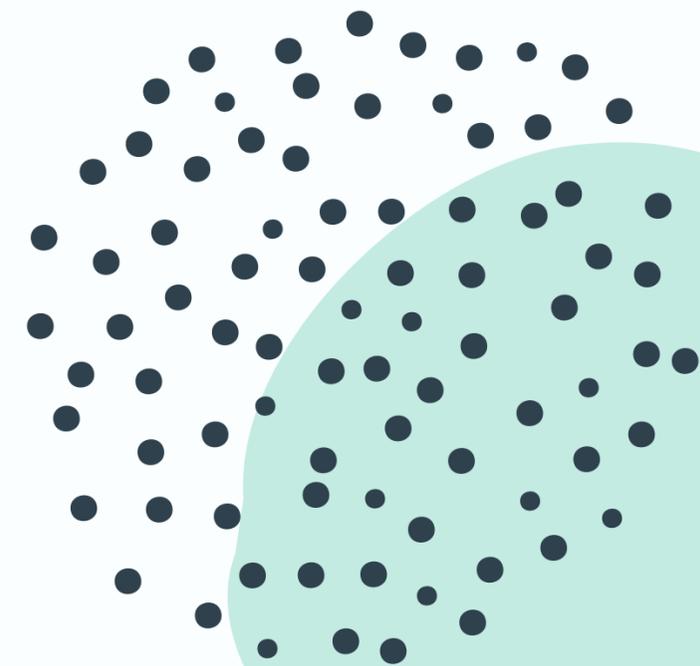


GRADING FOR EQUITY

By Joe Feldman

MAINE DOE
BOOK STUDY
DAY

2



Today's Webinar

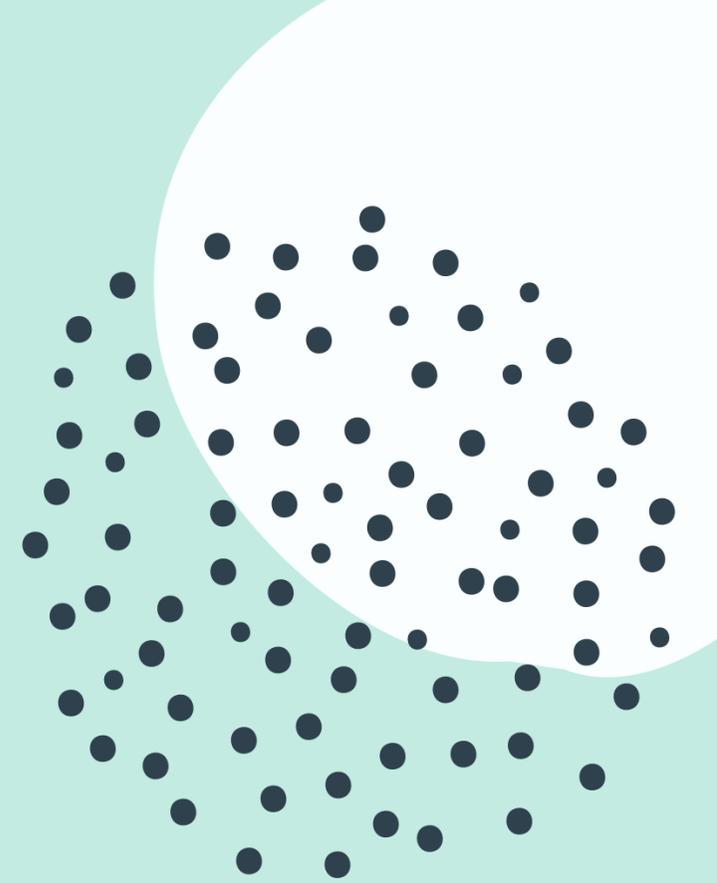
CHAPTER REVIEWS & DISCUSSIONS

Chapter 3:

How Traditional Grading Stifles Risk-Taking
and Supports the "Commodity of Grades"

Chapter 4:

Traditional Grading Hides Information, Invites Biases,
and Provides Misleading Information

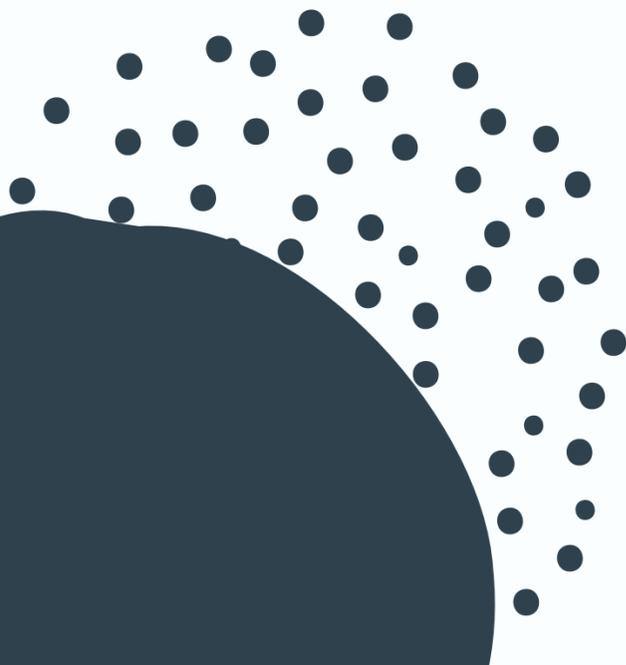


Grading for Equity
by Joe Feldman

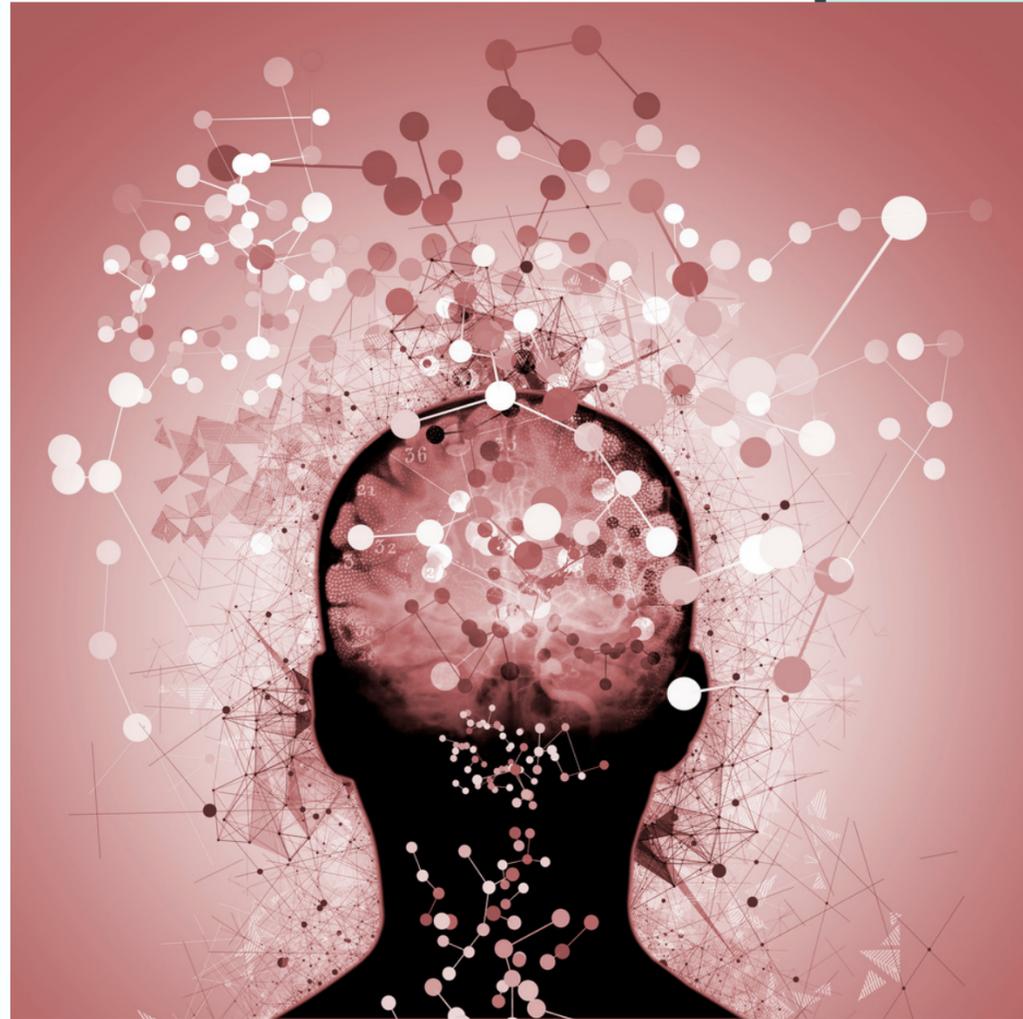
Guiding question:

ALL
↓

What's best for students?

