



Continuum Questions About the Purposes of Grading

The “Continuum Exercise” from the School Reform Initiative (<http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/>) is used to organize this activity. The purpose of this activity is to begin to explore beliefs about grading and reporting and to think about how this process could be used with teachers, students, parents, and community members.

Here are a set of continuum statements for the activity. It is best to have many more statements ready to go than are needed, then adjust based on the group’s discussion.

One side of Continuum	Other side of Continuum
Everything I get from students goes in the gradebook and is counted	Only summative assessments should count towards the course grade
If everybody earns high grades that feels like grade inflation	If everybody earns high grades that feels like successful instruction
Let me grade my own way (responsibility of the individual teacher)	Grading should be uniform across the school
Teachers are responsible for student learning outcomes	Students are responsible for what they get out of a class
Students need opportunities to retry assessments until they get it right	Redos give a message to students that they don’t have to do things on time because they will always get another chance
The primary audiences for the message conveyed in grades are students and their parents. Teachers, administrators, and other educators are secondary audiences.	The message conveyed in grades are equally important for students, parents, teachers, administrators and other educators
Giving out zeros and other low grades to students prompt them to work harder	Giving out zeros and other low grades to students is primarily demotivating to students
Grades should provide a basis for differentiating students	Grades should NOT provide a basis for differentiating students
Grade distributions should resemble a normal bell-shaped curve	Grade distributions should NEVER resemble a normal bell-shaped curve
Students should receive one grade for each subject or course that averages all of the contributions to that grade	Students should receive grades on individual standards and work habits within each course