

Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of the Focus on Grades and How They Intend to Respond

Bryce S. Dueck, University of Alberta, Canada
Jastinne M. Diaz, University of Alberta, Canada
Lauren D. Goegan, University of Manitoba, Canada
Lia M. Daniels, University of Alberta, Canada

Abstract: The use of grades in assessment is common but debated by educators given its varied consequences for students. The purpose of the present study was: (a) to examine to whom pre-service teachers attribute the focus on grades, and (b) to explore the reasons why pre-service teachers plan to either reduce, or not reduce, the focus on grades in their future classrooms. Pre-service teachers attributed the focus on grades least to teachers and then increasingly to principals, students, school boards, and parents. Pre-service teachers who indicated that they would reduce the focus on grades provided myriad reasons for doing so, which included the drawbacks of competition, cheating, and mental health outcomes. They instead promoted student growth, competence, effort, and intrinsic motivation. Results are discussed through an examination of how pre-service teachers who are critical of grading practices plan to engage with students in their future classrooms. We conclude this paper with suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Grades, Assessment, Pre-service Teachers

Introduction

Grades are a central focus at all levels of education. Students earn grades, parents attend parent-teacher conferences to discuss their children's grades, and principals examine grades as data that represents their students' learning. Although grades are commonly accepted as an important indicator of achievement, focusing on grades too much can have detrimental consequences for students (Anderman & Koenka, 2017; Bloodgood et al., 2009; Farias et al., 2010; Marsden et al., 2005). Pre-service teachers, with their hope for the profession and student's learning, may have unique perspectives on where the focus on grading comes from as well as how to challenge this focus. Thus, the purpose of this research was twofold: (a) To understand the extent to which pre-service teachers believe certain members of the educational community focus on grades, and (b) to understand their commitment to reducing the focus on grades in their future classrooms.

The Role of Grades

Currently, grades are a core feature of academic environments worldwide. In North America, grades are presented on both a 100-point scale and a letter grade scale from A to F (Schinske & Tanner, 2014). This grading system is widely believed to "set clear goals [for students], [be] more objective [than any other type of assessment], and [is the most] convenient [method for providing students with feedback]" (Torres, 2019, p. 5). In K-12 education, grades are critical indicators of academic performance for students and are used to communicate students' progress and performance to students and parents alike (Magno, 2010; Ronsisvalle & Watkins, 2005).

Despite their prominence, grades are often less accurate in representing students' learning than stakeholders in education may think. Grade Point Averages (GPAs), a commonly used measure of academic performance, are argued to lack criterion validity such that students who score similarly across different assessments may have different sets of knowledge and skills (Kaplan, 2016). Similarly, GPAs are argued to mask the contextual and social-cultural factors that influence grade production (Kaplan, 2016). Specifically, there is evidence to suggest that non-achievement related factors such as students' gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and classroom behaviour influence teachers' internalized beliefs about achievement and grading (Alexander et al., 1987; Jussim et al., 2009; Ready & Wright, 2011; Sirin et al., 2009; Südkamp et al., 2014), thus calling into question the utility of grades as an indicator of academic achievement in schools today.

Who Focuses on Grades?

Due to the importance placed on grades, *students* often focus on earning high grades, at times to the detriment of their learning and well-being (Anderman & Koenka, 2017; Bloodgood et al., 2009; Farias et al., 2010; Marsden et al., 2005). With respect to learning, the desire to earn high grades directly contradicts long-lasting learning outcomes

(Crooks, 1988; Gibbs & Simpson, 2005; Weimer, 2002). Specifically, grades have been found to promote surface learning, where students prioritize memorizing course content to perform well on formal assessments instead of actively engaging with the material (Farias et al., 2010; Marton & Säljö, 1976; Romanowski, 2004). With respect to well-being, social comparison between students regarding their grades can lead to competition, academic dishonesty, increased student stress, anxiety, procrastination, and lower levels of emotional and behavioural engagement (Kanat-Maymon et al., 2015; Poorthuis et al., 2015; von der Embse et al., 2018). Grades also play a prominent role in determining the opportunities available to students post-graduation, including scholarships and admissions into university, which heightens the importance of grades to students and parents alike (Allen, 2005; Magno, 2010).

