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Grading What Matters

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What Do We Measure?

As I reflected on this topic, I resolved to refocus myself and my students on learning. This, of course, required that I know what exactly I meant by student learning. Once more I took a look at my practice, and what I discovered was disturbing. I was not unlike the teacher I spoke with recently who hesitated to test her students after a three-day weekend because she feared they would perform poorly. If we avoid assessing our students after a long weekend, then obviously we are not expecting, nor attempting to assess, enduring understanding in students. Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (2005) agree that grades tend to measure students' short-term recall of information, rather than long-term, meaningful understanding.

If we focus predominately on measuring students' compliance and their ability to recall facts, our practices will interfere with our most significant purposes as educators. **If we are to shift our focus to higher-level thinking, we must shift our grading practices.**

Fixing the Fixation on Compliance

One key to making grades more meaningful is carefully distinguish Tm(O)3(n)-practinn

Restructuring her grades around these principles, science teacher Kendy Blake identified the following categories and their relative weight:

- *Content Knowledge*: The ability

not only to be responsible and to remember, but also to understand