

UC Assessment Outline

Outline/Agenda:

- Title, Meet the team, Agenda, the Series (Samantha; ~2 min)
- Equitable grading assessment, Grading for equity, Strategies (Mariah; ~3 min)
- Poll (~2 min)
- Use Cases: 3- 5 (~8 min)
 - Samantha
 - Annie
 - Worku
 - Cova
 - Asao
 - Jack and Josh
 - Mariah
 - Mike
 - Goldberry
 - Dr. Rob
 - Fabi
 - Tatevik

Slides:

- <https://gamma.app/docs/CURRENT-Engaging-Faculty-to-Rethink-Grades-Strategies-and-Use-Cas-1t7qx9as74etbig>

Mariah's Script: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PAIXZIBwYswM5wKZOqm3Lr09nWOHma-3ZvKLpV4zDlc/edit?usp=sharing>

Zoom:

<https://ucr.zoom.us/j/98053968554>

Meeting ID: 980 5396 8554

One tap mobile: +16694449171,,98053968554# US

TinyURLs and links to share or to have open in tabs:

- Crowdsourcing Poll: <https://www.mentimeter.com/app/presentation/aldyrrifqrj8xctu7gwouswwobhkjths/edit?source=share-invite-modal>

- Q&A Poll Results: (placeholder)
- Session Evaluation?:

To do:

- Browser group of tabs

Have open in tabs:

- Q&A Poll: (placeholder)

Session Introduction (2 min.) - Samantha	
SLIDE	CONTENTS/NOTES
	Please have your phone to vote during this session, and here's a QR code to access these slides in case you'd like to follow along at your own pace or review them later. We'll share the QR code and link to them again at the end of the session.
Title	Thanks for joining us today for this talk about "Engaging Faculty to Rethink Grades: Strategies and Use Cases for Alternative and Equitable Assessment." Today, we're excited to share some examples and models of use cases demonstrating alternative approaches or strategies for achieving more equitable grading and ways these strategies were implemented in specific course contexts.
Meet the team	My name is Samantha Eastman and I'm a Sr. LX Designer with the XCITE Center for Teaching and Learning, here with Mariah Cladis, our XCITE Learning Specialist. We've been fortunate to have an intersegmental team from UC Riverside and several CA Community Colleges Our colleagues who contributed but who are not able to join us here today include: • Alex Rockey, Academic Technology Professor at Bakersfield College and • Fabiola Torres, Humanized Online Instructor of Ethnic Studies from Glendale Community College.

Agenda	For today's talk we will cover a few alternative strategies for grading and assessment, with an opportunity to focus on specific use cases.
the Series	These strategies are derived in part, from a faculty development series called the "Alternative and Equitable Grading" series, hosted by the XCITE Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of California, Riverside in Winter 2024. It was funded through UC Online's "digital Inclusion" award to support program development for the UCR's "Healthy Pedagogy" initiative. It was also partially funded through an NSF grant called "Beyond Access: Leveraging Mobile-Friendly Design to Support Student Success." The series was designed to broaden opportunities for exposure, support and inspiration among instructors interested in exploring alternative grading strategies and equitable approaches to grading. It consisted of four, hybrid 1-hour sessions, including: "Overview of Alternative and Equitable Grading Strategies," "Specifications and Mastery Grading," "Alternative or Authentic Assessments," and "Contract Grading and Ungrading." The initiative featured invited speakers who presented use cases, explanations, and ideas on how to implement their corresponding strategies. A companion course also held recordings, discussion boards, additional resources, and Q&A forums to encourage a COP.
Equitable grading assessment, Grading for equity, Strategies (3 min.) - Mariah	
Poll (2 min.) - Mariah	
Use Cases (3-5 @ 8 min.) - Samantha and Mariah	
Annie	● Associate Professor of Teaching in Psychology ● Interested in scaling to high enrollment courses ● 165 stu in Statistics for PSYC majors ● Book rec: Specifications Grading by Linda Nielson (sp?) ● Overview: ○ Grades are tied to meeting expectations with regard to learning outcomes

