

Investigating Teachers Grading Perceptions, Current Grading Habits and Their Views Towards Classroom Assessment Grading Practice

Oluchukwu David Okoli
Festus Ebuka Ifejika
Anambra State

E-mail address: odavid243@gmail.com

Abstract: This study empirically investigated teachers' perceptions, current assessment grading practices, and their views towards classroom assessment grading practice. The study utilising qualitative research design adopted three questionnaires for data collection, and randomly sampled 204 teachers. Cronbach Alpha Coefficient established the reliability of the various questionnaires. Frequency counts and percentages were used to answer the study research questions, while t-test was employed to test the study hypotheses. The study found that teachers do not positively perceive assessment grading practice, included non-achievement factors when grading students' assessments and used subjective knowledge when grading assessments. However, teachers viewed the assessment grading practice as an essential tool for quantification of students learning. Subsequently, significance difference was found between teachers' experience and teachers' perception towards assessment grading practice and views on the classroom importance of assessment grading practice. Nonetheless, no significant difference was found between teachers experience and teachers' current classroom grading habits.

Keywords: Teachers Perception, Teachers Current Grading Habits, Assessment Grading Practice

Assessment grading, a process used in assigning scores to test taker's quality of work (Zhou, 2015), is a critical aspect of the classroom teacher's responsibility. Assessment grading is an essential school phenomenon that affects all students within its system. As such, it has become the primary process utilised by classroom teachers to report student scores to interested stakeholders.

According to Drexlerová, Šed'ová, and Sedláček (2019), teachers assessment grading practices play significant roles that have a far-reaching educational implication on students' academic progress. Hence, the assessment grading practice can be used to improve learners' motivation, self-efficacy, and self-esteem (Ross & Kostuch, 2011; Perry, Davies & Qiu, 2018). It can also be used to achieve other inappropriate goals, such as encouraging inappropriate competition among students and suppressing students' motivation and creativity (Lipnevich & Smith, 2009; Tomlinson, 2010). Moreover, Tierney (2015) noted that in the classroom, the teacher uses the assessment grading practice to determine students'

level of instruction mastery, improve, and support the classroom instructional process (Gustafsson & Erickson, 2013; Südkamp, Praetorius & Spinath, 2018). For institutions, the assessment grading practice provides an external evaluation of the student's level of achievement. Likewise to parents, the assessment grading practice provides evidence of the extent of a student's performance in the course of study, thereby helping the parents decide when and where it has become essential to provide necessary and relevant educational interventions (Okoye, 2015; Randall & Engelhard, 2010).

Despite the crucial roles the assessment grading practice plays within school systems, the assessment grading practice seems to be the least liked, least understood, least enjoyed, uncomfortable and difficult task, which causes internal and external tensions amongst teachers. In some other instances, some teachers seem to be irritated by the practice. This perceived aversion among teachers towards the grading practice could result in the significant variations among teachers in their assessment grading practices.

One major reason for grading variations among teachers could be that some teachers are in haste when scoring students' tests. Hence, they adopt ethically questionable models of assessment grading, which vary widely and unpredictably (Kubiszyn and Borich, 2013). It could also be that few teachers receive formal training on assessment grading and reporting practices (Guskey, 2009) or that those teachers who received formal training on assessment grading failed to employ and adhere to the measurement guidelines they learned in measurement courses. On the other hand, some of the teachers may lack strong measurement skills. As a result, they do not have knowledge of the various assessment grading practices pros and cons and probable effects on students. Therefore, because of these, even when provided with some measurement instructions, these teachers may tend to indulge in hodgepodge practices by including non-achievement factors in grades, or use subjective value judgments when assigning scores to students work (Enwefa, 2015).

