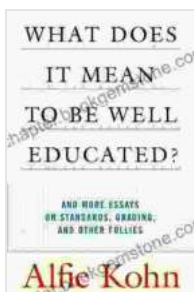


And More Essays On Standards Grading And Other Follies: An In-Depth Analysis

In his thought-provoking book, "And More Essays On Standards Grading And Other Follies," Alfie Kohn challenges the pervasive use of standards-based grading and other traditional educational practices. With a wealth of research and compelling arguments, Kohn exposes the flaws and negative consequences associated with these approaches, advocating for a more holistic and student-centered approach to assessment.

Critique of Standards-Based Grading

One of the central criticisms in Kohn's book is directed at the widespread adoption of standards-based grading systems. These systems rely heavily on standardized tests and objective criteria to measure student performance. Kohn argues that such systems are overly simplistic and fail to capture the complexities and individuality of student learning.



What Does It Mean to Be Well Educated?: And More Essays on Standards, Grading, and Other Follies

by Alfie Kohn

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 716 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 226 pages



Kohn highlights several problems with standards-based grading. Firstly, he argues that it can lead to a narrow focus on specific, testable skills at the expense of broader knowledge and understanding. This can result in students memorizing facts and procedures without developing critical thinking skills or a genuine love of learning.

Secondly, Kohn contends that standards-based grading is often arbitrary and discriminatory. Different schools and teachers may set different standards, leading to inconsistencies and unfair comparisons between students. Additionally, students from disadvantaged backgrounds may face systemic biases that can impact their test scores and grades.

Alternatives to Standards-Based Grading

In place of standards-based grading, Kohn proposes alternative assessment methods that emphasize student growth, effort, and self-reflection. These methods can take various forms, such as:

- * **Portfolio assessments:** These allow students to showcase their work over time, demonstrating their progress and development in a particular subject.
- * **Performance-based assessments:** These require students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts, providing a more authentic measure of their understanding.
- * **Self-assessments:** These encourage students to reflect on their own learning, develop metacognitive skills, and take ownership of their progress.

The Folly of Rewards and Punishments

Another major theme in Kohn's book is the critique of rewards and punishments as extrinsic motivators for learning. He argues that these

approaches undermine intrinsic motivation, which is essential for long-term engagement and success in learning.

Kohn explains that rewards can make students focus more on external approval than on the inherent value of the task. This can lead to a loss of interest and motivation when rewards are no longer available. Similarly, punishments can create a sense of fear and anxiety, inhibiting creativity, risk-taking, and genuine engagement in learning.

Instead of relying on rewards and punishments, Kohn advocates for creating a classroom environment that fosters intrinsic motivation. This involves providing students with opportunities for choice, autonomy, and meaningful connections to their learning.

Implications for Education

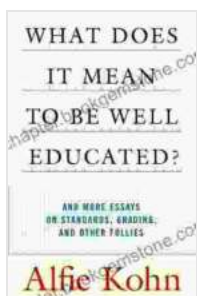
Kohn's criticisms and alternative proposals have significant implications for education. By challenging the traditional emphasis on standards and grades, he encourages educators to rethink their assessment practices and prioritize the development of learners as whole individuals.

Some of the implications for education include:

- * **Emphasis on growth and progress:** Assessment should focus on tracking student growth over time, rather than simply comparing them to arbitrary standards.
- * **Individualized learning:** Assessment methods should be tailored to each student's unique learning needs, strengths, and interests.
- * **Student agency:** Students should have a say in their own assessment and be encouraged to reflect on their learning and make improvements.
- * **Collaboration and feedback:** Assessment should be a

collaborative process involving students, teachers, and parents, providing constructive feedback to support learning.

Alfie Kohn's "And More Essays On Standards Grading And Other Follies" is a powerful indictment of the current educational system's overreliance on standards-based grading and extrinsic motivators. Through rigorous research and engaging arguments, Kohn challenges educators to rethink their practices and embrace a more holistic and student-centered approach to assessment. By promoting intrinsic motivation, individualized learning, and student agency, we can create educational environments that foster lifelong learning and empower students to reach their full potential.



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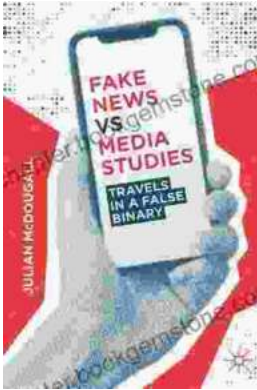
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