- Work towards achievement of outcomes should be measurable and specific
- Should be based on achieving mastery
 - Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory on Assignments
 - S = B- (80%)
 - Pass = C
 - Set thresholds for how you want Nielson suggests Satisfactory = B-
- Approach:
 - Annie “bundles” assignment options by equivalent grade category, i.e., “A,” “B,” or “C”
 - Students choose which assignments they want to complete to reach a “satisfactory” level
 - Choice bw bundles to earn the grade they want
 - For a “C” students might complete ⅔ assignments and pass all quizzes at 80% average, no portfolio assignment necessary
 - “B:” ⅔ assignments (problem sets), higher average than “C” for quizzes, plus a portfolio assignment
 - “A:” All 5 problem sets, higher average than “B” for quizzes, Submit a “Stats in the News” essay, and undertake the “design a research question” project
 - Students know what they need to expect to complete to the specification to get the grade they want (very obvious) so they know what they are trying to accomplish
 - Students revise based on feedback from instructional team
 - to get to “S” through use of tokens
 - Tokens set specs apart from mastery
 - the token economy
 - Tokens provide a limited number of revisions per student per class.
 - Tokens create flexibility and more equitable opportunities (some are more likely to request extensions outside of this system)
 - It takes some students more times than others to reach mastery
 - it forces them to choose what is most important for them to do to help them reach their goal
 - They can use them when they need an extension
 - Specifications need to be clear and self-explanatory, esp. for assignments
 - It should be obvious when they have achieved an outcome or not based on TA markings
 - to get an “S,” for example, students must get 16/20 Qs on a quiz
 - accurately identify the statistical test appropriate for analyzing ⅔ research designs
 - When students pass with specs, its either “all or none”

- Letter Grades can be earned by
 - creating higher (cognitive) level work
 - scaling challenge of an assignment is one way
 - or by doing more work at a more base level of understanding (good for intro courses)
 - more about understanding, remembering and applying across PSYC domains
- Advice for high-enrollment
 - adopt a “specs-lite” approach but still use some points
 - Limit #s of possible re-do’s and build it into the course
 - Can always re-do with tests
- Results
 - Fewer As with the shift to specs
 - On final exams students scored an average of 81% (22S; specs) compared to 82% (21S; traditional)
- Advice
 - it’s not a magical panacea
 - don’t jump in whole hog
 - you might not see grade distributions shift upward
 - Her traditional course is already designed to combat the problems specs is typically used to address, i.e.,
 - infrequent, high-stakes testing
 - allowing test corrections
 - encouraging mastery
 - flexible approach
 - open content
- How students responded
 - They notice:
 - they’re being held to high academic standards
 - it might motivate them to learn and excel
 - stress goes down
 - less overwhelmed with high stakes grading
 - Students still emphasize grades over learning
 - can become hyper focused on how grades are getting assigned, even moreso than in a typical course
 - It makes them feel more responsible for their own learning