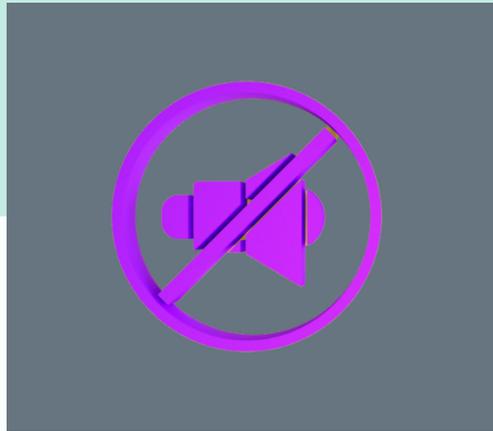


GRADING FOR EQUITY
BOOK STUDY



*"As we learn new ideas, let us be
OPEN,
HUMBLE,
HONEST, and
FORGIVE OURSELVES
if we weren't aware that things
could be different."
(Feldman, 13).*

AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS



Shorter Presentations

Mute
Video off



More breakout
group discussions

Video on
Share the air



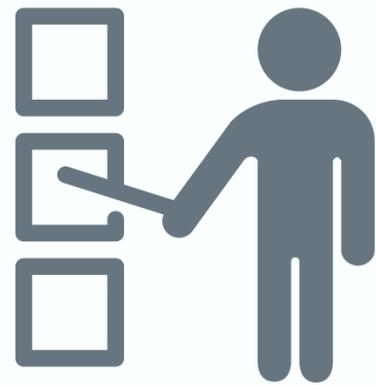
Chat box

Thoughts
Questions
Epiphanies

Break out Groups

Factors for Success

4 people
8 minutes



Facilitator



Timekeeper



Video on & unmute
Introduce yourself

“Generous authority”

from Priya Parker The Art of Gathering interview on Brene Brown's Unlocking Us podcast



4 people
8 minutes

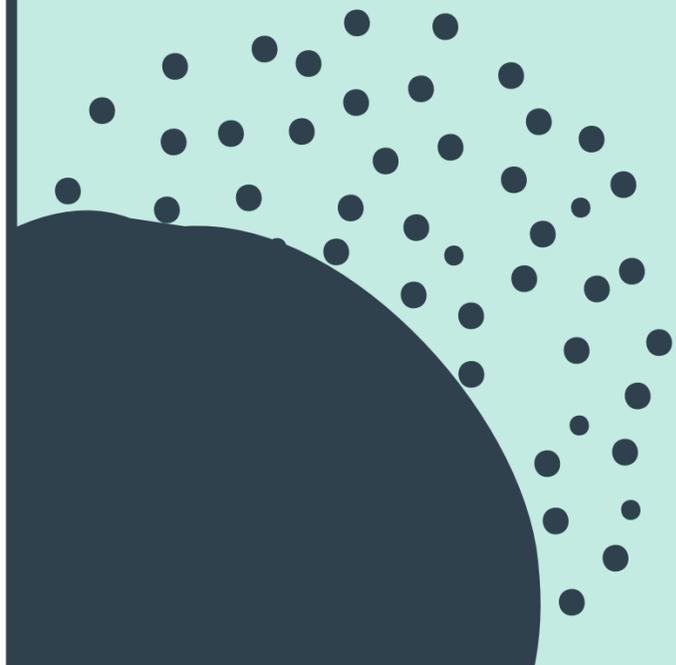
Discussion Question #1

Reflect on your reading up to this point.

What has changed, challenged, or confirmed
your thinking?

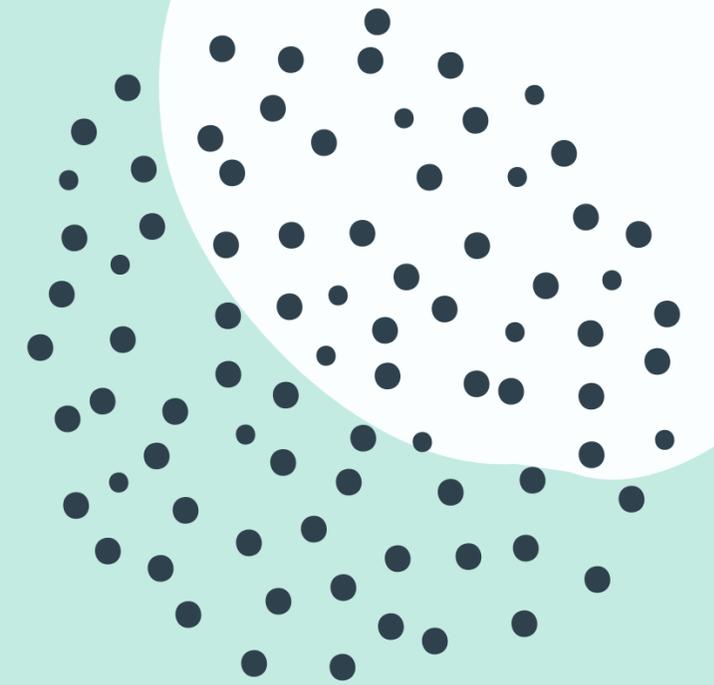
Groups of 4, 8 minutes to discuss, 2 minutes each!

PART 2 | THE CASE FOR CHANGE



INTRODUCTION
TO THE CASE FOR CHANGE

20th Century Beliefs

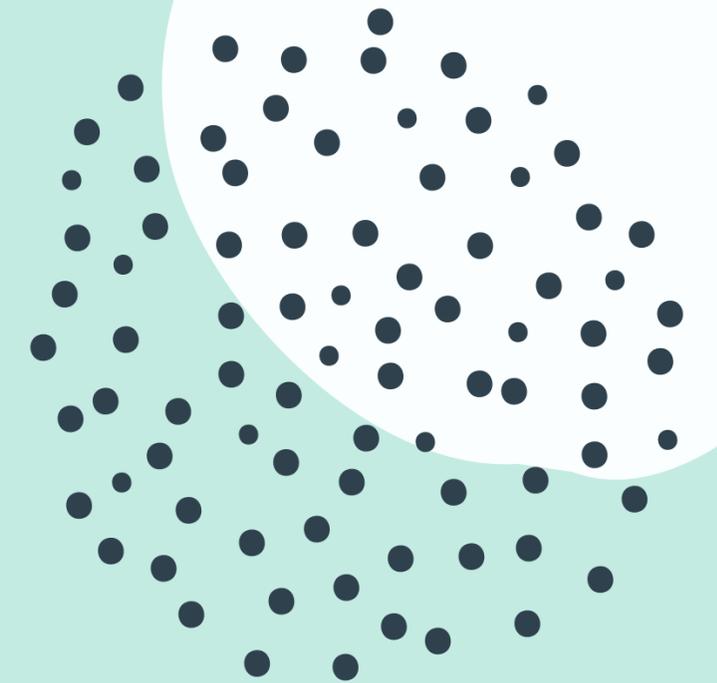


Student achievement on a curve

Students motivated through
extrinsic rewards & consequences

Key purpose of schools
to sort students

21st Century Beliefs Have Changed



All students capable of meeting academic standards

Extrinsic motivation for rote behaviors
but intrinsic motivation
better for higher-order thinking

Schools should not sort students



Yet—

**GRADING SYSTEMS HAVEN'T
CHANGED MUCH**

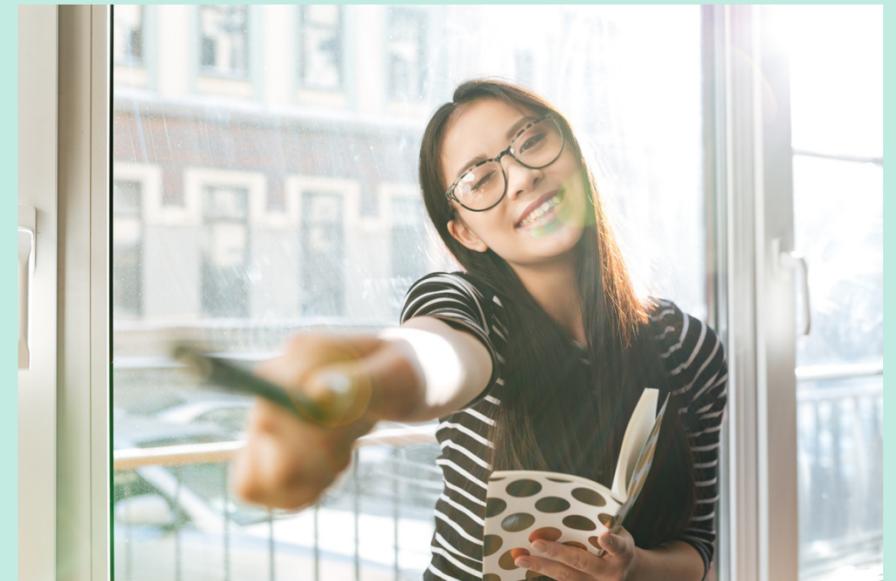
*and there is
"no meaningful research to
support it." (Marzano, 2000)*

CHAPTER 3

HOW TRADITIONAL GRADING



STIFLES RISK-TAKING



AND SUPPORTS THE
"COMMODITY OF GRADES"

CHAPTER 3: SECTION 1



RISK-TAKING, TRUST, AND THE
TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

Chapter 3 | Risk-Taking, Trust, & the
Teacher-Student Relationship

HOW DO WE BUILD TRUST?



