiles. Each of these has been defined in terms of behaviors and each has implications for how to facilitate change and for evaluating change success and effectiveness.

For example, educators at **Level 0 Non-use** are not doing anything related to the change, in this case the new professional learning standards. They don't talk about it, they don't check it out on the web, and they do not attend an introductory meeting. This behavioral profile is different from the person at **Level I Orientation**, who asks questions, attends the introductory meeting, and considers use of the innovation. Both of these levels represent people who are not using the change. However, in terms of facilitating a change process, the interventions that should be emphasized for each are quite different.

Among the Levels of Use, one that is particularly important is **Level III Mechanical Use**. This is an approach where the

implementer is disjointed in what he or she is doing. Implementers at this level continually check back to the user manual, their scheduling is inefficient, they can't plan beyond tomorrow, or anticipate what will happen next week. We know from research that most first-time implementers will be at Level III Mechanical Use. We also know that many will continue to be at this level through the first two or three years of implementation. If the inefficiencies of Level III use are not addressed, then the Implementation Bridge can become very long, and some

Providing feedback about how the change process is unfolding is important. Each of the CBAM diagnostic dimensions described here can be used to measure how far across the Implementation Bridge each teacher, school, or district has progressed. The same constructs and data should be used as feedback to leaders and implementers. These data can be used to plan next steps.

implementers will jump off.

There are many implications of Level III Mechanical Use. One that will be particularly important with the new standards is deciding when and with whom summative evaluation studies should be conducted. Change research has clearly documented that most first-time users will be at Level III Mechanical Use. These are not the implementers who should be included in a summative evaluation study. They are inefficient and have not reached full understanding of how to use the new way. Summative evaluation samples should be comprised of implementers who have made it across the bridge. They have established routines and can predict what will happen next. This behavioral profile is **Level IV-A Routine**. When summative evaluations include many first-time users, it is not surprising that there are no significant differences in outputs.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Another key theme in the Implementation standard is providing constructive feedback. Providing feedback about how the change process is unfolding is important. Each of the CBAM diagnostic dimensions described here can be used to measure how far across the Implementation Bridge each teacher, school, or district has progressed. The same constructs and data should be used as feedback to leaders and implementers. These data can be used to plan next steps for making further implementation progress. These data also can be used in reports about implementation progress. In addition, these same data can be used in summative evaluations that relate the extent of implementation to outcomes.

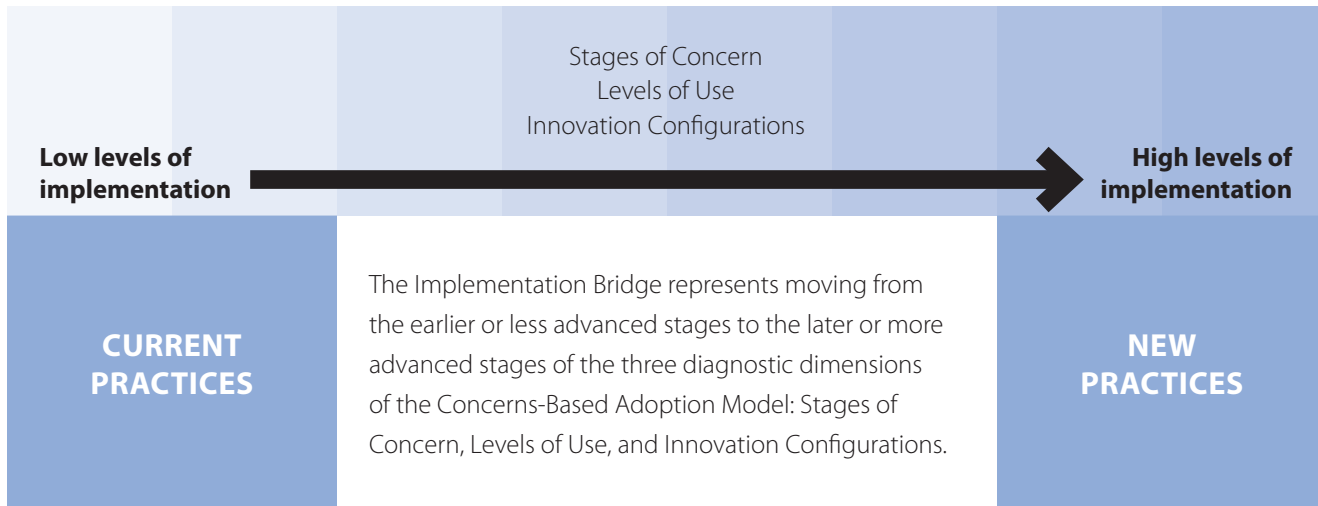
Assessing implementation at regular intervals and providing feedback to all participants are important keys to implementation success.

SUSTAINING CHANGE BEYOND IMPLEMENTATION

We know a lot through research, practice, and theory about how to launch a change process, facilitate movement across an Implementation Bridge, and assess implementation progress and evaluate innovations. What we know less about are the essential elements and processes that are necessary to sustain long-term use of an innovation. Getting across the bridge is necessary, but what are the processes and structures that assure

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continuing use of high-fidelity configurations, in this case, of the standards? How do we prevent abandonment? Addressing the sustainability challenges of the latest standards will need special attention.