Like students, *teachers* focus on grades as a facet of their jobs. Teachers are professionally mandated to evaluate student learning and assign grades, thereby making evaluation a clear focus of their responsibilities (Government of Alberta, 2018; BC Teachers' Council, 2019). By some counts, teachers spend upwards of one-third of their time assessing learning (Stiggins & Conklin, 1992), much of which results in numerical grades. Teachers use grades as an incentive to compel students to study effectively and complete their work (Docan, 2006). Given the requirements of grading practices to report on student performance, it would be nearly impossible for teachers not to have some focus on grading.

In the administrative context, *principals* and *school boards* use grades produced by standardized assessments to rank schools (Alberta Teachers Association, 2009). All but one Canadian province requires students to take standardized tests in a variety of grade levels and subject areas (Zwaagstra, 2011), and Canadian adolescents regularly participate in international assessments such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Volante & Ben Jaafar, 2008). Particularly in the United States, performance on assessment is used by principals and school boards to evaluate teacher effectiveness (Haertel, 2013). While these practices have yet to be adopted in Canada, grades continue to impact administrative decisions and student outcomes.

The Role of Pre-Service Teachers. Pre-service teachers are a unique sample because they are simultaneously teachers and students (Daniels et al., 2020). Pre-service teachers typically enter the profession with good intentions and hopes to improve student learning and well-being. Unfortunately, these intentions and hopes for student learning do not always carry through into their teaching practice (Daniels, 2013) when they encounter professional realities, such as grading, assessment, and school cultures which may or may not support current grading practices. To date, little research has examined pre-service teachers' perspectives on grading practices. Given our limited understanding of pre-service teachers' perspectives on grades, it is important to examine their perceptions about the focus on grades and if they would choose to reduce, or not reduce the focus on grades in their future classrooms given their role in assessment and student learning.

Current Study

The present study aimed to examine pre-service teachers' perceptions of the focus on grades in the classroom and whether they intend to respond. We posed the following research questions: (1) which group(s) of people do pre-service teachers believe focus on grades the most? And (2) do pre-service teachers intend to reduce the focus on grades in their future classrooms? If so, for what reason(s)?

Method

Participants and Procedure

During the Fall semester (September to December) of 2020, self-reported data was collected from a convenience sample of students in the teacher preparation program from a large university in Western Canada. At the time of this study, students were enrolled in a classroom assessment course that focused on important concepts in assessment and evaluation such as goals of assessment, equity and fairness, and grading and reporting. As part of their course work, students completed a variety of activities via an online Google Form. These activities were given to students in order to extend their learning and open opportunities for further reflection on important course topics, including the emphasis on grades in school, academic dishonesty, trauma-informed practices, and summative assessment in relation to student motivation. After completing the course-based activity, students were asked if they consented to have their responses included in this research study. If the student indicated yes, their quantitative and qualitative data were collected ($n = 205$) and analyzed following the conclusion of the course. These procedures were approved by the university's Research Ethics Board.

Measures

Demographic measures (4 items)

To describe the sample, we asked participants to indicate their age, gender, grade levels or teachable subjects they were studying to become qualified to teach, and ethnicity ($n = 83$). Participants ranged in age from 20 to 48 years old ($M = 25.08$) and were evenly divided between students who identified as a man (49.4%) and a woman (50.6%). The students were predominantly training to be Secondary teachers (75.9%) rather than Elementary (2.4%) and Junior High teachers (20.5%). The students identified with a variety of ethnicities, including Aboriginal, Caucasian, Chinese, Latin American, and Southeast Asian.

Focus on Grades (5 items)

To determine where pre-service teachers believed the focus on grades was strongest, we asked them to indicate the extent to which five members of the school community had this focus. Participants were prompted with the following statement: *To what extent do you think each of the following groups of people is focused on students' grades?* They indicated their responses for (a) students, (b) parents, (c) teachers, (d) principals, and (e) school boards on a scale from 1 (not very focused) to 7 (very focused).

