



Charting a Course to Standards-Based Grading: What to Stop, What to Start, and Why It Matters

Tim R. Westerberg

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What's the best way to ensure that grading policies are fair, accurate, and consistent across classrooms? How can schools transition to a grading system that better reflects what students are actually learning? Tim R. Westerberg makes this journey easier by offering a continuum of options, with four "destinations" on the road to improved grading and assessment.

Destination 1 critically examines such popular grading mechanisms as the zero, extra credit, the "semester killer" project, averaging, mixing academic performance with work ethic, and refusing to accept late work, and explains how they undermine objectivity and instead result in widely divergent grades for comparable work—with major consequences for students.

Destination 2 invites educators to put assessment and grading into the larger context of a districtwide guaranteed and viable curriculum and lays out the organizational conditions and necessary steps to accomplish this goal.

Destination 3 brings parents and others on board with a multiyear implementation plan and community engagement strategies for introducing report cards that indicate student achievement by standards rather than—or in addition to—letter grades.

Destination 4, competency-based education, involves a total rethinking of the nature and structure of school, leading to individualized education for all students.

However far they choose to go, administrators and teacher leaders can turn to *Charting a Course to Standards-Based Grading* for the quick wins and long-term support and guidance they need to make the trip well worth the effort.

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