In Nigerian secondary schools, teachers can administer classroom assessment in various forms such as on-the-spot assessment, take-home assignments, group works, projects, or term examinations. The frequency of these assessments could be weekly, monthly or termly. Regardless of their frequency, these assessments are expected to provide the classroom teachers with the extent to which students have achieved classroom learning goals and objectives as well as provide relevant stakeholders with information on students' academic progress. Also, aside from its classroom-based uses, the assessment grading practice is used by teachers and schools to provide student achievement grades in the forms of continuous assessment grades which are used to supplement students' grades in high-stake standardised examinations such as those conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO), Nigeria. Given this, teacher assessment grading practices hold enormous significance to students' current and future academic opportunities, as once these grade are awarded, it may never be recovered. Given this, there is a need for careful considerations before teachers assign grades to students..

From these perspectives, there is a need to investigate teachers' perception, and current assessment grading habits and their views on the importance of assessment grading practice. This is because teachers' perception of the grading practice could impact on their classroom current grading

practices as well as the view of its importance to the teaching and learning process. Also, teachers perception, current grading habits and view of its importance could impact on student academic achievement, as these grades teachers assign could either open up or close down future academic opportunities for these students.

Theoretically, individual's perception may consist of physical, psychological and physiological aspects. As such, perception refers to an individual's viewpoint, opinion, or how they feel about a specific phenomenon or event consciously or unconsciously (Okoli, Agada, & Ugorji, 2011). Additionally, it involves the process, in which sensory stimuli are harmonised into experiences, thus making the experience, a product of stimulation and of the process itself (Okoli et al., 2011). In view of this, the study draws upon the sense-datum theory, which highlights that when individuals have sensory experiences, there is something of which the individual becomes aware willing or unwillingly (Crane & Craig, 2011). Based on this, it could be said that experiences depends on events, or activities, engaged in, which in turn influences the information that enters the working memory.

Specifically, due to the relevance of these construct to the study, this study inquired about teachers' perception towards assessment grading practice, the current assessment grading habit of teachers, and the teacher's views on the importance of assessment grading practice. Additionally, this study also hypothesized that there is no significance difference between teachers' years of experience and their perception of assessment grading, current grading habits, and their views on the importance of assessment grading practice. This is because scholars have noted that teacher's years of experience is an important variable of interest when it comes to teacher classroom activities and may hold relevance to how the teacher undertake task and activities in their classroom.

This study adopted a quantitative research design. The population of the study included all the public secondary school teachers in Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria.

Nevertheless, the study randomly sampled 204 secondary school teachers.

In line with reviewed literature, three questionnaires were developed and used for the study. The first instrument was titled: Questionnaire on teachers' perception of classroom assessment grading practice (QTPAGP). This questionnaire comprised seven items examining teachers' perceptions of the classroom assessment grading

practice. This instrument was scaled on three points ranging from always, sometimes, rarely. The second questionnaire was titled: Questionnaire on teachers' current grading habits towards classroom assessment (QTCGHTCA). This questionnaire consisted of 12 items assessing teachers' current grading habits towards classroom assessment and scaled on three points ranging from always, sometimes, rarely. The third questionnaire was: Questionnaire teachers' views on the importance of classroom assessment grading practice (QTVICAGP). This Questionnaire was composed of 13 items and scaled on four points: strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, and disagree.

Generally, after the initial questionnaire draft editing, the instrument face and content validity were further explored by measurement experts. Reviews from the experts resulted in the retentions of seven items for QTPAGP, 12 items for QTCGHTCA, and 13 items for QTVICAGP. To further establish the instrument construct validity, the retained items from the various questionnaires QTPAGP, QTCGHTCA and QTVICAGP were further subjected to the exploratory factor analysis. An overview of all the questionnaires Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin values were .717, .755, and .639, respectively. Also, their Barlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance, therefore, supporting factor analysis (see. Appendix B).

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

	QTPAGP	QTCGHTCA	QTVICAGP
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.717	.755	.639
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	141.935	465.920	276.238
Df	21	55	78
Sig	.000		.000

An overview of Figures 1, 2, and 3, scree plots for QTPAGP, QTCGHTCA and QTVICAGP, reveals an apparent break from their second, second, and fifth components.



Figure 1. Scree Plot for questionnaires on teachers' perception of classroom assessment grading practice (QTPAGP).