Intentional reduction on grades focus (2 items, 1 open-ended)

Additionally, pre-service teachers responded to the forced-choice yes-no question: *Will you intentionally try to reduce the focus on students' grades in your future classroom?* Then, participants were asked to complete an open-ended response to the question: *What has led you to the decision? In other words, tell me why this is important to you.*

Plans for Analysis

We conducted our analyses in two stages. To answer our first research question, we examined the means from the participants' responses to the focus on grades items. We ranked the means in ascending order and compared the differences in scores. Moreover, we ran Pearson correlation coefficients between the items to examine whether pre-service teachers' responses for (a) students, (b) parents, (c) teachers, (d) principals and (e) school boards were correlated with one another. To answer our second research question, we examined the reasons pre-service teachers gave for reducing the focus on students' grades in their future classrooms using an inductive thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017). We open-coded their responses as to why or why not they intended to reduce the focus on grades in their classrooms. For the purpose of this paper, we will report on the responses of pre-service teachers who said they would intentionally reduce the focus on grades in their future classrooms.

Results

Quantitative Survey Items

Pre-service teachers indicated that out of the five groups identified, parents were the most focused on grades ($M = 6.26$) followed by school boards ($M = 6.13$), students ($M = 5.84$), principals ($M = 5.68$) and teachers ($M = 5.09$). Results of the Pearson correlation found a significant positive correlation between principals and school boards. Weak positive correlations were found between principals and teachers, parents and principals, and parents and school boards (see Table 1).

Table 1

Rank ordering of focus on grades and correlations between groups from least to most focused.

<i>Individual</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Skew</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
1. <i>Teachers</i>	5.09	.96	3-7	.03	-.29	-			

2. <i>Principals</i>	5.68	1.01	2-7	-.66	.65	.27**	-		
3. <i>Students</i>	5.84	.99	3-7	-.40	-.57	.04	.00	-	
4. <i>School Boards</i>	6.13	1.02	2-7	-1.63	3.72	.03	.73**	-.04	-
5. <i>Parents</i>	6.26	.87	4-7	-1.04	.36	.17*	.29**	.14	.27**

Note(s). *Significant at $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Qualitative Analysis

We conducted an inductive thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017) to examine pre-service teachers' responses to the question: *Will you intentionally try to reduce the focus on students' grades in your future classroom? What has led you to the decision? In other words, tell me why this is important to you.* Of the 205 students who completed the survey, 29 responses were left blank, and nine responses were removed from the analyses as they did not meet coding criteria. This resulted in 166 student responses for analysis. 92% of the pre-service teachers indicated "yes," and 8% indicated "no" to the forced-choice question about intentionally reducing the focus on grades in the classroom. Responses were coded into two thematic categories: Reasons for Intentionally Reducing the Focus on Grades and Alternatives to Focusing on Grades. The first two authors developed a codebook that included definitions for both categories, theme codes, and sample quotations to aid with coding. Inter-rater reliability for the first 20 student responses was 20%. The first and second authors reviewed the coding criteria to improve inter-rater reliability for the remaining items. Inter-rater reliability for the following 146 student responses was 88%. The researchers discussed differences in the remaining 12% of student responses until consensus amongst the research team was reached. A table was created and revised to highlight the main themes in the student responses (see Table 2).

Table 2

Qualitative Thematic Categories related to Pre-Service Teachers' Perceptions of the Focus on Grades in the Classroom

<i>Thematic Category</i>	<i>Codes</i>	<i>Sample Statements</i>
<i>Reasons for Intentionally Reducing the Focus on Grades</i>	Competition	Grades can lead to increased competition between peers.
	Cheating	I think that too much focus on the grades and not the actual learning will increase frequencies of cheating.
	Mental Health and Wellbeing	High focus on grades can contribute to a lot of negative effects such as poor self esteem and mental health.

<i>Alternatives to Focusing on Grades in the Classroom</i>	Growth	I would like to focus on student learning, and on student growth.
	Competence	I would like to shift the focus from performance to mastery in my classroom.
	Effort	Goals for students will vary as well, so focusing on effort and task completion might be a better way to motivate some students.
	Intrinsic	
	Motivation	By not focusing on grades and focusing on feedback, I hope to increase my student's intrinsic motivation.

The pre-service teachers provided various comments that reflected the drawbacks of focusing on classroom grades. We grouped the responses into three themes. First, a majority of pre-service teachers commented on how grades lead to *competition* between students. For example, one participant wrote, “Focusing on grades takes focus away from learning and puts it on competition,” while another commented, “The motivation behind grades is largely extrinsic and drives competitive behaviour.” Second, several pre-service teachers claimed that focusing on grades contributes to increases in competitive behaviour, namely *cheating*. For example, one participant commented, “When students are focused on competition and proving they are more competent than others, they get anxious about grades and are more likely to cheat on assignments and exams.” Third, pre-service teachers commented on “the pressure to perform” and its impact on students’ *mental health and wellbeing*. These comments included feeling “anxiety about reaching an arbitrary number” in addition to experiencing “poor self-esteem,” lowered “self-worth,” and “reduced confidence.”

