

# A Different Look at Children, School, and Standards: Practitioner Inquiry Series

Traditional grading systems have long been used to assess student learning. However, there is a growing body of research that suggests that traditional grading practices can be harmful to students. Traditional grading systems can lead to students feeling anxious, stressed, and disengaged from learning. They can also lead to students focusing on getting good grades rather than on learning the material.

In this article, we will explore the limitations of traditional grading systems and present alternative assessment methods that promote deeper learning and student growth. We will also provide examples of how these alternative assessment methods can be used in the classroom.

## The Limitations of Traditional Grading Systems

Traditional grading systems typically rely on summative assessments, such as tests and quizzes, to measure student learning. Summative assessments are given at the end of a unit or lesson and are used to determine a student's grade.



## Starting Strong: A Different Look at Children, School, and Standards (Practitioner Inquiry Series)

by Patricia F. Carini

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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There are several problems with summative assessments. First, summative assessments are often not a good measure of student learning. Students may do well on a test but still not understand the material. Conversely, students may do poorly on a test but still understand the material. Second, summative assessments can be stressful for students. Students may feel anxious about not doing well on a test, which can interfere with their learning. Third, summative assessments can discourage students from taking risks. Students may be reluctant to try new things if they are afraid of getting a bad grade.

## **Alternative Assessment Methods**

There are a number of alternative assessment methods that can be used to measure student learning. These methods are often more authentic and engaging than traditional summative assessments. They can also be used to assess a wider range of skills and knowledge.

Some examples of alternative assessment methods include:

- **Formative assessments:** Formative assessments are assessments that are given during the learning process to provide feedback to students on their progress. Formative assessments can be used to identify areas where students need additional support. They can also be used to help students track their own progress.

- **Authentic assessments:** Authentic assessments are assessments that are based on real-world tasks. Authentic assessments allow students to demonstrate their learning in a meaningful way. They can also help students to develop problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills.
- **Performance assessments:** Performance assessments are assessments that require students to demonstrate their skills or knowledge. Performance assessments can be used to assess a wide range of skills, such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking skills.
- **Portfolio assessments:** Portfolio assessments are collections of student work that demonstrate their progress over time. Portfolio assessments can be used to assess a wide range of skills and knowledge. They can also help students to reflect on their own learning.

## Using Alternative Assessment Methods in the Classroom

Alternative assessment methods can be used in a variety of ways in the classroom. Here are a few examples:

- **Use formative assessments to provide feedback to students on their progress.** Formative assessments can be used to identify areas where students need additional support. They can also be used to help students track their own progress. For example, you could give students a formative assessment at the beginning of a unit to assess their prior knowledge. Then, you could use the results of the formative assessment to tailor your instruction to meet the needs of your students.

- **Use authentic assessments to allow students to demonstrate their learning in a meaningful way.** Authentic assessments allow students to show what they know and can do in a real-world context. For example, you could have students create a project that demonstrates their understanding of a concept.
- **Use performance assessments to assess a wide range of skills, such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking skills.** Performance assessments can be used to assess students' abilities to think critically, solve problems, and communicate effectively. For example, you could have students give a presentation on a topic that they have researched.
- **Use portfolio assessments to collect student work that demonstrates their progress over time.** Portfolio assessments can be used to assess a wide range of skills and knowledge. They can also help students to reflect on their own learning. For example, you could have students create a portfolio of their work from a unit. Then, you could use the portfolio to assess their progress over time.

Traditional grading systems have a number of limitations. They can be harmful to students, they are not a good measure of student learning, and they can discourage students from taking risks. Alternative assessment methods can address these limitations. They are more authentic and engaging than traditional summative assessments, they can be used to assess a wider range of skills and knowledge, and they can help students to learn more effectively.

If you are looking for ways to improve your assessment practices, I encourage you to consider using alternative assessment methods. These

methods can help you to create a more positive and productive learning environment for your students.

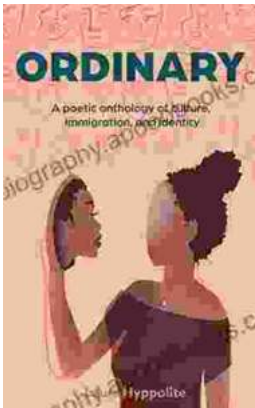


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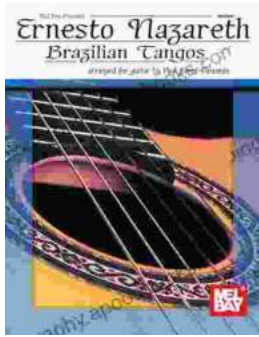
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