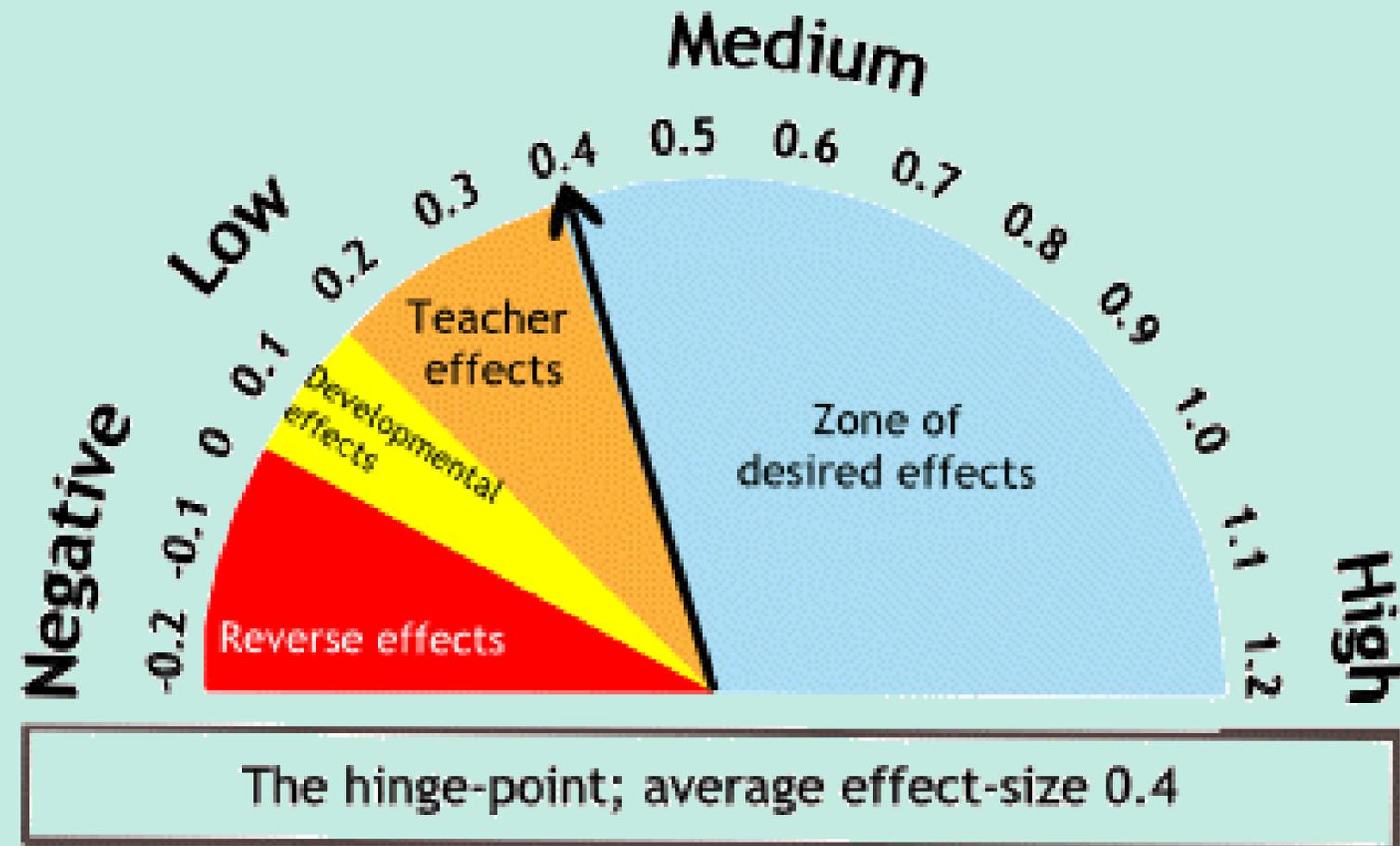
Chapter 3 | Risk-Taking, Trust, & the
Teacher-Student Relationship

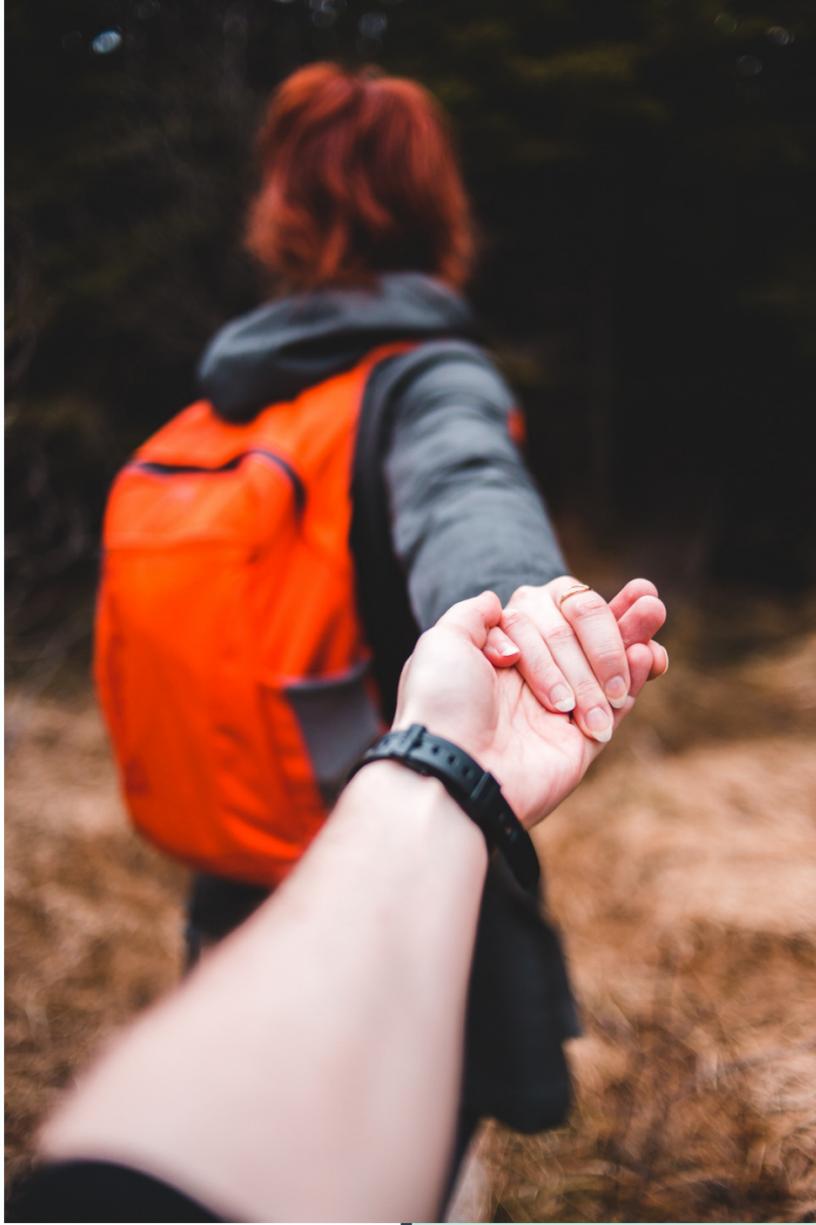


**THROUGH
POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS
& INTERACTIONS
WITH STUDENTS**

John Hattie's research

**POSITIVE
TEACHER-STUDENT
RELATIONSHIPS=
.55 EFFECT SIZE**





POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

“It is teachers who have created positive teacher student relationships that are more likely to have the above average effects on student achievement.” (John Hattie)



POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS IMPROVE:

Engagement

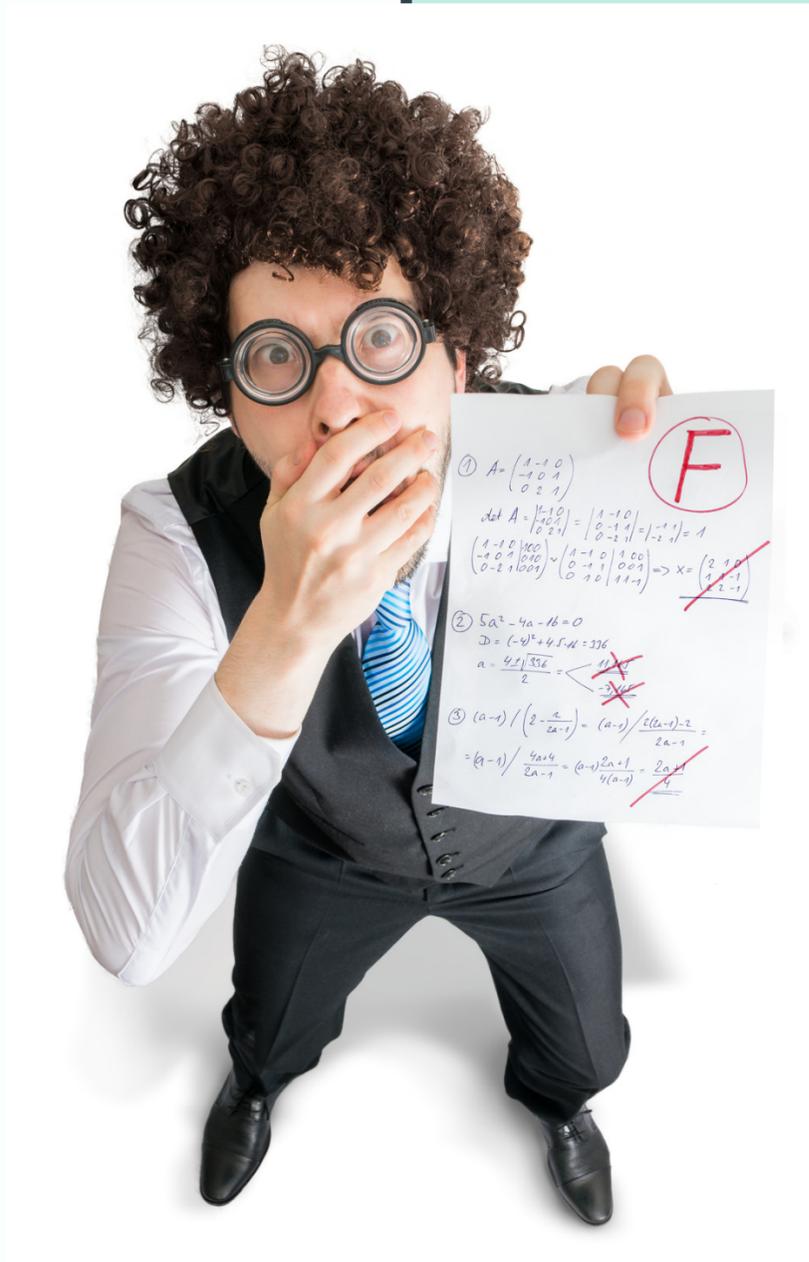
Motivation

Academic Achievement

(Research by Delpit, Hattie, Noddings, Pianta, Wentzel)

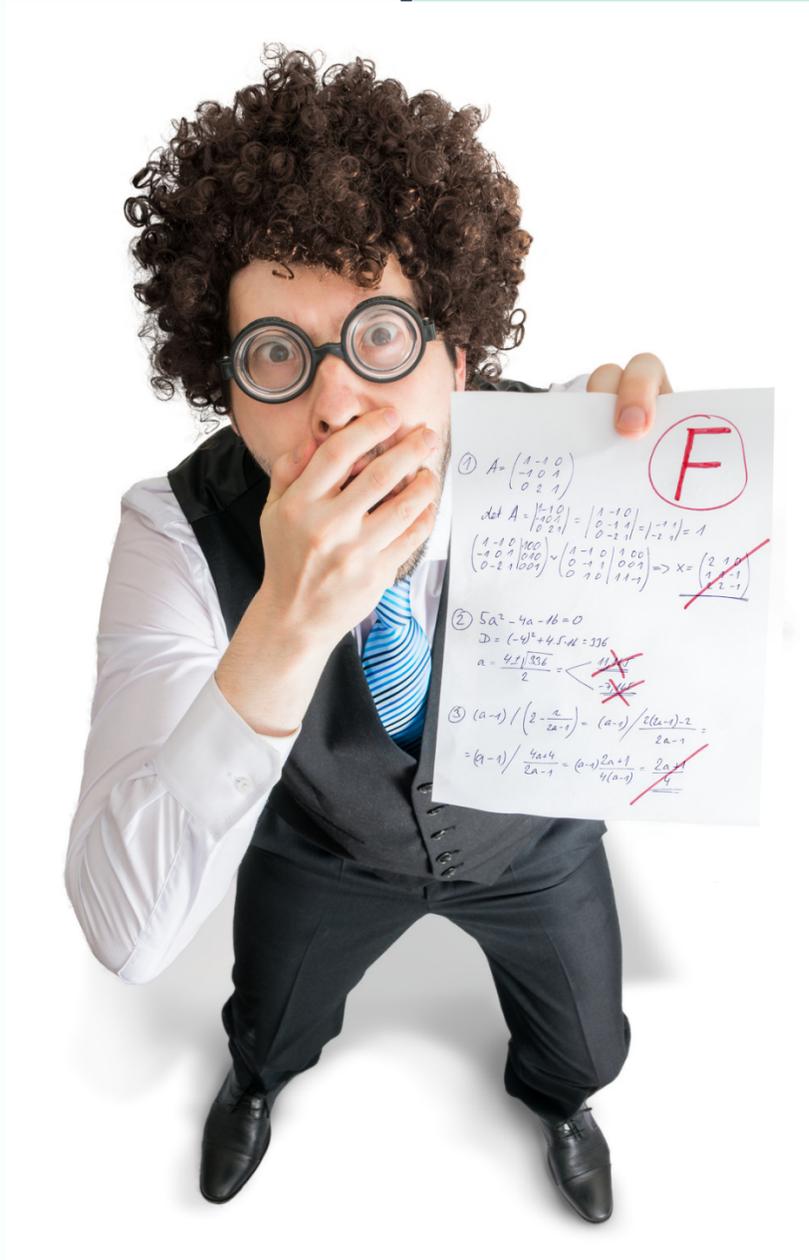
**POSITIVE
TEACHER-STUDENT
RELATIONSHIPS=
STUDENT'S FEEL SAFE TO
TAKE RISKS AND MAKE MISTAKES**





Yet—

**WHEN WE GRADE EVERYTHING
THROUGHOUT THE LEARNING
PROCESS STUDENTS FEEL:**



Judged
Pressure to be Perfect
Anxious
Overwhelmed

"The message when everything is included in the grade is clear: You are always being judged and must show your absolute best performance in every respect—academic and nonacademic—every day.

If you make a mistake, or even are just having a bad day, it's going to count against you.

There is no room for error, no safe place to make mistakes."

(Feldman, 32)

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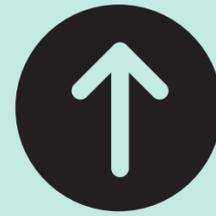
***If you make a mistake,
or even are just having a bad day,
it's going to count against you.***

***There is no room for error,
no safe place to make mistakes."***

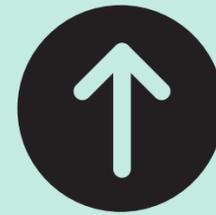
(Feldman, 32)



Grading can undermine the teacher-student relationship, leading to distrust—



Deceit--Copying & Cheating



Shame--Avoidance

"Most of us entered teaching to build meaningful relationships with young people, to engender in them a sense of trust and safety by accepting mistakes along a path to proficiency..."
(Feldman, 32)

"...but our traditional grading encourages us to judge nearly everything a student does or doesn't do, and we create pressure-cooker classrooms where no mistake goes unpenalized."

(Feldman, 32)

"...but our traditional grading
encourages us
to judge nearly everything
a student does or doesn't do,
and **we create
pressure-cooker classrooms
where no mistake
goes unpenalized.**"

(Feldman, 32)



4 people
8 minutes

Discussion Question #2

How does the element of trust in the student-teacher relationship influence a student's approach to the learning process, particularly for historically underserved student populations, and how does our traditional grading impact that trust?