The pre-service teachers also provided various responses that proposed alternatives to focusing on grades in the classroom. We grouped these responses into four themes. The majority of pre-service teachers spoke about the benefit of focusing on students’ *growth*. For example, one respondent commented, “It is more important to see what students have learned and how they can apply their knowledge,” while another participant commented, “I want [the students] to try and discover their own improvements over time.” Other pre-service teachers spoke about the benefits of measuring *competence*. These comments included students’ “mastery of a subject,” “critical thinking skills,” and “genuine retention.” Pre-service teachers also commented on the role of *effort*. For example, one respondent mentioned, “It is important to praise hard work and grit.” Lastly, pre-service teachers also mentioned students’ *intrinsic motivation*. One participant commented, “I would rather focus on them enjoying what they are learning,” while another commented, “I want classes to be engaging and motivating enough where getting good grades is a by-product, not a focus.”

Discussion

This study examined pre-service teachers’ perceptions of the focus on grades in the classroom. We discuss the quantitative results pertaining to pre-service teachers’ perceptions of parents and teachers. Second, we discuss qualitative results through considering implications for teaching practice. We then identify three limitations of this study and offer directions for future research.

Parents as most focused

Pre-service teachers reported that all 5 members of the educational community were more focused on grades than not, as evidenced by scores above the midpoint. Of the five members, teachers were reported to be least focused on grades, followed by principals, students, school boards, and parents. The finding that parents were most focused on grades was somewhat surprising given that parents do not assign learning tasks or work within assessment in any way. Interestingly, this ranking for parents differs from a similar study in which teachers ranked the same five members of the educational community on their focus on competition. Goegan and Daniels (2022) found that school boards were more focused on competition than parents who ranked second. Although the comparison is not perfect, one reason for parents being seen as most focused on grades in this study may be because pre-service teachers are still students who themselves have parents who care about their grades and the implications of academic achievement for their futures. In Canada, 85% of parents expect their children to go on to postsecondary education, which is predicated on having high grades (Corak et al., 2003). Another reason for parents being viewed as the most focused on grades may be because parents are the furthest removed from the classroom and daily life of school, assessment, and grading (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Pre-service teachers may assume that parents lack general knowledge on assessment, grades, and the weaknesses of assessment schemes in measuring student success within education.

Teachers as Least Focused

As part of their professional training, teachers receive instruction on educational assessment and student success and this may explain why pre-service teachers rated teachers as being least focused on grades. Despite seeing teachers as the least focused on grades, 92% of pre-service teachers indicated they would personally try to reduce the focus on grades in their future classrooms. In explaining their reasons why, most pre-service teachers spoke to the drawbacks of focusing on grades in the classroom, including competition, cheating, and mental health outcomes. Substantial existing evidence shows that pre-service teachers are correct in their concerns: schools with a strong focus on competition and achievement, as opposed to learning, often invoke increased cheating and plagiarism amongst students (Anderman & Koenka, 2017). Likewise, students are more likely to cheat in high-stakes testing situations, where demonstrating competence is of high importance (Daumiller & Janke, 2019). With respect to mental health outcomes, previous research has linked grades to enhanced stress, anxiety, and procrastination (Bloodgood et al., 2009; Kanat-Mayon et al., 2015; von der Embse et al., 2018). It is likely that a prominent focus on grades negatively affects students and the subsequent culture of learning in classrooms, schools, and school districts. In this study, pre-service teachers demonstrated that they are aware of these negative outcomes and desire to reduce them by focusing less on grades in their future teaching practice.