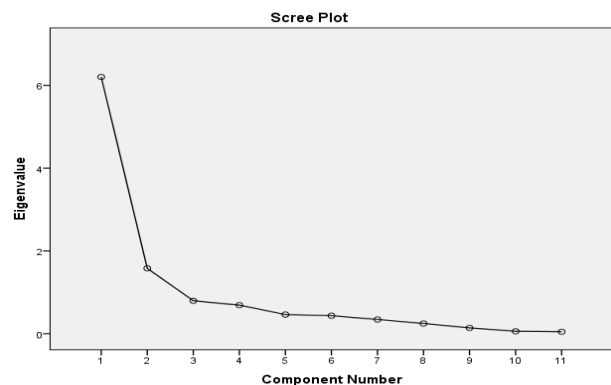


Figure 2. Scree Plot questionnaire on teachers' current grading habits towards classroom assessment (QTCGHTCA).

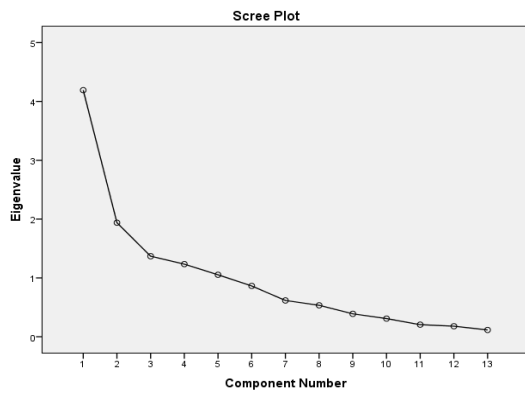


Figure 3. Scree Plot questionnaire on teachers' views about the importance of classroom assessment grading practice (QTVAICAGP).

Furthermore, an inspection of tables 2, 3, and 4 showed that the second, second, and fifth components of the various scales (QTPAGP, QTCGHTCA, QTVICAGP) had Eigenvalues exceeding one. Also, the total variance explained accounted for 65.3% of the variance for QTPAGP, 70.7% for QTCGHTCA, and 75.3% for QTVICAGP. These suggest that the scales comprised elements of unidimensionality

Table 2. Eigenvalues for Questionnaires on teachers perception of classroom assessment grading practice (QTPAGP)

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.513	50.184	50.184	3.513	50.184	50.184	3.140	44.859	44.859
2	1.059	15.125	65.309	1.09	15.125	65.309	1.431	20.450	65.309
3	.849	12.123	77.431						
4	.609	8.707	86.138						
5	.488	6.966	93.104						
6	.324	4.624	97.728						
7	.159	2.272	100.000						

Table 3. Eigenvalues for Questionnaire on teachers current grading habit towards classroom assessment (QTCGHTCA)

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.201	56.372	56.372	6.201	56.372	56.372	6.180	56.185	56.185
2	1.579	14.356	70.728	1.579	14.356	70.728	1.600	14.543	70.728
3	.796	7.235	77.964						
4	.690	6.273	84.236						
5	.462	4.199	88.435						
6	.435	3.958	92.393						
7	.344	3.132	95.524						
8	.246	2.239	97.764						
9	.140	1.272	99.035						
10	.059	.534	99.570						
11	.047	.430	100.000						

Table 4. Eigenvalues Questionnaire on teachers' views about the importance of classroom assessment grading practice (QTVICAGP).

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.191	32.241	32.241	4.191	32.241	32.241	2.343	18.020	18.020
2	1.939	14.912	47.152	1.939	14.912	47.152	2.284	17.567	35.587
3	1.369	10.532	57.685	1.369	10.532	57.685	1.750	13.462	49.049
4	1.234	9.496	67.181	1.234	9.496	67.181	1.741	13.393	62.442
5	1.053	8.101	75.281	1.053	8.101	75.281	1.669	12.840	75.281
6	.863	6.642	81.923						
7	.617	4.746	86.670						
8	.534	4.110	90.780						
9	.390	2.998	93.778						
10	.309	2.373	96.151						
11	.205	1.580	97.732						
12	.179	1.378	99.109						
13	.116	.891	100.000						

A confirmatory analysis using the Varimax Rotation procedure was also performed to examine the factor loading of each item on the instruments.