Worku	● Assistant Professor of Teaching in Anthropology ● “Students learn best by doing things” ● Background ○ Implemented self and peer evaluation in lower div. undergraduate courses ○ COVID induced radical change in the teaching profession ■ It impacted Worku’s approach to teaching grading ■ He had previously considered equity, diversity and sense of belonging before COVID ■ He hadn’t previously considered grading from a perspective of equity ■ He became disturbed by the degree of monitoring and surveillance that resulted from the switch to emergency remote teaching ● It revealed a divide ● the traditional approach with proctoring systems was perpetuating inequalities in learning spaces ● Cultural Anthropology ○ Anthropology is the study of what it is to be humans ● Goals: ○ Help students learn about anthropology by invoking their own cultures and lived experiences ○ for students to gain anthropological insights and perspectives ● Approach ○ hands on, writing assignments ■ CTA 1 & 2 ■ CTA1: ● students reflect on their own cultures in relation to how anthropologists reflect about culture ● create a 3 pp. essay through multiple drafts, writing stories about their own cultures ● They first assess themselves ● They submit the improved essay for peer evaluation ● Then they assess one another and apply feedback to make improvements ○ Authentic assessment principles for equity minded teaching ■ being intentional about relevance and rigor ■ being transparent ○ Relevance speaks to the content and assessment he is using ■ How is the content relevant to their aspirations and lived experience, and to their ideas of a “good life?” ● Humanizes the learning process
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- Helps them include their own stories and experiences as part of learning the material (authentic)
 - They learn anthropology from their own stories and from critically analyzing their peers' stories
 - this values and validates their stories
 - gives ownership and agency
 - it fosters a sense of belonging
- Methods
 - Students:
 - Create stories of their own cultures and identities
 - Produce multiple drafts
 - Engage in self and peer assessments using rubrics
- Student response
 - Did self and Peer Evaluation help you with CTA1?
 - 87% - Yes
 - 13% - no
 - CTA2?
 - 90% of 106 - yes
 - 10% - no
 - In what ways did it help (CTA1)?
 - helped reflect on my own
 - see my mistakes
 - see what was missing
 - peer review offered insight from an unbiased party, supporting good revisions
 - one student wrote they appreciated receiving beneficial criticism and insight from someone in their same position as a peer learner
 - In what ways did it help (CTA2)?
 - Self: helped to critically analyze work for what they did right and what they could improve on; Peer: see how others wrote
 - Self: notice small things; Peer: realize stuff I may have missed
 - Allowed them to
 - validate what they did correctly
 - refine
 - Improve their writing
- Helped the focus stay on effort, learning, improvement and growth

Cova	● Interim Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs in CHASS, Associate Professor of Hispanic Studies ● Study Abroad Program in Spain for Heritage Speakers ○ 2016-2022 (ex. 2020, 2021) ○ ~15 stu. paper year ○ developed DH project in collaboration with local ethnographic museum ● Visited 13 cities and 14 museums or cultural locations ○ Buddy system ○ Students count themselves ala Sound of Music in SPN to gain their tone/voice in a foreign language ● No tests while there ○ a process of self-exploration ■ go to places that interest them ● scavenger hunts ○ see buildings ○ Find painting in museums ■ write about them in SPN ● evaluate their own experiences ○ what is the effort they are making ○ guidelines are clear ● own the experience where they are comfortable, with a push toward SPN ○ take pics ○ see things ○ reflect on social media ● Everyone has an “A” ○ they just need to keep it ● Majority are happy to self-express in ways they are most comfortable ○ i.e., using images or videos with some supporting text ● Methods ○ Students become agents of their own learning process, beginning with what they already know ○ team-building helps to prevent isolation, esp. online ○ allows for self discovery while pursuing geographical discovery ○ facilitates interactions in the local language (speaking, listening, city signage) ● Qs for replication

	○ How to produce these activities and articulate them in ways where the assessment is clear for the students, i.e., they know what they need to do to get a good grade ■ complete/incomplete? ○ Individual + group discrete tasks ○ Make it bi-lingual ● What Cova wants to assess is creation of knowledge ○ not evaluate knowledge but rather how people create knowledge for themselves ■ most of us have access to knowledge ● what we need to teach our students is: how to find is what constitutes good knowledge or how to determine when knowledge is not well-sourced ● Students need to know where to go to find information ● Students should create knowledge ● connect knowledge they bring to what is presented through the course
Asao	● Professor of Rhetoric and Composition, ASU ● ~30 stu. ● See Handout. ● LBG is a form of ungrading (the larger umbrella) ○ a form of contract grading ● Seeks to combat biases of traditional grading using an equity-based alternative. Grades are: ○ subjective ○ account for variables out of the control of students and teachers ○ are influenced by time and context ○ are out of students' control when they are judged by ability ○ labor and effort are often not counted ○ speak to the dispositions of the judge and judger ○ reflect conditions of learning and of grading ○ reflect socio-economic positioning and privilege (out of control of students and teachers) ● Seeks to combat the advent of grading as a technology that breeds: ○ hierarchies ○ one standard ■ you can only have a regression towards mediocrity (the mean) when you work from a single standard ● this is bell curve bias