Moreover, most pre-service teachers spoke of alternatives to focusing on grades in the classroom. It is likely that the assessment course pre-service teachers were enrolled in at the time of this study influenced their understanding of assessment and their subsequent reasons for reducing the focus on grades. Again, their perspectives are consistent with previous research on academic success (Goegan et al., 2020; Jennings et al., 2013; Oster & Roberts, 2007; Yazedjian et al., 2008; York et al., 2015). For example, Goegan et al. (2020) found that students within a Faculty of Education at a Canadian university identified several indicators or sub-themes of academic success, including performance, learning, goals, motivation, and emotions. Similarly, in this study, pre-service teachers identified four alternative ways to support student success aside from grades by focusing on student growth, competence, effort, and intrinsic motivation. While pre-service teachers identified several indicators of academic success, very few commented on the value of using other assessment methods, such as standards-based grading or competency-based models of assessment. Additionally, few discussed the ways in which they would implement alternative assessment tools in their teaching practice. In future research, it may be important to ask participants to identify what they would use in place of grades to measure student success.

Limitations and Future Directions

The findings of this research may help pre-service teachers to become more aware of the potential drawbacks of grading and provides this population with alternatives to grading that they can draw on as they enter the teaching profession. Reviewing these findings as part of pre-service teacher education assessment classes may prove useful.

While our findings regarding the focus on grades and pre-service teachers' responses to this focus provide important insights that can help pre-service teachers in their teaching practice, three limitations should be acknowledged. First, participants were comprised of a convenience sample of pre-service teachers from a large university in Western Canada. Therefore, the results may not generalize to other academic institutions. Additionally, our sample came from students in their third year of a teaching program, and therefore they cannot fully speak to the practice of teaching. Nonetheless, it is still important to consider pre-service teachers' perceptions of the focus on grades in the classroom because even if their intentions do not fully translate into practice, they are an important predictor of future behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Future research should consider a broader sample of pre-service teachers and institutions to remedy this limitation. Moreover, it would also be informative to ask parents, school boards, principals, and students themselves where they believe the focus on grades is the strongest and if they consider this focus appropriate.

Second, open-ended written questions have been argued to lack depth in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). Although the open-ended question provided consistent answers, it likely did not fully capture the participants' perspectives. Future research could incorporate structured methods such as one-on-one interviews to better understand pre-service teachers' perspectives on grades moving forward.

Third, participants were asked what led them to their decision as to whether they would intentionally try to reduce the focus on grades in their future classrooms and to give reasons why it was important to them, even though they ranked teachers as least focused on grades in the quantitative ranking. It would be interesting to explore in which way(s) pre-service teachers could help other members of the educational community who arguably have higher focuses on grades to make a similar commitment to reducing their focus on grades. Future research on how best to support pre-service teachers in adapting their assessment practices to support other assessment methods and measures of academic success will prove helpful.

Conclusion

The perspectives of pre-service teachers regarding grades were investigated to better understand the extent to which pre-service teachers believe certain members of the educational community focus on grades and to understand their commitment to reducing the focus on grades in their future classrooms. The results from our study provide researchers and administrators with valuable information regarding pre-service teachers' perceptions of parents as being most focused and teachers as being least focused on grades. This study further demonstrates pre-service teachers' support for reducing the focus on grades and their support for other indicators of academic success in their future classrooms, including student growth, competence, effort, and intrinsic motivation.