Table 5.

Questionnaires on teachers perception of classroom assessment grading practice (QTPAGP)		Always	Sometimes	Rarely
1	I try my best to avoid engaging in assessment grading practices			
2	The assessment grading practice irritates me			
3	The assessment grading practice is a difficult task			
4	I dislike engaging in assessment grading practice			
5	The assessment grading is a boring practice			
6	The thought of grading assessment creates tensions within me			
7	I feel uncomfortable whenever I grade assessment			

Table 6.

Questionnaire on teachers current grading habits towards classroom assessment (QTCGHTCA)		Always	Sometimes	Rarely
1	include non-achievement factors when grading students assessment			
2	grade assessment to punish students			
3	grade undisciplined students assessment low			
4	grade disciplined students assessment high			
5	grade low achieving students assessment low			
6	grade high achieving students assessment high			
7	grade students assessment to encourage competition			
8	assign a grade of zero if a student fails to complete an assignment or assessment			
9	inflate students assessment grades			
10	deflate students assessment grades			
11	Use subjective knowledge when grading assessment			

Table 7.

Questionnaire on teachers' views about the importance of classroom assessment grading practice (QTVICAGP)		SA	A	SD	D
1	improves the teaching and learning process				
2	improves student's self-efficacy				

3	improves students' motivation
4	improves student's self-esteem
5	helps the teacher identify strengths and weaknesses in the content area
6	improves teacher instructional effectiveness
7	help rank students according to their level of ability
8	provide feedback on student's academic progress
9	identify students with exceptionalities
10	provide accountability to relevant educational stakeholders
11	selecting student's educational activities or program
12	providing rewards for students to learn
13	providing students with information for self-assessment

Factors loading for items below .4 were rejected. Afterward, seven items were retained for the QTPAGP (see Table 8), 11 items for QTCGHTCA (see Table 9), and 13 items for QTVICAGP (see Table 10).

Table 8. Factor Rotation for Questionnaires on teachers perception of classroom assessment grading practice (QTPAGP)

	Component	
	1	2
item2		.794
item3		.673
item1	.758	
item4	.686	
item5	.777	
item6	.797	
item7	.894	

Table 9. Factor Rotation for Questionnaire on teachers current grading habit towards classroom assessment (QTCGHTCA)

	Component	
	1	2
Item1		.848
item11		.560
Item2	.875	
Item3	.798	
Item4	.868	
Item5	.822	
Item6	.794	
Item7	.601	
Item8	.774	
Item9	.877	
item10	.901	

Table 10. Factor Rotation for Questionnaire on Teachers' Views on the

Importance of Assessment Grading Practice in the Classroom (QTVICAGP).

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
item3	.799				
item6	.774				
item4	.577				
Item10		.888			
Item11		.742			
item9		.589			
item2		.576			
item7			.858		
Item1			.649		
item5				.856	
Item12				.735	
item8					.830
Item13					.513

Based on the results, the two factors from the questionnaires on teachers' perception of classroom assessment grading practice (QTPAGP) were labeled: Grading as worrisome, Grading as burdensome (see Table 11). The two factors from the questionnaires on teachers' current grading habits towards classroom assessment (QTCGHTCA) were labeled: Disregard grading practices, Engage in hodgepodge grading practices (see Table 12). The five factors from the questionnaires on teachers views on the importance of assessment grading practice in the classroom (QTVICAGP) were labeled Important for student development, For sorting of students, Contributes to student academic improvement, Serves as incentives to both teacher and students, Crucial for providing students with feedback (see Table 13). Cronbach Alpha Coefficient assessed the reliability of the three Questionnaires. Cronbach alpha established the reliability of the QTPAGP, QTCGHTCA, and QTVICAGP as .82, .90, and .80, respectively. Also, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to estimate each subscale. Hence, Table 11, Table 12, Table 13 highlights the reliability estimate of the two, two, and five subscale components of the QTPAGP, QTCGHTCA, and QTVICAGP, respectively.

