

## What About 2-1?

*Only test scores and marks motivate students. We need to give them more of that. They need that kind of information.*

Many of us believe that the best way to motivate others and ourselves is with external rewards like test scores, grades, and marks. This thinking can be a mistake. Research and writing in the area of human motivation (Pink, 2009; Covington, 1998) reports that what motivates us is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things, and to do better by our world and ourselves. Edward Deci & Richard Ryan (2002) and Wynne Harlen & Ruth Deakin Crick (2002) remind us that extrinsic rewards alone – like test scores, grades, and marks, which are all forms of evaluative feedback – undermine interest and motivation.

Students who are fed a steady diet of evaluative feedback tend to select tasks that are low in difficulty, with an eye to getting them done as quickly and as easily as possible. For students who struggle, receiving evaluative feedback alone can lead to feelings of rejection and alienation. Consistent messaging that they are not doing well enough does not give them the information that they need to change what they are doing. Many students have difficulty decoding what the evaluative feedback is saying. What have I done well? What do I need to change?