REFERENCES

- Alberta Teachers' Association. (2009). Issues related to Provincial Achievement Tests: What parents need to know. *The Learning Team*, 12(4).
<https://legacy.teachers.ab.ca/News%20Room/The%20Learning%20Team/Volume%2012/Number4/Pages/Issues%20relatedtoProvincialAchievementTests.aspx>
- Alexander, K. L., Entwisle, D. R., & Thompson, M. S. (1987). School performance, status relations, and the structure of sentiment: Bringing the teacher back in. *American Sociological Review*, 52(5), 665-682.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2095602>
- Allen, J. (2005). Grades as valid measures of academic achievement of classroom learning. *The Clearing House: A journal of educational strategies, issues and ideas*, 78(5), 218-223. <https://doi.org/10.3200/TCHS.78.5.218-223>
- Anderman, E. M., & Koenka, A. C. (2017). The relation between academic motivation and cheating. *Theory Into Practice*, 56(2), 95-102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2017.1308172>
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179-211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)
- BC Teachers' Council. (2019). *Professional standards for BC educators - gov*.
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teacher-regulation/standards-for-educators/edu_standards_poster-11x17.pdf
- Bloodgood, R. A., Short, J. G., & Jackson, J. M. (2009). A change to pass/fail grading in the first two years at one medical school results in improved psychological well-being. *Academic Medicine*, 84(5), 655-662.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0b013e31819f6d78>
- Brookhart, S. M. (1993). Teachers' grading practices: Meaning and values. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, 30(2), 123-142. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-3984.1993.tb01070.x>
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Harvard University Press.
- Cheng, L., & Sun, Y. (2015). Teachers' grading decision making: Multiple influencing factors and methods. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 12(2), 213-233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2015.1010726>
- Corak, M., Lipps, G., & Zhao, J. (2003). *Family income and participation in post-secondary education*.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2003210-eng.pdf?st=pggEqv9q>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed). Sage.
- Crooks, T. (1988). The impact of classroom evaluation practices on students. *Review of Educational Research*, 58(4), 438-481. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543058004438>
- Daniels, L. M. (2013). From pre-service to practicing teacher: Considering the stability of personal and classroom mastery and performance goals. *Educational Psychology*, 35(8), 984-1005.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2013.870329>
- Daniels, L. M., Goegan, L. D., Radil, A. I., & Frohlich, J. R. (2020). Simultaneously student and teacher: Measuring achievement goals in preservice teachers. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 88(1), 165-182.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220973.2018.1543641>
- Daumiller, M., & Janke, S. (2019). The impact of performance goals on cheating depends on how performance is evaluated. *AERA Open*, 5(4), 233285841989427. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858419894276>
- Docan, T. N. (2006). Positive and negative incentives in the classroom: An analysis of grading systems and student motivation. *Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 6(2), 21-40.
- Farias, G., Farias, C., & Fairfield, K. (2010). Teacher as judge or partner: The dilemma of grades versus learning. *Journal of Education for Business*, 85(6), 336-342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08832321003604961>
- Gibbs, G., & Simpson, C. (2005). Conditions under which assessment supports students' learning. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, 1, 3-31.
- Goegan, L. D., & Daniels, L. M. (2022). Just a little healthy competition: Teacher perceptions of competition and social comparison in the classroom. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/08295735221101223>

- Goegan, L. D., Radil, A. I, Brooks, A. & Daniels L. M. (2020). Pre-service and practicing teachers' perspectives on academic success: More than just a grade. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 25, 1-19.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-021-09641-y>
- Government of Alberta (2018). *Inclusive Education*. <https://www.alberta.ca/inclusive-education.aspx>
- Guskey, T. (2011). Five obstacles to grading reform. *Educational Leadership*, 69(3), 17-21.
- Haertel, E. H. (2013). *Reliability and validity of inferences about teachers based on students' test score- Ets Home*.
<https://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICANG14.pdf>
- Jennings, N., Lovett, S., Coba, L., Swingle, L. & Lindkvist, H. (2013). "What would make this a successful year for you?" How students define success in college. *Liberal Education*, 99(2). 1-11.
- Jussim, L., Cain, T., Crawford, J., Harber, K., & Cohen, F. (2009). The unbearable accuracy of stereotypes. In T. Nelson (Ed.), *Handbook of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination* (pp. 199-227). Erlbaum.
- Kanat-Maymon, Y., Benjamin, M., Stavsky, A., Shoshani, A., & Roth, G. (2015). The role of basic need fulfillment in academic dishonesty: A self-determination theory perspective. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 43, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2015.08.002>
- Kaplan, A. (2016, August). Research on motivation and achievement: Infatuation with constructs and losing sight of the phenomenon. In biennial meeting of the International Conference on Motivation, Thessaloniki, Greece.
- Magno, C. (2010). The functions of grading students. *The Assessment Handbook*, 3, 50-58.
- Marsden, H., Carroll, M., & Neill, J. T. (2005). Who cheats at university? A self-report study of dishonest academic behaviours in a sample of Australian university students. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 57(1), 1-10.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530412331283426>
- Marton, F., & Säljö, R. (1976). On qualitative differences in learning: Outcome and process. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 46(1), 4-11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8279.1976.tb02980.x>
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 160940691773384. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Osters, S. & Roberts, D. (2007). Academic success – How do students define it? Presentation at the Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA)/ National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Region III/ Texas Association of College & University Student Personnel Association (TACUSPA) Joint Student Affairs Conference, Dallas, Texas.
- Poorthuis, A., Juvonen, J., Thomaes, S., Denissen, J., Orobio de Castro, B., & van Aken, M. (2015). Do grades shape students' school engagement? The psychological consequences of report card grades at the beginning of secondary school. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 107(3), 842-854. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000002>
- Ready, D. D., & Wright, D. L. (2011). Accuracy and inaccuracy in teachers' perceptions of young children's cognitive abilities the role of child background and classroom context. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(2), 335-360. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831210374874>
- Romanowski, M. (2004). Student obsession with grades and achievement. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 40(4), 149-151.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2004.10516425>
- Ronsivalle, T., & Watkins, R. (2005). Student success in online K-12 education. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 6(2), 117-124.
- Schinske, J., & Tanner, K. (2014). Teaching more by grading less (or differently). *CBE Life Sciences Education*, 13(2), 159-166. <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.CBE-14-03-005>
- Sirin, S. R., Ryce, P., & Mir, M. (2009). How teachers' values affect their evaluation of children of immigrants: Findings from Islamic and public schools. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 24(4), 463-473.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2009.07.003>
- Stiggins, R., & Conklin, N. (1992). *In teachers' hands: Investigating the practices of classroom assessment*. State University of New York Press.
- Südkamp, A., Kaiser, J., & Möller, J. (2014). Teachers' judgments of students' academic achievement: Results from field and experimental studies. In S. Krolak-Schwerdt, S. Glock, & M. Böhmer (Eds.), *The future of educational research: Vol 3. Teachers' professional development: Assessment, training and learning* (Vol. 3, pp. 5-25). Sense Publishers.