Table 11. Reliability estimate for QTPAGP two-component subscale

Sub-scales	Number of items	reliability
Grading as worrisome	.86	5
Grading as Burdensome	.31	2

Table 12. Reliability estimate for QTCGHTCA two-component subscale

Sub-scales	Number of items	reliability
Disregard grading practices	9	.93
Engage in hodgepodge grading practices	2	.344

Table 13. Reliability estimate for QTVICAGP five-component subscale

Sub-scales	Number of items	reliability
Important for student development	3	.66
For sorting of students	4	.77
Contributes to student academic improvement	2	.47
Serves as incentives to both teacher and students	2	.75
important for providing students with feedback	2	.30

RESULTS

Research Question One. What is the perception of teachers towards assessment grading practice?

Table XIV shows that teachers' do not have a positive perception towards assessment grading practice.

Table 14. Teachers Perception towards assessment grading practice (QTPAGP)

Section A: Item Cluster	Always		Sometimes		Rarely	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
I try my best to avoid engaging in assessment grading practices	136	66.7	60	29.4	8	3.9
The assessment grading practice irritates me	160	78.4	40	19.6	4	2.0
The assessment grading practice is a difficult task	24	11.8	160	78.4	20	9.8
I dislike engaging in assessment grading practice	80	39.2	80	39.2	44	21.6
The assessment grading is a boring practice	96	47.1	64	31.4	44	21.6
The thought of grading assessment creates tensions within me	80	39.2	40	19.6	84	41.2
I feel uncomfortable whenever I grade assessment	92	45.1	48	23.5	64	31.4

Research Question Two. What is the current assessment grading habit of teachers?

Table XV highlights that teachers include non-achievement factors when grading students' assessments and used subjective knowledge.

Table 15. Table15. Teachers Current classroom Grading Practice (QTCGHTCA)

Section B: Item Cluster	Always		Sometimes		Rarely	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
include non-achievement factors when grading students assessment	84	41.2	112	54.9	8	3.9
grade students assessment to encourage competition	24	11.8	84	41.2	96	47.1
grade assessment to punish students	24	11.8	84	41.2	96	47.1
grade undisciplined students assessment low	84	41.2	44	25.4	16	7.8
grade disciplined students assessment high	137	66.8	40	21.6	76	37.3
grade low achieving students assessment low	88	43.1	68	33.3	48	23.5
grade high achieving students assessment high	84	41.2	80	39.2	40	19.6
assign low grades for late submission of assessment	20	9.8	92	45.1	92	45.1
assign a grade of zero if a student fails to complete an assignment or assessment	32	15.7	88	43.1	84	41.2
inflate students assessment grades	76	37.3	64	31.4	64	31.4
deflate students assessment grades	92	45.1	40	19.6	72	35.3
Use subjective knowledge when grading assessment	84	41.2	108	52.9	12	5.9

Research Question three. What are the teacher's views on the importance of assessment grading practice?

Table XVI reveals that teachers view the assessment grading practice as an essential tool for quantifying students' learning.

Table 16. Teacher View on the Importance of the Assessment Grading Practice (QTVICAGP)

Section C: Item Cluster	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
improves the teaching and learning process	88	43.1	100	49.0	16	7.8	-	-
improves student's self-efficacy	144	70.6	44	21.6	4	2.0	12	5.9
improves students' motivation	168	82.4	28	13.7	4	2.0	4	2.0
improves student's self-esteem	116	56.9	72	35.3	8	3.9	8	3.9
helps teacher identify strength and weakness in content area	120	35.3	72	58.8	8	3.9	4	2.0
improves teacher instructional effectiveness	84	41.2	112	54.9	8	3.9	-	-
help rank students according to their level of ability	100	49.0	96	47.1	4	2.0	4	2.0
provide feedback on student's academic progress	148	72.5	44	21.6	12	5.9	-	-
identify students with exceptionalities	116	56.9	80	39.2	4	2.0	4	2.0
provide accountability to relevant educational stakeholders	112	54.9	72	35.3	8	3.9	12	5.9
selecting student's educational activities or programs	104	51.0	48	23.5	12	5.9	40	19.6
providing rewards for students to learn	72	35.3	108	52.9	12	5.9	12	5.9
providing students with information for self-assessment	44	21.6	148	72.5	12	5.9	-	-

HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis One There is no significance difference between teachers' years of experience and their perception of assessment.

