



Teachers' grading decisions and practices across cultures

Exploring the value, consistency, and construction of grades across Canadian and Chinese secondary schools

Article Summary

Grades are the dominant currency that enables student migration patterns; in particular, the recent upsurge of Chinese students studying and settling in Canada. Given the use of grades for student promotion, mobilization, and admission into educational programs internationally, there is an urgent need to understand the validity of grades across learning contexts. This study explored 35 Canadian and Chinese secondary school teachers' grading decisions and practices through nine focus groups. Following inductive analyses, findings indicated that teachers primarily valued fairness as an overarching driver of decision-making when generating and considering grades. Teachers' considerations of fairness centred around four emergent themes: (a) context and classroom management, (b) learning values: grades as academic enablers, (c) policy and external pressures, and (d) consequences of grade use. The overarching thread common among both Canadian and Chinese teachers was their reported challenge in maintaining fair grading practices.

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Cheng, L., DeLuca, C., Braund, H., Wei, Y., & Rasooli, A. (2020). Teachers' grading decisions and practices across Canadian and Chinese secondary schools. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 67, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2020.100928>



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