- Torres, J. (2019). Positive impact of utilizing more formative assessment over summative assessment in the EFL/ESL Classroom. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 9(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2019.91001>
- Volante, L., & Ben Jaafar, S. (2008). Educational assessment in Canada. *Assessment in Education: Principles, policy & practice*, 15(2), 201-210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09695940802164226>
- von der Embse, N., Jester, D., Roy, D., & Post, J. (2018). Test anxiety effects, predictors, and correlates: A 30-year meta-analytic review. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 227, 483-493. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2017.11.048>
- Weimer, M. (2002). *Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice*. Jossey-Bass.
- Yazedjian, A., Toews, M. L., Sevin, T., & Purswell, K. E. (2008). "It's a whole new world": A qualitative exploration of college students' definitions of and strategies for college success. *Journal of College Student Development*, 49(2), 141-154. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2008.0009>
- York, T. T., Gibson, C., & Rankin, S. (2015). Defining and measuring academic success. *Practical assessment, research, and evaluation*, 20(1).
- Zwaagstra, M. (2011). *Standardized Testing is a Good Thing*. Policy Series No.119 (October). Frontier Centre for Public Policy. <https://fcpp.org/files/1/PS119StandardizedTesting.pdf>

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Bryce S. Dueck, MEd is a PhD student in the School and Clinical Child Psychology program at the University of Alberta. Her research interests include the impact of self-care on professional psychology graduate students' outcomes. She is also interested in studying the motivational underpinnings of self-care attitudes and behaviours. Her current research is focusing on developing and examining the effectiveness of a professional development module on self-care for professional psychology graduate students.

Jastinne M. Diaz, BSc is a graduate student at the University of Alberta in the Master of Public Health program. Her research interests include the social determinants of health and their impacts on the aging process, and the socio-emotional and cultural impacts of bilingualism. She is also interested in how different mediums of feedback can affect students. Her current research seeks to examine the personal, cultural, and emotional impacts that come with being able to fully understand, but not proficiently speak a heritage language.

Lauren D. Goegan, PhD is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. She studies the transition from high school to postsecondary education, with a focus on students with Learning Disabilities. In particular, she examines student motivations and self-beliefs, their integration into the campus, and their success at postsecondary. Her research also examines perceptions of academic success and academic dishonesty, and her work draws on various motivational theories.

Lia M. Daniels, PhD is a Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta. Her research focuses on student and teachers' motivation and emotions with the hopes of creating adaptive learning environments. She is primarily a quantitative researcher working from the theoretical perspectives of achievement goal theory, self-determination theory, attribution theory, and control-value theory of emotions. She directs the Alberta Consortium for Motivation and Emotion where she mentors emerging scholars in the application of motivation theory to diverse achievement settings.