Table XVII shows a significant difference between teachers' experience and teachers' perception towards assessment grading practice.

Table 17. Teacher's years of experience and their perception towards assessment grading practice

Variables	Experience	N	\bar{x}	SD	T-test	df	P-value	Decision
Perception towards assessment grading practice	0-9	176	2.32	.47	3.28	202	.001	Significant
	10 and above	28	2.00	.56				

Hypothesis Two. There is no significance difference between teachers' years of experience and current grading habits.

Table XVIII reveals that there is no significant difference between teachers' years of experience and current grading habits.

Table 18. Teacher's years of experience and current teacher grading habit.

Variables	Experience	N	\bar{x}	SD	T-test	df	P-value	Decision
Current teacher grading habit	1-9	176	2.06	.50	.366	202	.715	Not Significant
	10 and above	28	2.02	.40				

Hypothesis Three. There is no significance difference between teachers' years of experience and their views on the classroom importance of assessment grading practice?

Table XVIV shows a significant difference between teachers' experience and teachers' views on the classroom importance of assessment grading practice.

Table 19. Teachers years of experience and their views on the classroom importance of assessment grading practice

Variables	Experience	N	\bar{x}	SD	T-test	df	P-value	Decision
Teachers views on the classroom importance of assessment grading practice	0-9	176	3.49	.40	5.22	202	.000	Significant
	10 and above	28	3.06	.39				

DISCUSSION:

Based on the table 14 results, teachers' do not have a positive perception towards the assessment grading practice. This may be the reason a large percentage of teachers' perceive the assessment grading practice as an uncomfortable, boring, irritating venture therefore, they try their best to avoid engaging in assessment grading practices.

Table15 results disclose that teachers still indulge in hodgepodge grading practices when grading students' assessments. As a result, they include non-achievement factors and use subjective knowledge when grading students' assessments, as well as grade students assessment to encourage competition. This means that grade teachers assign to students are not a true reflection of their academic achievement but a mix of other factors. As such, teachers' assessment grading outcomes are unreliable measure of students' achievement or performance.

Findings from Table 16 showed that teachers view the assessment grading practice as an essential tool for quantifying students' learning. Therefore, majority of them agreed that it helps them provide feedback on student's academic progress, selecting student's educational activities or programs as well as help improves student's self-efficacy, motivation, self esteem.

Table 17, the t-test statistics table showed teachers with 0-9 years of experience had slightly higher mean score ($\bar{x} = 2.32$, $SD = .47$) than teachers with 10 years and above ($\bar{x} = 2.00$, $SD = .56$). Furthermore, a significant difference was found between teachers' years of experience and teachers' perception towards assessment grading practice ($t[202] = 3.28$, $p = .001$).

Table 18, the t-test statistics table reported that with 0-9 years of experience had slightly higher mean score ($\bar{x} = 2.06$, $SD = .50$) than teachers with 10 years and above ($\bar{x} = 2.02$, $SD = .40$). However, no significant difference was found between

teachers' years of experience and teachers' current teacher grading habit ($t[202] = .366$, $p = .715$).

Finally, table 19, the t-test statistics table reported that with 0-9 years of experience had slightly higher mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.49$, $SD = .40$) than teachers with 10 years and above ($\bar{x} = 3.06$, $SD = .3.9$). Also, a significant difference was found between teachers' years of experience and and their views on the importance of assessment grading practice ($t[202] = 5.22$, $p = .000$).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that teachers have do not have a positive perception of assessment grading practice, and currently engage in hodgepodge assessment grading habits. Nevertheless, they still viewed the assessment grading practice as an essential school practice. Additionally, a teacher's years of experience is a significant factor in determining teachers' perception towards assessment grading practice and teachers' views on the classroom importance of assessment grading practice. However, teachers' years of experience is not significant in determining teachers' current grading habits.

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