

Grading Smarter, Not Harder

This course is based on the ASCD book *Grading Smarter, Not Harder: Assessment Strategies That Motivate Kids and Help Them Learn* (2014) by Myron Dueck. There are many reasons for educators to consider taking this course. Some districts have taken on grading and assessment changes and this course could help you with specific tools, resources, and research to substantiate and incorporate new methods. Perhaps you want to embark on standards-based grading and need some assistance separating academics and behavior. For others, these learning opportunities may be part of a quest to jump from being a good teacher to a great educator, and this can be a daunting task for anyone. Regardless of your reasons and aspirations for taking this course, this set of readings, videos, assignments, and prompts should be of great value in examining your grading, evaluating assessment, and reporting beliefs and routines. As you start this course, use the journal and other tools to track your questions, concerns, and thoughts. Only when we are reflective and critical in our own learning do we get the most out of any experience.

Course Objectives

Module 1

- Understand the value of targets and how they can form both the starting point and structure of a sound assessment plan.
- Create an effective unit plan that clearly establishes all of the elements that a student will need to know, reason, demonstrate, and produce.

Module 2

- Identify issues involved with the traditional, one-shot unit test structure.
- Identify challenges and corresponding solutions to developing a reassessment structure for unit tests.
- Construct two differently formatted assessments that separate and evaluate the same learning outcomes.

Module 3

- Understand the importance of separating behaviors and academics when reporting student achievement.
- Develop an evaluation tool that will report on behavior without grading it.
- Determine how your grading rules meet the CARE criteria for your students.

Module 4

- Analyze the purpose of homework as it relates to practice, reinforcement, and preparation.
- Develop an in-class assessment procedure that is intended to measure the understanding of an academic element that was reinforced by a homework activity.

Module 5

- Summarize and reflect on why creativity and student ownership is an effective way to increase student motivation, deep content understanding, and engagement.
- Identify a learning outcome that you currently approach in a very traditional manner and use one of the approaches covered in this section to make it more engaging.

Course Syllabus

<p>Module 1</p>	<p>Let's Start with Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Welcome • Reading 1: Unit Plans • Video 1: A Clear Road Map for Students • Reading 2: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—Learning Targets on Parade • Video 2: No Surprises • Knowledge Check • Application: Develop a Student-Friendly Unit Learning Plan • Post-Module Reflection
<p>Module 2</p>	<p>Assessing Understanding of the Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Welcome • Reading 1: Retesting • Video 1: Problems with Traditional Testing Systems • Reading 2: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—Redos and Retakes Done Right • Video 2: Using a Tracking Form • Knowledge Check • Application: Assessing Targets and Retesting • Post-Module Reflection
<p>Module 3</p>	<p>Alternatives to Punitive Grading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Welcome • Reading 1: Grading • Video 1: Why Would You Grade? • Reading 2: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—How Grading Reform Changed Our School • Video 2: Approach to Late Assignments • Knowledge Check • Application: Audit Your Gradebook • Post-Module Reflection

Module 4	Homework That Is Purposeful and Effective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Welcome • Reading 1: Homework • Reading 2: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—No Penalties for Practice • Video: Completion Doesn't Mean Understood • Knowledge Check • Application: Determine Effectiveness of Homework • Post-Module Reflection
Module 5	Creativity—The Missing Link <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module Welcome • Reading 1: Creativity • Video 1: Creativity and Assessment • Reading 2: <i>Educational Leadership</i>—Five Musts for Mastery • Video 2: Major Project Planning Sheet • Knowledge Check • Application: Creativity and Engagement • Post-Module Reflection

References

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