- false precision
- linear measurements of quality
- alienation of students
- bell curve bias
- Alienated Labor was meant to
 - support industrialization
 - make compliant workers
- Grades are the unit of exchange that represents student learning
 - separate students from the products of their labor and each other
 - alienate students
 - are unreliable and inconsistent
 - From Jesse Stommel- Grades:
 - are not good incentive
 - are not good feedback
 - encourage competitiveness over collaboration
 - are not good markers of learning
 - don't reflect the idiosyncratic, subjective, emotional, character of learning
 - aren't fair
 - Student laboring makes learning
- Bell curve bias
- Implicit biases matter
 - Qs to ask when designing grading practices:
 - What grade distribution do we expect? Why?
 - How much (if any) "failure" should the system produce? Why?
 - How much "excellence" should it produce? Why?
 -
- Ungrading
 - moves away from association of points or numbers with assignments and activities and towards
 - meaningful, formative feedback
 - student reflections and self-assessment
 - emphasis on growth mindset through focusing on learning and laboring
- LBG:
 - Avoids the use a single standard to determine course grades, yet expectations are used by readers to make judgements on writing (produce feedback)
 - Circulates non-hierarchical judgements of language by not using a single standard against all students.

- Circulates, honors, and interrogates multiple standards, or habits of language in the course while still addressing “quality” of writing.
- Avoids a false “precision” in grading through numbers, replacing that with other ways of understanding the products of learning, such as “thick descriptions” of judgements and their sources in readers’ histories.
- Creates grade distributions through agreements about how much labor will equate to each grade.
- Feels fairer to most students because they negotiate the terms and those terms are based on how much work they do, not what someone else thinks of that work.
- Offers environments for negotiating language differences in student writing and judgments by juxtaposing a variety of standards of writing in feedback.
- Provides students with opportunities for critical negotiations of language use and judgments of languaging.

- **APPROACH**

- a LBG contract is produced in negotiation with students in the first week or two of class
 - the contract is renegotiated in the middle or latter part after experiencing labor under the contract for the first portion of the term
- Feeling fair is more important than being fair (there are no fair systems)
 - fairness is dictated by the participation of individuals in a system and what that system produces as outcomes
- Thus, the grade of A+ (4.33) depends primarily on behavior and labor. Have you shown responsible effort and consistency in our class? Have you done what was asked of you in the spirit it was asked? Have you put in the appropriate amount of labor? But if you turn in too many late essays or assessment labor goals or miss labors, your grade will drop (see the grade breakdown table below).
- One Gimme
 - A gimme may do the following:
 - make 1 late assignment into an "on time" assignment
 - make 1 missed assignment into a late one (but not the final project labor)
 - A gimme MAY NOT be used to make a missed final project into a late one because the final project is vital to all students' learning in this course.
- [Grading contracts](#) assume a universal design for assessment approach (FROM [BLOG](#)):
 - afford multiple and collaborative means of judging and assessing student performances and learning, which includes standards or expectations that are responsive to all students’ needs and learning conditions

