

# Constructive grading to help teachers in their decision-making and to improve students' learning: what else?

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**Assessment for Changing Times: Opportunities and Challenges**

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# Plan

- Some issues about grading
- A core definition and six key questions
- A theoretical framework
- A case study and its brief analyze
- Key findings from our research
- You said constructive grading ?
- A beginning rather than a conclusion !

# Some issues about grading

- Teachers have an uncomfortable, complex, and sometimes paradoxical relationship with the grade (e.g., Alm & Colnerud, 2015; Crahay, 2007)
- Grading practices are mostly idiosyncratic, and have little reference to learning (e.g. Cross & Frary, 1999; McMillan, 2001, 2003; Moss, 2013; Pasquini, 2019; Tierney et al., 2011)
- Teachers in all OECD education systems, lack the skills and knowledge to assess and grade consistently (e.g. Allen, 2005; Brimi, 2011; Centre national d'étude des systèmes scolaires [CNESTO], 2014; Conseil supérieur de l'éducation [CSE], 2018; Moss, 2013)

# A core definition

“Grading practices refer to the ways teachers **use information** from assessments and other sources of information **to determine** and report student grades, whether on papers, unit tests, or semester reports”

(McMillan, 2019, p.85)

# ... and six key questions

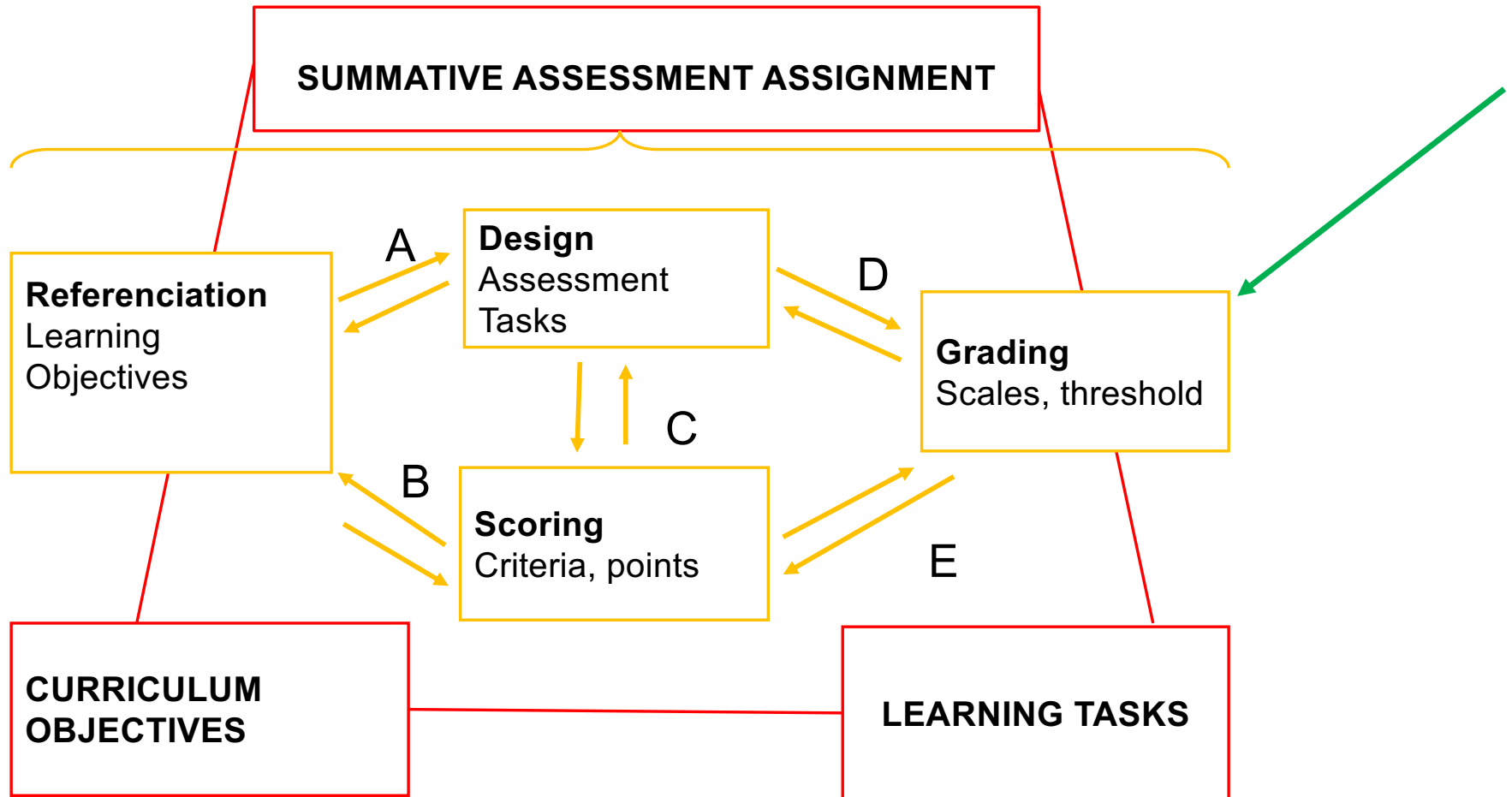
- How do summative assessment and grading practices come together in synergies (e. g., McMillan & Nash, 2000; Pasquini, 2021)?
- Under what conditions can we consider a grade based on learning (e. g., Brookhart, 2017)?
- What reasoning should be used about learning objectives to construct a grade with qualitative and high information value (e. g., Shepard et al., 2018)?
- How can we go about creating assessment tasks that show the quality of learning (e. g., Wiggins, 1988)?
- Under what conditions should the assessment criteria – as a central tool in a constructive grading approach - be developed (e. g., Sadler, 2009)?
- How can teachers move away from an arithmetical and standardized use of grading scales, as well as from a logic of ranking and selection of students (e. g., Guskey, 2013)?

