



Grading policies in China

Are we assessing the learner or the learning?

Article Summary

As one of the most high-stakes practices in education, grading has been the subject of significant debate and research over the years. However, it is only recently that researchers have started to explore the teaching and learning values embedded in grades by looking at grading policies. This study examined grading policies in China by focusing on the embedded teaching and learning values that could potentially influence teachers' grading practices. Three main types of policy documents were analysed in this research: Ministry of Education policy documents, curriculum documents, and discussion papers. A central theme derived from the analysis revealed the influence of the dominant guiding educational philosophy of comprehensive quality education on grading policies. This philosophy dictates that grading practices should include both achievement and non-achievement factors, with an emphasis on the learner as a whole rather than on the learning alone. The results of this study provide urgently needed empirical evidence of the teaching and learning values potentially embedded in teacher-constructed grades.

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