CHAPTER 3: SECTION 2



THE "COMMODITY OF GRADES" &
EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Chapter 3 | The "Commodity of Grades"
and Extrinsic Motivation

HOW DID GRADES GET SO VALUABLE?



Grading throughout Schooling



EARLY ELEMENTARY-

Teacher feedback verbal:
encouragement, supportive
correction, reflection.



LATER ELEMENTARY-

Teacher feedback shifting to currency
of points: categorizing, tracking
achievement.



MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

Grading as economic system:
points w/incentives
and penalties



TEACHERS BELIEVE:

"Point economies are a vital incentive and feedback mechanism to help students successfully meet class expectations."

(Feldman, 34)



But—

**USING POINTS TO MOTIVATE
ASSUMES EXTRINSIC
MOTIVATION IS MOST
EFFECTIVE TO PROMOTE
LEARNING**

*Remember Skinner
and Behaviorism?*



Today—

**OUR UNDERSTANDING OF
MOTIVATION HAS EVOLVED**

Extrinsic motivation works
for menial/repetitive tasks,
NOT for higher-order thinking
and creativity.

Learners throughout Schooling



EARLY ELEMENTARY-

Curious,
innate interest in learning
and growing

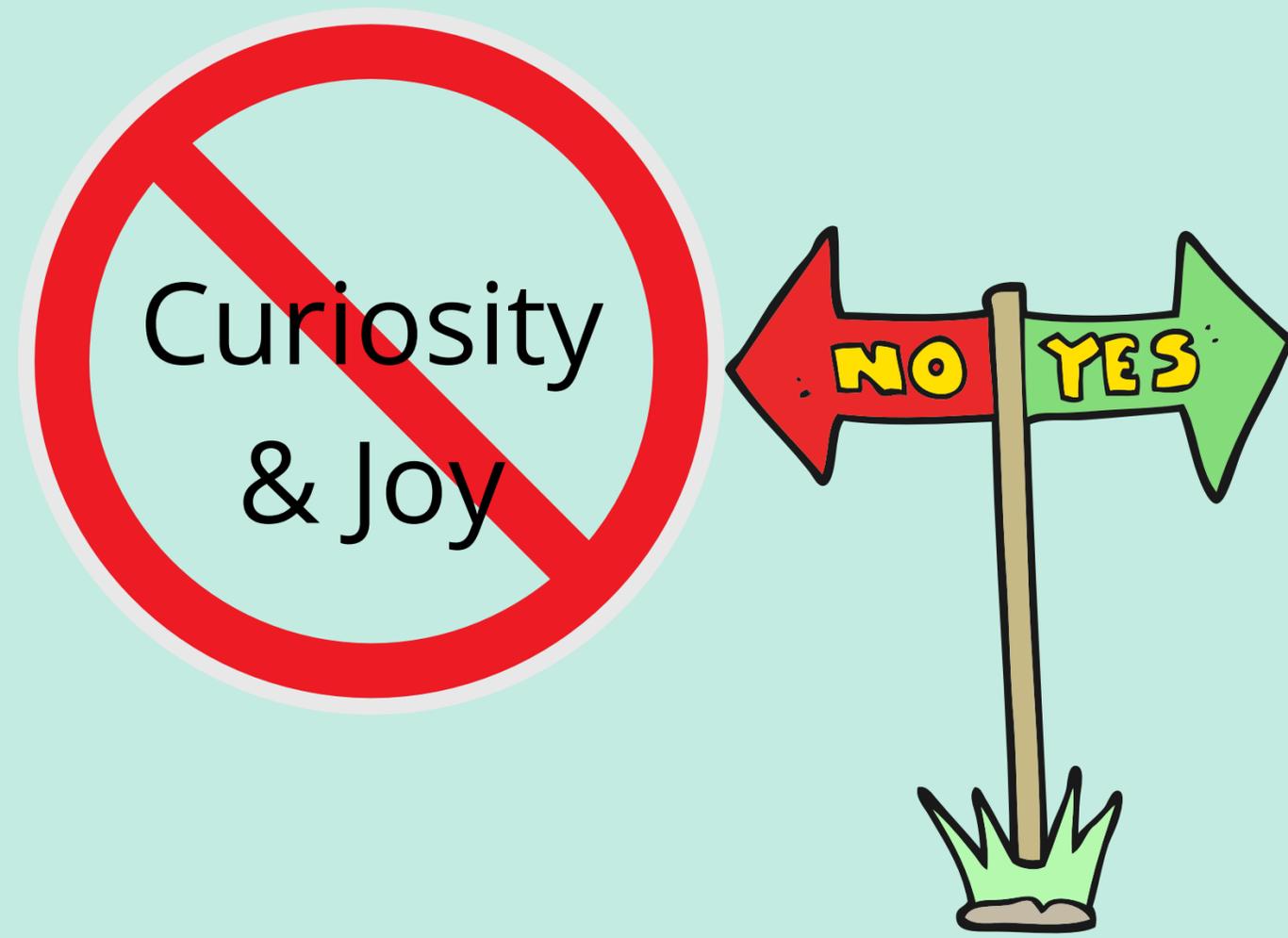


MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

"How many points
is this worth?"

- Bargaining over points
- Pleading not to lose points
- Requests for extra credit

As a measure of learning, grades:





The teacher becomes the Federal Reserve of the classroom



Can "print" more currency

Can inject more points into the
classroom economy when needed.

Chapter 3 | The "Commodity of Grades"
and Extrinsic Motivation



**"WE PREACH
THE GOSPEL
OF LEARNING,
BUT WE MAKE STUDENTS
GENUFLECT
TO THE ALTAR
OF POINTS."
(FELDMAN, 35)**

**POINTS = POWER
& THE POWER
IS HELD BY THE TEACHER**



THE TEACHER'S GRADING POSITION OF POWER DECREASES STUDENT TRUST & RISK-TAKING



**WE OFTEN USE THE
EXTRINSIC
MOTIVATION
OF POINTS
EVEN MORE
WITH STUDENTS:**

- FROM LOW INCOME FAMILIES
- WHO HAVE STRUGGLED ACADEMICALLY
- WHO HAVE BEEN HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED

**WE TRY TO BRIBE
STUDENTS WITH POINTS**



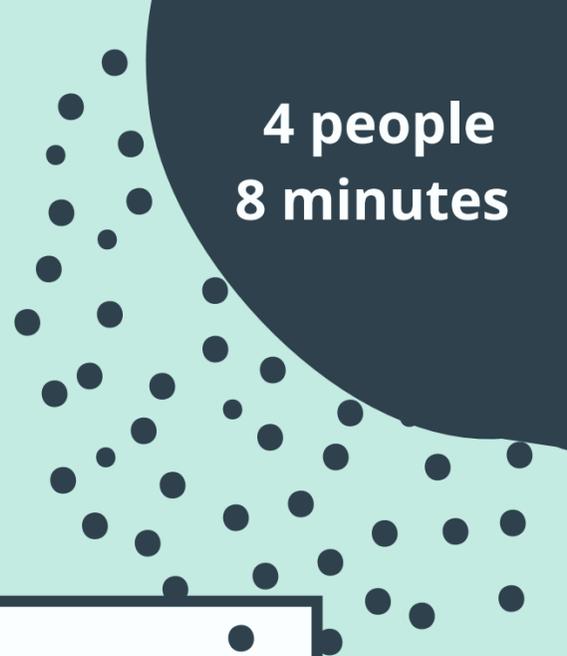
**BUT THIS ONLY CREATES
THE ILLUSION OF
ENGAGEMENT & MOTIVATION**

"Using only extrinsic motivation incentives to inspire learning is a form of educational engineering that implicitly views students as inferior, inert, and in need of motivation. Such an orientation dims our awareness of learners' own determination and promotes their dependency."

(Dr. Margery Ginsberg, 2015)

We complain that some students only care about points or we wish we had more trusting relationships with students, but "our approach to grading may be to blame."

(Feldman, 37)



4 people
8 minutes

Discussion Question #3

How effective is the use of grades/percentages/points for students who are the least motivated & engaged?

How might the use of points—the addition and subtraction throughout a student's day—affect those students' relationships w/adults and their self-concept about whether school is "for" them?

