

Alternative Assessments and Feedback



The Problems

- Students don't respond to feedback.
- Students fixate on the grade.
- Professors worry about cheating on tests and plagiarism on written work.
- Professors and Students are opposing forces when it comes to grades.
- No one is digging into the content and practice of the discipline.

Potential Solutions

- Work the feedback process into the assessments.
 - This can be anything from providing general feedback on classroom assessment techniques to incorporating feedback into a revised product.
- Remove the grade as a point of contention between faculty and student

Specification Grading

- Professor sets the specifications for successful completion of an assessment. Students either pass or fail the assessment.
- Professor “bundles” assessments and students choose which to pursue to earn a certain grade.
- Assessments are tied directly to course and program outcomes with the added bonus that it creates artifacts the program can show accreditors.

Un-Grading

- The emphasis is on metacognition, developing life-long learning skills, and student provided evidence of what they've learned.
- The practice can include:
 - Periodic self-reflection.
 - Student self-evaluation (like a performance evaluation).
 - Student produced artifacts of what they've learned.

Some Preparation is Required

The professor needs to communicate to the students:

- Why they are using this approach,
- The standards that are expected,
- that specification grading or ungrading is a conversation on growth and development and that they prioritize student agency and development,
- They will be unharmed.

Resources

- Ungrading
- Jesse Stommel - [How to Ungrade](#)
- Clarissa Sorensen-Unruh - [Ungrading: A Series \(Part I\)](#)
- Susan Blum, ed. [Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning \(and What to Do Instead\)](#)
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- Specifications Grading
- Macie Hall - [What is Specifications Grading and Why Should You Consider Using It?](#)
- Linda Nilson - Inside Higher Ed, [Yes, Virginia, There's a Better Way to Grade](#); and [Specifications Grading: Restoring Rigor, Motivating Students, and Saving Faculty Time](#)