



12 Tips FOR ANTIRACIST GRADING

- 1. Stop grading homework.** Homework should be framed as low-stakes practice on new skills, not a hammer to promote compliance or punish children struggling to get it done.
- 2. Stop measuring participation.** Participation grades are rife with bias, inviting unconscious discrimination against students with attention challenges or cultural and communication styles that don't mirror the teacher's.
- 3. Reimagine behavior charts.** They are often punitive, shaming, and biased in their implementation. Focus instead on incentives and finding ways to publicly affirm every child.
- 4. Welcome late work and/or establish a grace period for every assignment.** As one principal says, "The penalty for not doing the assignment is doing the assignment!"
- 5. Invite redos and retakes.** Students should be allowed to redo or retake an assessment numerous times, until they show mastery, before the end of the grading period.
- 6. Any student should be able to retake a major assessment for a higher grade as long as they are coming to school and putting in basic effort.** Often only the students who performed poorly are allowed to retake, but any student should have the option.
(Credit: Guillermo Morales)
- 7. Have students focus on retaking** the parts of any assessment they missed or struggled with, not the entire thing. *(Credit: Guillermo Morales)*
- 8. Use descriptive, criterion-based rubrics instead of points.** Points promote a culture of bean-counting and competition, whereas rubrics, when well-crafted, promote reflection.





- 9. Consider, whenever possible, building the rubric with the students.** Students want to be held to high standards and are more likely to do so when they have a chance to demonstrate understanding in ways that are important to them. This can be a collaborative process between teacher and student, a formative process along the way, and a tool to connect a community of learners, as well as an assessment tool. *(Credit: Emma Dunbar)*
- 10. Use grades to summarize student achievement over time,** after the child has had ample opportunities to redo and revisit, not to punish or change student behavior.
- 11. Eliminate the zero.** It severely disadvantages learners who are struggling for a variety of reasons and breeds hopelessness.
- 12. Make time for narrative feedback and student conferencing, whenever possible.** If your student load is too high, teach students to do this with each other in structured peer conferences.

Tips adapted from Chapter 5 of *Street Data: A Next-Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation* (Corwin, 2021)



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