FINAL WORDS
CHAPTER 3

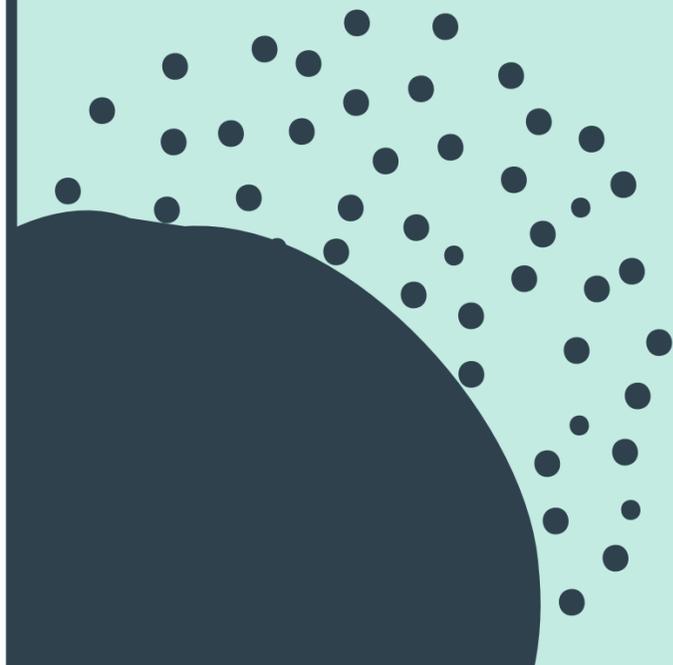
No Significant
LEARNING
Occurs without
a Significant
RELATIONSHIP!

- Dr. Comer

CHAPTER 4

TRADITIONAL GRADING:

- **Hides information**
- **Invites biases**
- **Provides misleading information**



CHAPTER 4 | TRADITIONAL GRADING HIDES
INFORMATION, INVITES BIASES, AND PROVIDES
MISLEADING INFORMATION



TRADITIONAL SINGLE-LETTER GRADES:

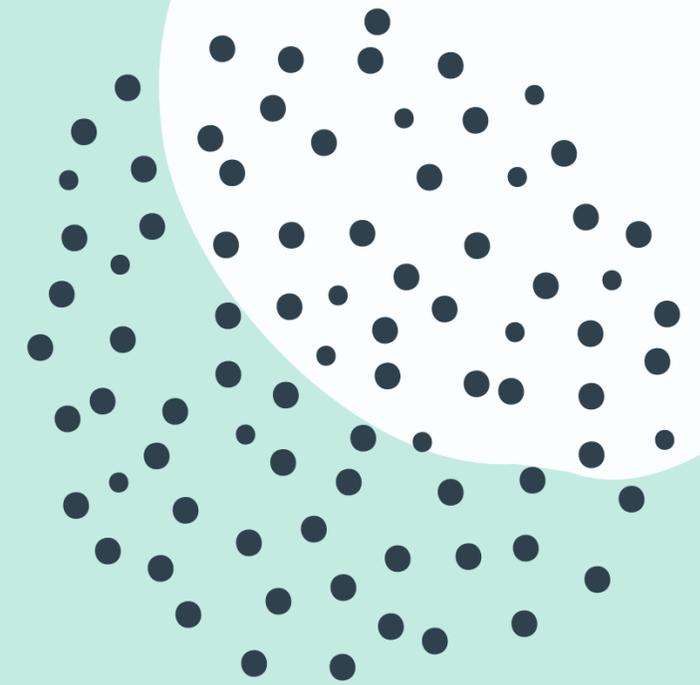
Overly complicated and
inappropriate mathematics

Idiosyncratic teacher hacks

Variance & unreliability
create frustrations
for students

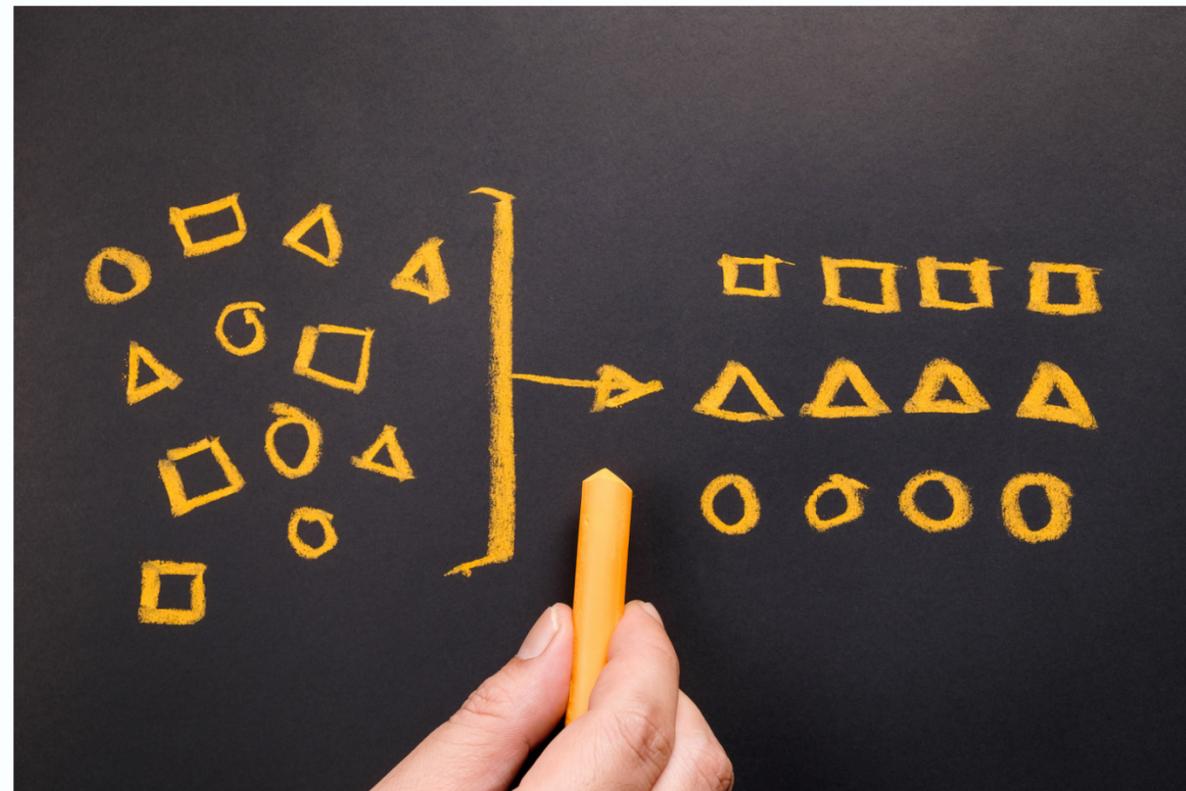
Letter grades

GRADING SCALE	
A	93-100
B	85-92
C	75-84
D	70-74
F	0-69



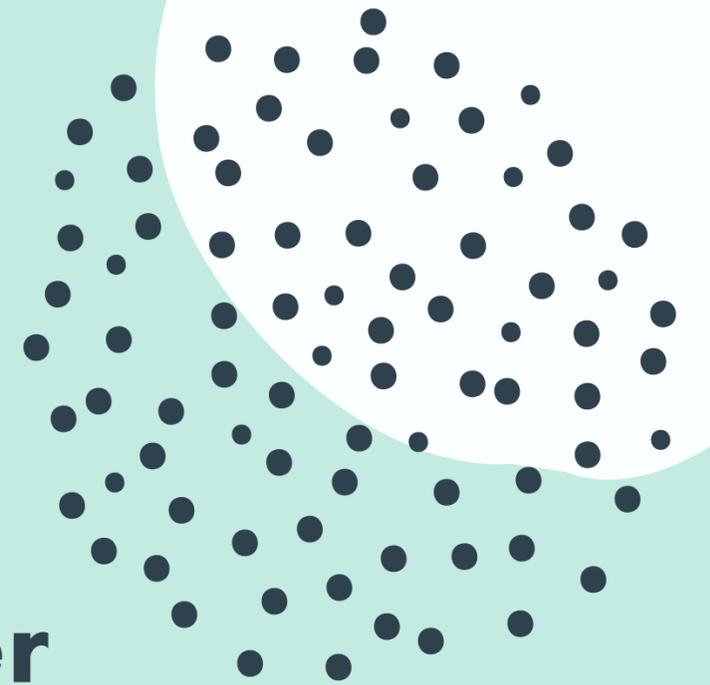
Include:

- Content knowledge
- Skills
- Behaviors
- Subjectivity
- Bias

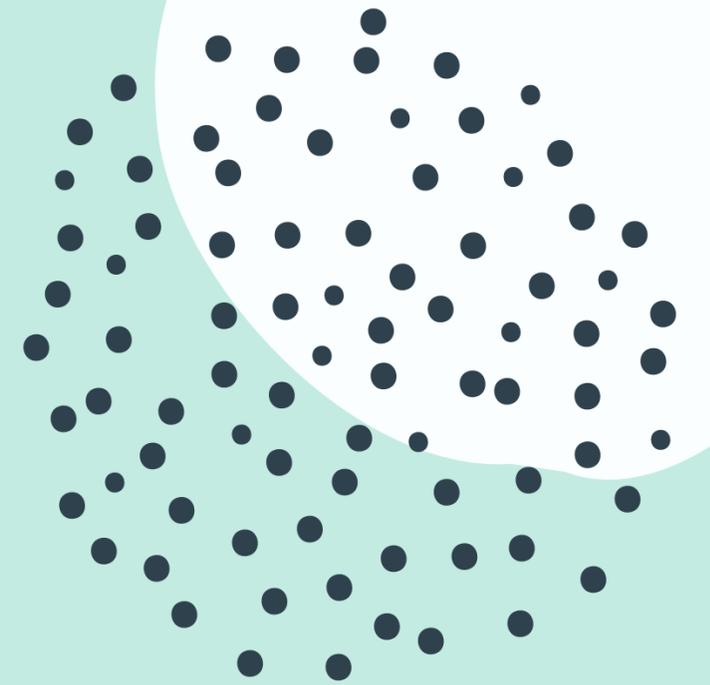


Typical teacher grade categories:

- Homework
- Tests/Projects
- Classwork/Activities
- Participation



Flawed lens when behavior is included



Not just WHAT
the teacher observes,
but HOW she interprets
what she observes.

Teacher observation

Student not talking during group work...

Student interrupting...

Student doodling during lecture...

Flawed?

Did the teacher look at the wrong time?

Is this disrespect or engagement?

Is this off-task or focused?





Implicit Bias

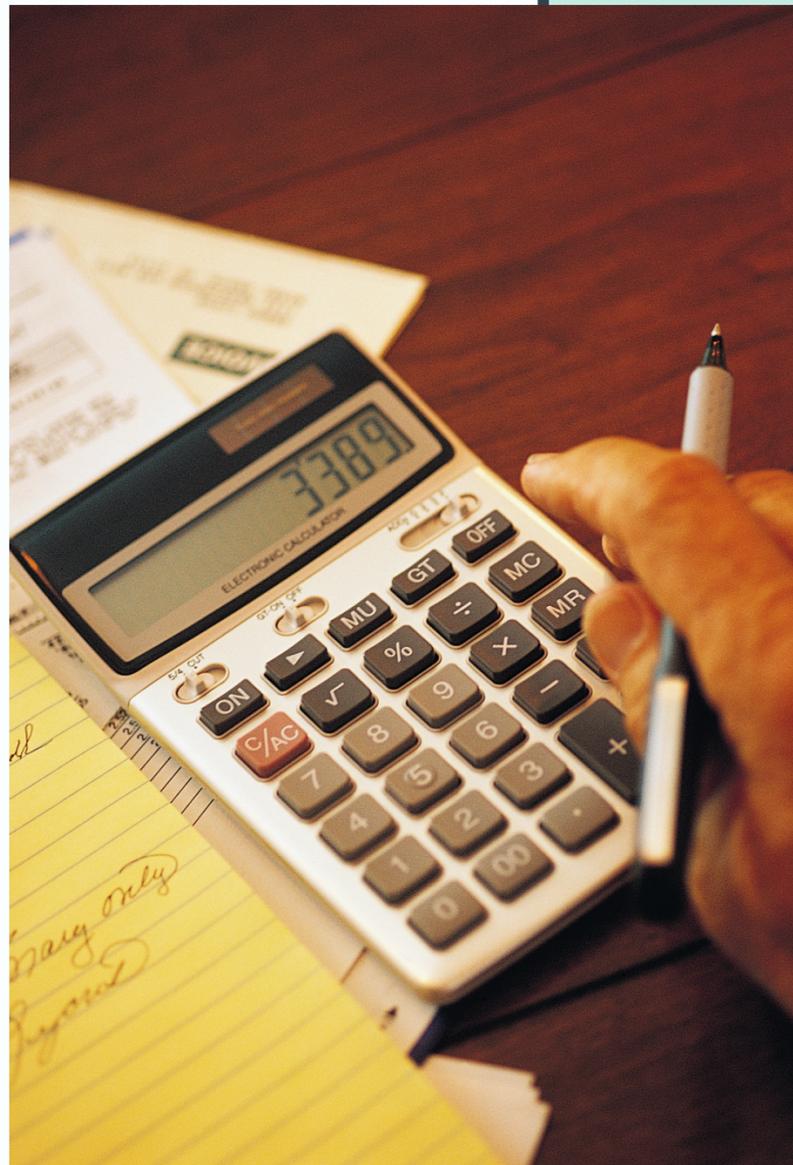
OUR ASSUMPTIONS & BELIEFS

*These "color our interpretation of
that person's action"*

(Feldman, 42)

"White teachers can misinterpret African-American students' behaviors, incorrectly believing them to be signs of disrespect or stemming from some evil intent or judging it to be inappropriate because the teacher comes from a different cultural background in which that behavior is less familiar or accepted"

(Feldman, 44)



**Subjective
awarding or subtracting for points
on behavior
stigmatizes students,
and harms academic success**

*Researchers Gershenson, Holt,
Papageorge, 2015
(Feldman, 45)*



"If we can't stop our implicit biases, can teachers, particularly for those of us who are white teachers, limit the opportunities to perpetuate inequities through our racial biases?"

(Feldman, 42)

The 1st step is





**The 2nd step is to
RECONSIDER policies
that invite bias
to operate.**



4 people
5 minutes

Breakout Discussion #4

What confidence or uncertainty do you have that two teachers in your school would assign the same grade to a student? Why is that? With what biases might this be connected?

5 minutes to discuss--1 minute each



The "Omnibus" Grade

**TOO MUCH INFORMATION IN
ONE SMALL CONTAINER**

**But these
create..**

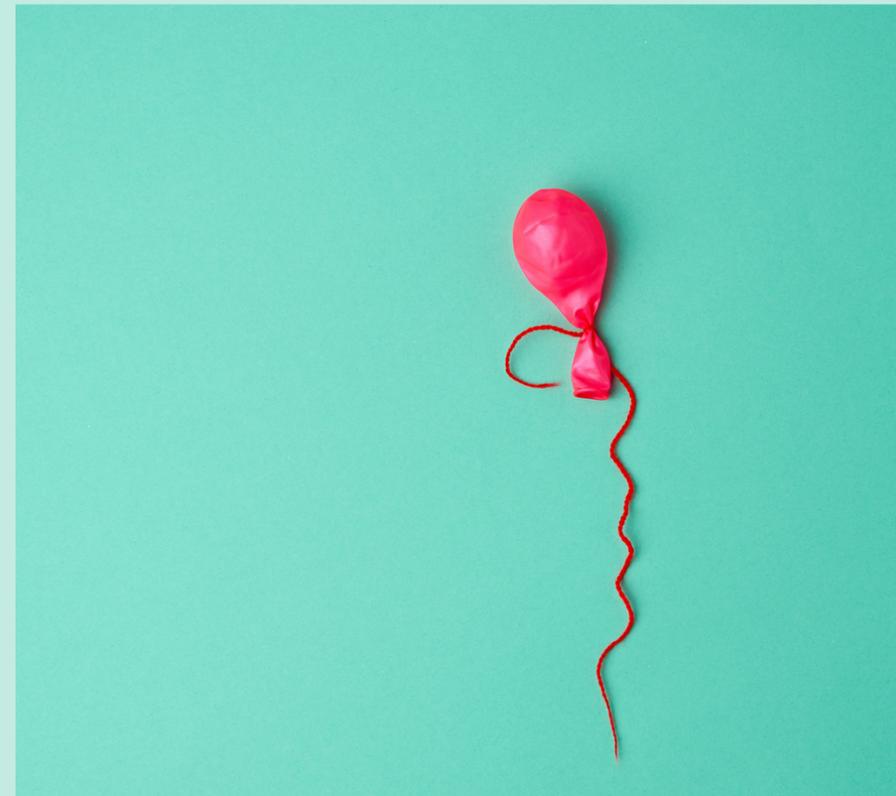


INFLATED

&

DEFLATED

GRADES



Tangela

On time

Often incorrect

INFLATED

by work ethic

Isabel

Always late

Always correct

DEFLATED

by work ethic

	CATEGORY WEIGHT	TANGELA'S CATEGORY SCORE	TANGELA'S WEIGHTED CONTRIBUTION
Homework	30%	80%	.24
Tests and Projects	40%	60%	.24
Class Activities	20%	90%	.18
Participation	10%	100%	.10
Total Weighted Percentage			74%

