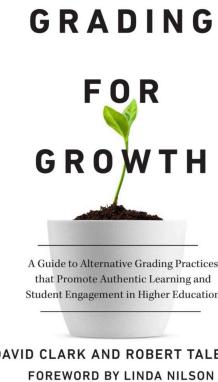


Raising the bar

What works, what doesn't, and what to do next with alternative grading

This document: <http://gvsu.edu/s/2vk>



David Clark: clarkdav@gvsu.edu, [@dccmath.bsky.social](https://dccmath.bsky.social), [web](#)

Slides: [Raising the bar with alternative grading - Slides](#)

Blog: <https://gradingforgrowth.com/>

Book: [Grading for Growth](#) is available now! (20% discount code: AEVV23)

Community:

- Perusall Engage [community book event](#) (January 15 - February 9, 2024): Read *Grading for Growth* asynchronously online and engage with other readers and the authors! (\$15 for 60 days access; includes discount code for physical book)
- The [Grading Conference](#): June 13 - 15, 2024, online (STEM focus).
- [Ungrading Conference](#): January 26, 2024, online (languages, literatures, cultures focus).
- [Slack alternative grading community](#) (use [this link to join](#)): Message board for anyone interested in alternative grading, from K-12 to college and in any discipline.
- [Ungrading Discord](#) (link invites you to join): Message board focused on ungrading.
- Twitter, Mastodon, BlueSky: #GradingForGrowth, #ungrading, #AlternativeGrading

Models and samples:

- [MTH 210 \(Intro to proofs\) Syllabus W23](#) - Hybrid of SBG, Specifications, etc.
- [MTH 331 \(Euclidean Geometry\) Syllabus W23](#) - Feedback only, portfolio
- Sample syllabi, objectives, and materials from alternatively graded classes in some STEM disciplines: [math](#), [physics](#), [bio](#), [chemistry](#), [computer science](#)
- Details: [Four pillars](#), [EMRN rubric](#)

Books, blogs, websites:

- [Alternative Grading FAQ](#): Direct answers to commonly asked questions
- Nilson, Linda: [Specifications Grading: Restoring Rigor, Motivating Students, and Saving Faculty Time](#). Stylus Publishing, 2014. The bible of Specifications Grading.
- Blum, Susan (ed.): [Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning \(and What to Do Instead\)](#). West Virginia University Press, 2020. A collection of essays on assessment and ungrading, focused on higher education.

- Feldman, Joe: **[Grading for Equity: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How It Can Transform Schools and Classrooms](#)**. Corwin, 2018. Focused on K-12, but readily applies to higher education as well.
- Matt Townsley's [Standards-Based Grading resource website](#) (somewhat K-12 focused). Includes summaries of research, examples, and a bibliography.

A few key pieces of alternative grading-related research:

- Butler, R., & Nisan, M. (1986). Effects of no feedback, task-related comments, and grades on intrinsic motivation and performance. *Journal of educational psychology*, 78(3), 210–216. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.78.3.210> *A classic study showing how grades can reduce student motivation and interest.*
- Anderman, E. M., & Koenka, A. C. (2017). The Relation Between Academic Motivation and Cheating. *Theory Into Practice*, 56(2), 95–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2017.1308172> *A summary of results from motivation theory on practices that reduce cheating. The four pillars of alternative grading are aligned with these best practices.*
- Lewis, D. (2022). Impacts of Standards-Based Grading on Students' Mindset and Test Anxiety. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 22(2), 67-77. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1347380.pdf> *This math-focused study shows a significant reduction in test anxiety when using standards-based grading, including elimination of gender differences.*