# A theoretical framework

- With the aim of better understanding the conditions under which grades can be a powerful tool to help teachers in their decisions and support students' learning

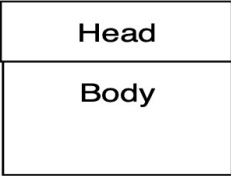




# Expanded curricular alignment

(Anderson, 2002; Pasquini, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021)



# A case study: The « Owl effect »

Pasquini (2017, 2021)

<b>OWL DRAWING : GUIDELINES</b>		
1° I draw the head on 1/3 and the body on the remaining 2/3 of the sheet.		
2° I draw 3 circles inside each other for each eye.		
3° I draw 1 triangle for each ear and another one for the beak.		
4° I draw 1 oval for the belly and 3 small ovals for each leg.		
5° In the belly, I draw between 5 and 8 different lines.	<p>eeeeeeeeeeeeee XXXXXXXXXXXX</p>	
6° I write over the lines with a pen.		
<p>Caution ! When you paint following instruction no. 7, be careful to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- leave no blank</li> <li>- not to exceed</li> <li>- not to make smudges</li> </ul>		
7° I paint each surface with a single colour. Watch out! Two surfaces of the same color do not touch each other.		

# The criteria

Date : \_\_\_\_\_ First Name : \_\_\_\_\_

## Visual arts assessment

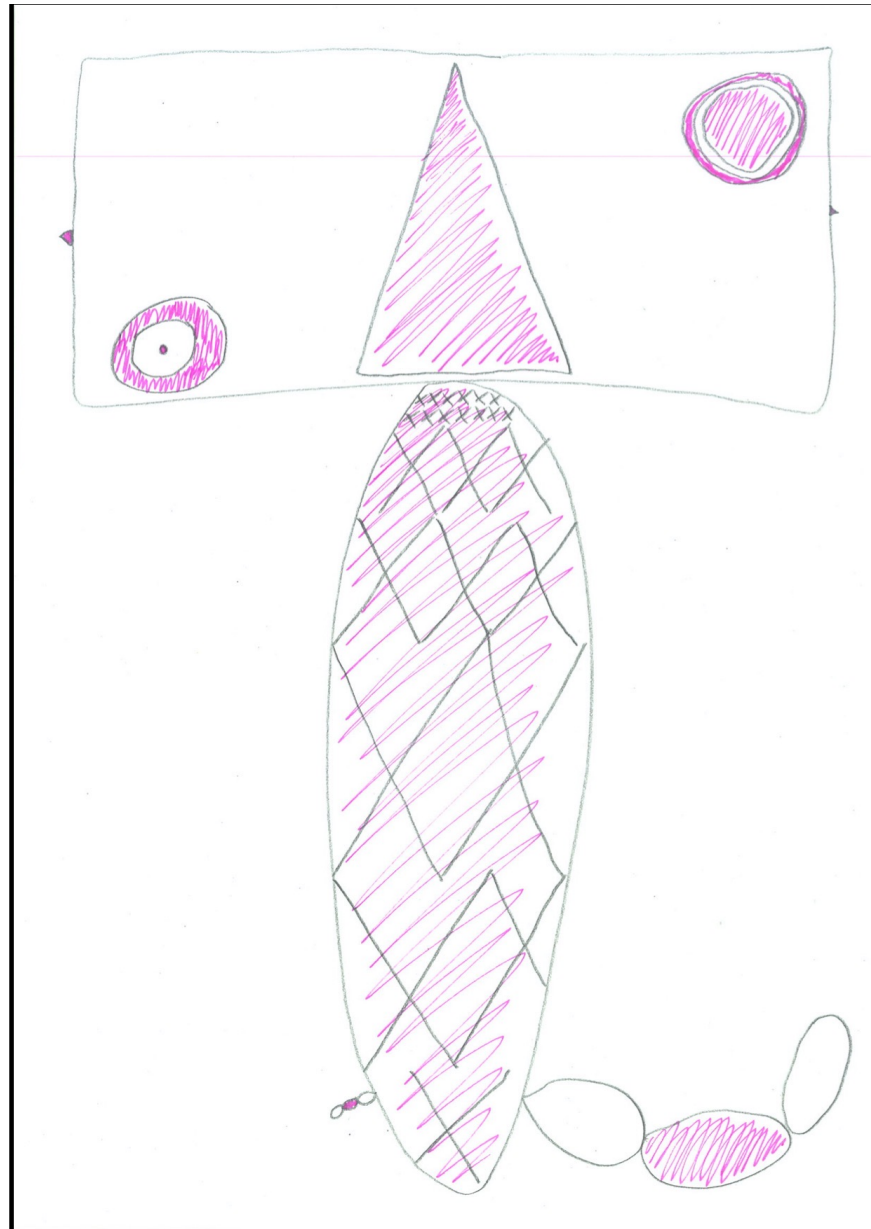
### OWL DRAWING

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA :	YES	NO
The head occupies $\frac{1}{3}$ of the sheet.		
The body occupies $\frac{2}{3}$ of the sheet.		
Each eye is composed of 3 circles (one inside the other).		
Each ear is drawn with a triangle.		
The beak is drawn with a triangle.		
The belly is drawn with an oval.		
Each leg is composed of 3 small ovals.		
The belly is decorated with differen lines. (5 to 8 lines)		
Pass over all construction lines with a permanent black pen in a continuous manner.		
Paint 1 colour per surface.		
2 surfaces of the same colour do not touch each other.		
Painting without leaving white.		
Painting without exceeding.		
The drawing is neat, it has no smudges.		

Number of successful criteria :

Non Achieved (NA)	Partially Achieved (PA)	Achieved (A)	Achieved with Ease (AE)	Largely Achieved (LA)
0-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	13-14