	CATEGORY WEIGHT	ISABEL'S CATEGORY SCORE	ISABEL'S WEIGHTED CONTRIBUTION
Homework	30%	60%	.18
Tests and Projects	40%	90%	.36
Class Activities	20%	70%	.14
Participation	10%	60%	.06
Total Weighted Percentage			74%

(Feldman, 49)

Compliance rewarded over competence

Tangela

On time

Often incorrect

INFLATED

by work ethic

*Tangela's academic weaknesses
overshadowed by work ethic,
doesn't get the support she needs*

Isabel

Always late

Always correct

DEFLATED

by work ethic

*Isabel learns it's not about what you know
but what the teacher wants
becomes less engaged/invested*



Grade Hacks

**MANIPULATING OUR
GRADING PROGRAMS**

Retroactively make changes to scores

OVERALL	S1 Q1:.	Objective Su...	12 Editing for...	11 Notebook...	10 Reading P...
Calc.	Calc.	55 PTS	1 PTS	10 PTS	10 PTS
96	98	55	1	10	8
83	73	39.5	1	7.5	8
89	90	47	1	10	8
98	94	49	1	10	10
90	85	41.5	1	10	9

drop lowest test score
selectively average scores

create extra credit

"curve up" scores

"bump up" for effort/growth

"end of term" fudge

"The problem is that each teacher solves for weaknesses in our software and our dysfunctional omnibus grade design in unique ways, guided by individual beliefs about what motivates students and what aspects of a course are most important, different levels of technical knowhow and comfort with grading software, and diverse ideas about what students need to learn and how."

(Feldman, 52)





Constraints of traditional grading system

+

***Well-intentioned grading decisions
by teachers***

=

Grade variance & unreliability

Impact of Grade Variance & Unreliability



Difficult for students to navigate

Challenge to keep track of differences between teachers

Creates uncertainty & confusion for students

Students get misplaced in course levels up & down

Distrust among colleagues

Discussion Question #5

12 minutes!

Need a NOTETAKER

to record notes on a Padlet (link in chat)

<https://padlet.com/pattiforster/sdyerrmh5t43vyt>

5 people
12 minutes

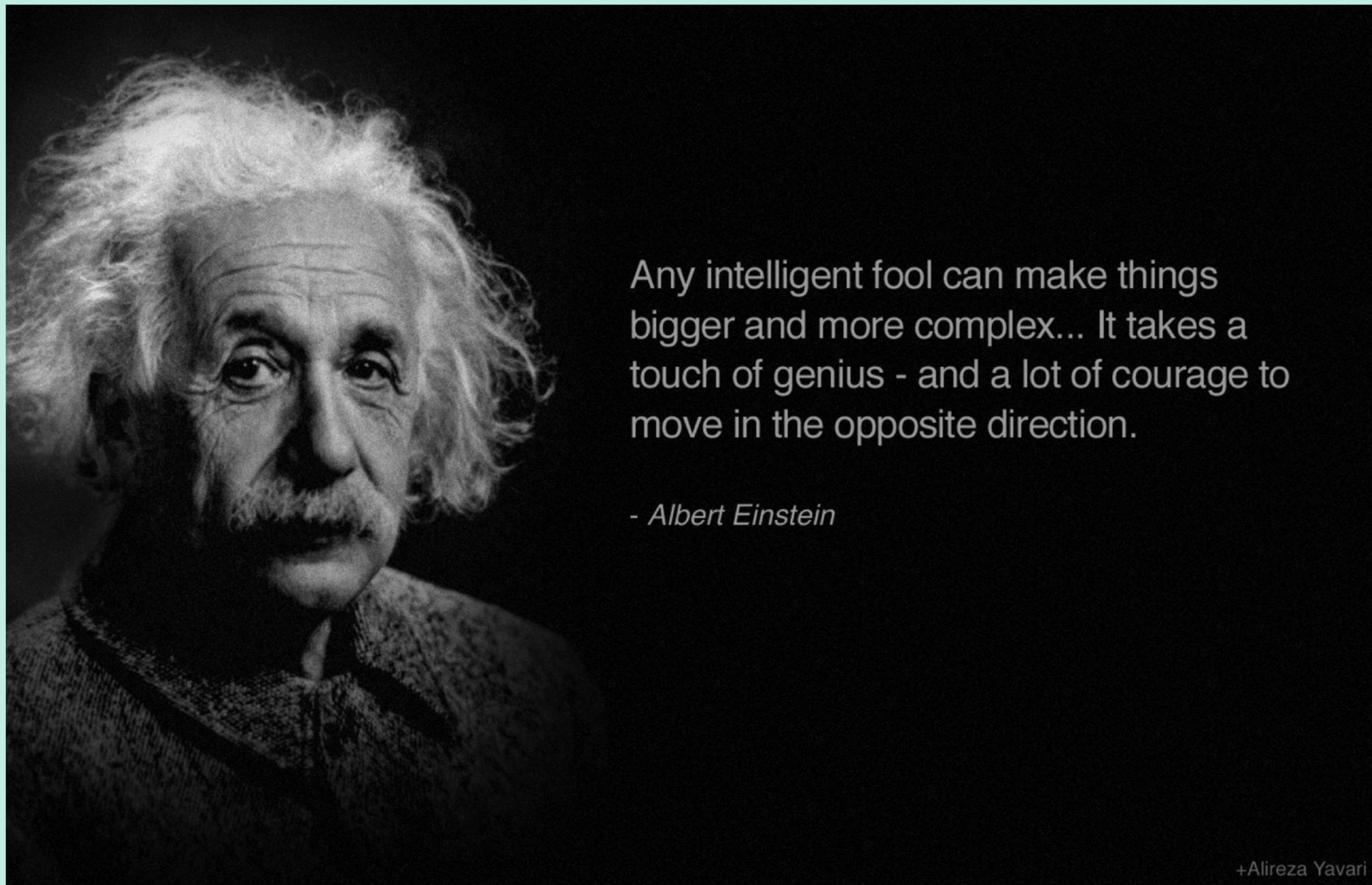
Discussion Question #5

What specifically defines teachers with reputations as "hard" or "easy" graders?

How do students react when they have "hard" teachers?
How do students react when they have "easy" teachers?

How does this impact learning and what does it suggest?

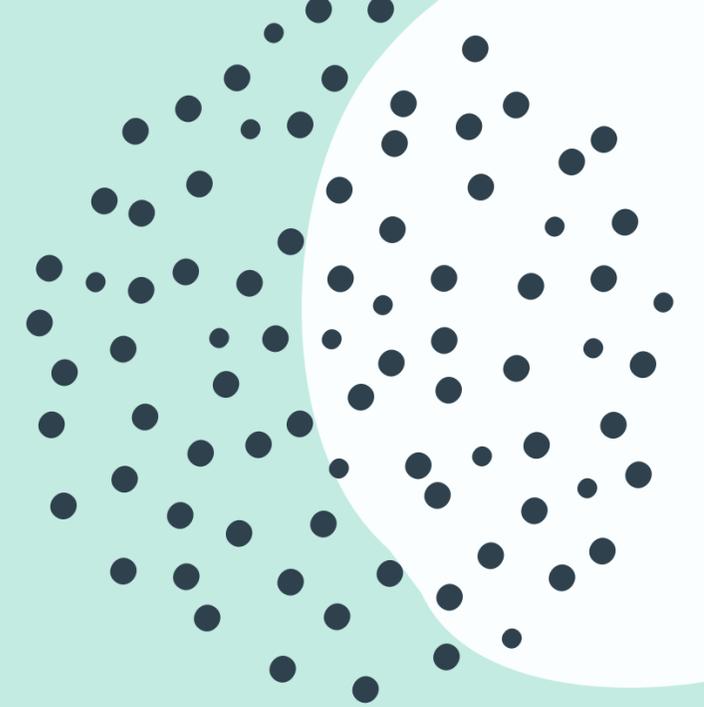
FINAL WORDS



Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex... It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction.

- *Albert Einstein*

Thank you for participating in this learning journey!



NEXT STEP

**Read and Reflect
on Chapters 3 & 4**

NEXT QUESTION

**Why do we let grades
have so much power and
what is the impact of
that power on our
learners?**

NEXT WEBINAR

Thursday, **12/17 @ 3:30pm**
Chapter 5/6 Preview
5: Traditional Grading
Demotivates and Disempowers
6: A New Vision of Grading