

Grading for Equity

CHAPTER 10: PRACTICES THAT VALUE KNOWLEDGE, NOT ENVIRONMENT OR BEHAVIOR (CONTINUED)

KEY IDEAS

*Grades should be based on valid evidence of a student's content knowledge, and not based on evidence that is likely to be corrupted by a teacher's implicit bias or reflect a student's environment.

*Equitable grading that is accurate and bias-resistant includes *nothing other than a student's summative assessment results*.

*Grade to teach students, not to control them.

We encourage you to prepare for engaging in the discussions by completing and reflecting on the assigned chapter(s) in advance, perhaps by marking the text for moments that stood out to you.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

PRE-READING

- How do you count HOMEWORK in your current grading practices? If a student does not complete homework, what is at stake for them? Think about students in your class who routinely do not complete homework. What sorts of things might be stopping students from getting homework done?
- Poll all of your adult friends who are not teachers. How many of them have "homework," that is, work that they have to bring home with them to complete after the work day is done?
- Think about the kind of supports you have in place in your classroom to create an environment that is conducive to student learning. To what extent do all of your students have those same supports in place when they go to complete homework? Are some students advantaged or disadvantaged by things in their environment that might be out of their control?

PILLAR 2

DRIVING PRINCIPLE: "Grades [should be] based entirely on summative assessments, not formative assessments such as homework" (127).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

DURING READING

- According to Feldman, "we can't deduct points for incorrect answers on homework - which penalizes students for mistakes - and at the same time tell students that homework is just practice and that mistakes are a necessary part of learning" (129). To what extent do you agree with Feldman's claim that grading homework penalizes students for learning, a process that is inherently fraught with making mistakes as individuals strive for mastery?
- Feldman argues that teachers actually encourage cheating by awarding points for homework, saying that "they're doing it because they know that they'll be penalized for not doing it, and copying therefore seems to be a reasonable and expedient choice" (136). Have you seen this to be true with your own students? How might you change your grading practices so as not to inadvertently encourage cheating?
- Feldman poses the question, "how do we not disproportionately harm our vulnerable students - those who need more time to do homework or those who have fewer supports and resources outside the school - and who most need the practice that homework is designed to provide?" (138). How might you answer this within the context of your own classroom?