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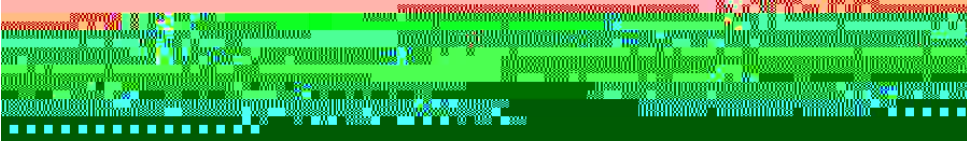
WID aims to kick off the 1st semester with a bang by bringing

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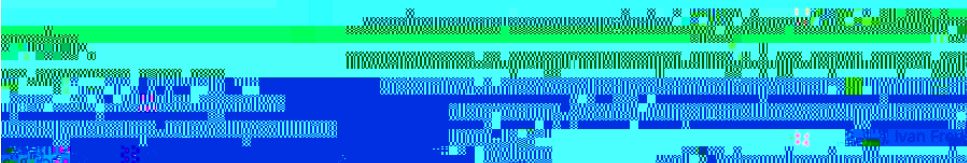
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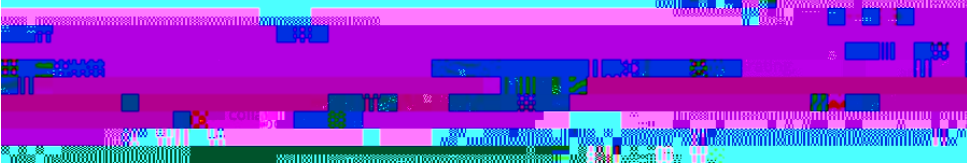
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Order of operations

1. What is contract grading?
2. What is specifications grading?
3. Benefits
4. Contract vs. specifications
5. Take it slow!
6. Are we allowed to do this?
7. *Example 1: Ben (History)*
8. *Example 2: Jocelyn (History)*
9. *Example 3: Jeff (English)*
10. Further reading
11. Questions/Discussion
12. Next steps?

What is contract grading?

“In a contract grading course, students have to complete a specific list of tasks in order to achieve a certain grade. These tasks are listed and explained on a contract” (Bean & Melzer 347).

Typically used with portfolios. A portfolio would include a collection of student work in a semester that culminates in a final product. It emphasizes process, increases value for students, and can “offer teachers a more holistic approach to assessing a student’s performance while also supporting the teacher’s coaching role” (Bean & Melzer 342).

2 types of contract grading schemes

1. With instructor gate
2. Without instructor gate



Converting to final grades

Bundling: Students choose a “bundle” of assignments that they will complete in order to attain a specific final grade.

The higher grade, the higher amount of increasingly difficult bundles the students must complete.

Benefits: Contract grading

“Contract grading is an approach to assessment that aims to lessen student anxiety, reduce the subjectivity of grading, and shift more of the emphasis of evaluation to students’ labor and processes” (Bean & Melzer 347).

“Asao Inoue...critiques the white, middle-class standard that is typically applied in grading student writing and the ways this standard often puts students of color at a disadvantage. Inoue argues that a course focused on assessing labor rather than teacher judgments about the quality of final drafts is more democratic and equitable” (Bean & Melzer 351).

Benefits: Specs grading

Ensures that everything a student hands in is of a high standard and completely meets the competency of the assignment.

To pass, students simply need to complete fewer assignments, and assignments that are less cognitively demanding.

To get an A, students need to complete all assignments, including the most cognitively demanding ones.

Motivational value: Allows students to feel “in control of [their] life outcomes and attributes them to [their] own efforts and determination” (Nilson 106).

Contract vs specifications

They're very similar in a lot of ways.

At the end of the day, no need to rigidly define which model you're choosing.

Can be a hybrid style.

The point is to:

- Give students a choice in their own learning journeys.

- Focus on process and individual improvement, rather than on a potentially subjective and ambiguous judgment of "quality".

Take it slow!

Take the time to read some of the suggested material at the end of this presentation.

You don't have to design your entire course around a contract or specs grading model. You can start by using one group of assignments.

- To get a 10/10 on journal submissions, you must complete all 10 and demonstrate...

- To get an 8/10, complete 8/10 and demonstrate...

- Etc.

Are we allowed to do this?

Examples

Further Readings

Bean, John C. & Dan Melzer. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. 3rd Edition. Jossey-Bass, 2021.

Chapter 16: Alternatives to Traditional Grading.

Nilson, Linda B. *Specifications Grading: Restoring Rigor, Motivating Students, and Saving Faculty Time*. Stylus, 2015.

Chapter 5: Essentials of Specifications Grading

Chapter 6: Converting Specs-Graded Student Work into Final Letter Grades

Chapter 7: Examples of Specs-Graded Course Designs

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