One indicator of sustainability will be when the implemented Standards for Professional Learning have a line item in the school or district budget. Another will be when it becomes regular practice for new staff to have access to learning and development. Still another important indicator will be that the process and criteria for succession of principals and relevant staff at the district office includes evidence of their understanding and interest in supporting professional learning through the standards. Above all, school and district leadership will provide continuous attention and direct the attention of others to the standards' value. These leaders become the internal and external champions for sustaining the standards and a continued focus on professional learning.

Supporting and celebrating the standards and their practices are keys to the standards' robust sustainability and the capacity to contribute richly to the ultimate goal — student learning success.

We see this standard as uniquely significant in that the standards revision architects explicitly identified the importance of addressing implementation. A strength of the Implementation standard is its reference to change process research that can be applied to assessing and guiding the implementation of professional learning. Understanding that change begins with the learning of educational professionals is crucial. Only through increasing adult learning will we increase student learning.

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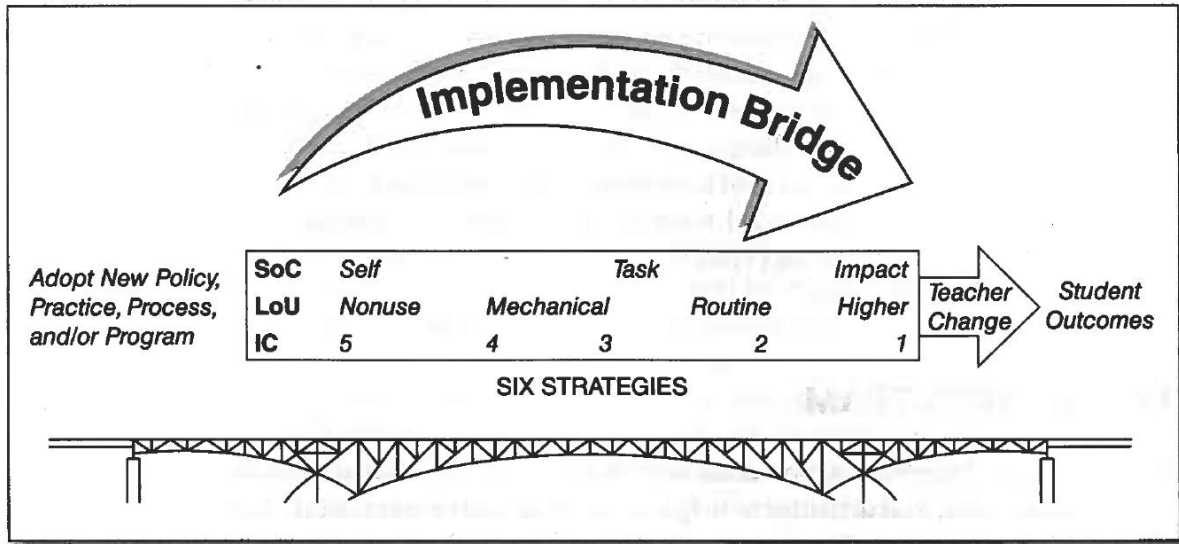
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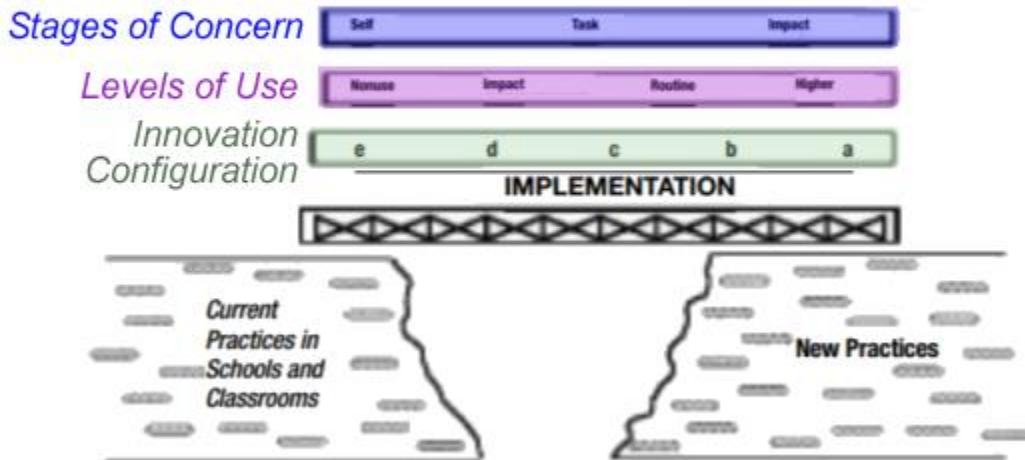
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The Implementation Bridge



Source: Adapted by James Roussin from Hall (1999).

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