	Thus, as you consider this grading contract ask yourself: How do we make our grading contract flexible enough so that everyone can learn and succeed in this course? What barriers to learning and progress are there in our grading contract? How are our multiple and collaborative means of judging and assessing responsive to our needs and our learning conditions? ■ we will try to create a culture of support, or rather a community of compassion, a group of people who genuinely care about the wellbeing of each other – and part of that caring, that compassion, is doing things for each other. It turns out, this also helps you learn. The best way to learn is to teach others, to help, to serve. So we will function as collaborators, allies, as fellow-travelers with various skills, abilities, experiences, and talents that we offer the group, rather than adversaries working against each other for grades or a teacher’s approval. ■ I want you not only to rely on your colleagues and yourself for assessment and revision advice, but to build strategies of self-assessment that function apart from a teacher’s approval. ■ Thus the default grade for the course is a “A+” (4.33). In a nutshell, if you do all that is asked of you in the manner and spirit it is asked, if you work through the processes we establish and the work assign in the labor instructions during the quarter, if you do all the labor asked of you, then you’ll get an “A+” course grade, the highest grade possible. ● Participation in good faith. ● Practice compassion. (Charter for Compassion, which contains the behaviors and actions we agree will cultivate a culture of compassion) ● Avoid turning in late or incomplete work. ● Do not miss work. ● Complete all work in the spirit it is assigned, on time, and in good faith. (you’ll follow in good faith the LABOR INSTRUCTIONS given for the assignment/labor, and be thoughtful about how much time you need and can spend doing the labor of the course. ● Contracts are agreements - not consensus, and not what is best for individuals, but rather everyone (social contract)
Jack and Josh	● Seeking to incorporate a growth mindset into a mastery grading scheme ● Growth mindset explores ways we can improve ability to learn over time: ○ Views on effort: a sign of weakness (fixed) vs. integral to learning (growth) ○ Goals: apt to set performance goals that are easier to meet (fixed) vs. setting mastery goals involving increasingly more difficult challenges (growth) ○ Attribution of failure: internalizes (not enough ability) or externalizes reasons for failure (blames others and situation) (fixed) vs. diagnoses more effectively his/her own responsibility (not enough effort, preparation, or ineffective strategies) vs. external factors (growth)

- Strategies: abandons and withdraws due to feelings of helplessness or repeats the same failed strategy (fixed) vs. doubles down on effort, tries new things, asks for help (growth)
- Feedback: avoids feedback, acts defensively (fixed) vs. proactively seeks feedback (growth)
- If instructors have a fixed mindset, this can have a disproportionately pernicious effect on URM students
- Looked at overall STEM course grade performance disaggregated by white vs minority students
 - Demographics at UCR require examination of strategies
 - a large proportion of underserved, URM student
- In General Chemistry there has been a 3-fold difference when it comes to underserved minority populations when it's comes to students not making it through classes
- Goals:
 - Restructure assessments to "bake in this growth mindset"
- Approaches:
 - Retrieval Practice: if you expose students repeatedly to topics or concepts, it improves student performance and outcomes.
 - 1.5x the standard deviation relative to repeated study concept map
 - Mastery grading
 - 60% MASTERY EXAMS
 - 6 Unit Mastery Assessments (topics):
 - Gases
 - Thermochemistry
 - Intermolecular forces
 - Colligative Properties
 - Thermodynamics
 - Kinetics
 - students can retake versions of the exams
 - 3 attempts per unit (change this on slides)
 - extensive versioning using Canvas
 - standard final and midterm (covers 1st 3 units) in addition
 - Final, if you do well, can replace a mastery exam
- Experimental approach
 - 3 groups
 - Control group: traditional, lecture-style course
 - Mastery grading group
 - Mastery + Open Learning Initiative: interactive courseware platform that gives tailored resources to students

	○ Common final exam written by control group instructor ■ looking at final exam performance by disaggregated data (student demographics) ● Not comparing grades bc instructors use different grading schemes, etc. ■ 700 students total ■ Overall jump in student performance across populations ■ Substantial jump for underserved minority students ● URM student performance flatlined without additional resources ● Next steps: Building in metacognitive reflective activities for when. student are not achieving mastery to help them figure out why they aren't
Wrap? Results and Next Steps?	