« My » owl



# Let's analyze this situation

1. How was the content taught? And were the learning objectives understood by the students? (Shepard et al., 2018)
2. What content and learning objectives are to be assessed? (Biggs, 2003; Pasquini, 2018)
3. What assessment situations (assessment tasks, guidelines) best assess the learning? (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005)
4. How to score these situations in the test with reference to the learning objective and the content to be mastered: points or criteria, or both? (Balan & Jönsson, 2018)
5. What thresholds will be most appropriate for reporting student performance and constructing grades? (Pasquini, 2021)

# Key findings from our research

In order to develop constructive grading practices:

1. Define the curriculum objectives to be achieved
2. Identify the key criteria for achieving these objectives
3. Construct learning tasks aligned with the objectives and criteria
4. Gather information about students' learning throughout the lessons in relation to the stated expectations, while thinking about the expectations related to the summative assignment

# You said constructive grading ?

(Pasquini, 2021)

A grade is constructive when it is elaborated on the basis of **criteria** that characterize **the learning objectives** assessed in a summative assignment.

Thus constructed, the grade allows teachers to give **feedback** to the students on what they have learned successfully and what still needs to be worked on.

# A beginning rather than a conclusion !

- We have to acknowledge that classroom assessment information is most often summarized and communicated through a grade (OECD, 2012; Quittre et al., 2019), but we can no longer agree that grades look like a hodgepodge (e. g., Cross & Frary, 1999; Brookhart et al., 2016)
- The innovative approach aimed at considering grading practices from a constructive perspective, i.e. in support of learning, probably constitutes a revolution in practices
- Teachers' education and training needs on this topic to be strengthened in order to develop teachers' assessment skills

# Many thanks for your attention !

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