Minimal Grading: Noah Brender (Humanities)

It can be hard to feel that you and your students are on the same team when you're in charge of evaluating their success or failure. How do we spend less time ranking students and justifying their grades, and more time coaching and giving constructive feedback?

STRATEGIES
- *Feedback for revision, not justification*: Tell students how to improve work before it's submitted, not what they did wrong afterward.
- *Minimal grading*: Fewer gradations means fewer decisions, less time spent ranking and justifying grades, and more time to give constructive feedback.
- *Rubrics for feedback*: Rather than giving numerical grades in different categories and adding them up, use rubrics to explain what students did well and where there's room for improvement.

REFERENCES
Bean & Melzer 2021, *Engaging Ideas*: Chapter 14, "Providing Effective and Efficient Feedback".

Elbow 1997, "Grading Student Writing: Making It Simpler, Fairer, Clearer." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 69 (Spring)

Elbow 1994, "Ranking, Evaluating, Liking: Sorting Out Three Forms of Judgment." *College English* 12. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.umass.edu/eng_faculty_pubs/12

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Group Work: Ivan Freud (Religion)

Many are the benefits of Group Work

- Powerful form of active learning –students practice disciplinary inquiry and argumentation
- Improves quality of thinking reflected in student writing.
- Gives students a sense of independence/self-reliance space to pursue their own lines of thought
- Promotes student interactions and friendships, develop leadership skills, and foster diversity.

Many are the kinds of Group Work

- The experimental learning practices of Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky
- The 'cooperative learning' movement associated with David Johnson and Roger Johnson
- The learning community movement - interdisciplinary teams of teachers colearn with students in pursuing a many-faceted, multidisciplinary problem
- The various disciplinary approaches to small groups, such as in Kenneth Bruffee's rhetoric and composition or in Uri Treisman's study groups in math
- Problem-centered approaches such as Harvard's case method
- Problem-based learning, often associated with the University of Delaware
- ***"Collaborative Learning Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty" – Barkley, Cross, and Major (2014)*** *This compendium of collaborative learning techniques*

(which they call CoLTs) provides a wealth of strategies for using small groups, ranging from the quick classroom use of unstructured "buzz groups" to elaborately planned use of structured teams whose members work comparatively over multiple class sessions in purposeful stages designed by the instructor.

Bean & Metzer Recommended Method of Group Work

Bean & Metzer recommend a Goal-oriented use of small groups giving students supervised practice in disciplinary thinking with teacher as coach.

- The teacher presents a disciplinary problem requiring critical thinking—typically resulting in a claim with argument (rather than a "right answer") or in a group-formulated research question or interpretive question.
- Students work together in small groups to reach consensus on a "best solution" to the problem.
- In a plenary session, group recorders present their group's solutions and arguments.
- As the reports unfold, the teacher coaches students' performance by pointing out strengths and weaknesses in the solutions, showing how the alternative claims or questions emerging from group's often parallel ongoing disciplinary debates, and otherwise offering constructive critiques.
- At the end, the teacher may also explain how this problem would be (or has been) approached by experts.

REFERENCES

Bean, John C., and Dan Melzer. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. Third edition., Jossey-Bass, 2021. Chapter 8, Using Small Groups to Coach Thinking and Teach Disciplinary Argument

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Translingualism: Kasia Wolfson (Anthropology)

Translingualism: Engaging images as a universal language

As the translingual approach to literacy recognizes language as a multimodal and emergent social practice, it provides opportunities to incorporate teaching how to decode (read) and encode (write) images.

Training students in the practice of looking and actively engaging with visual information by sharing ideas, forming interpretations, and finding evidence to support claims, has many benefits some of which include sharpening critical thinking skills and fostering a sense of community in and out of the classroom.

The following sources are good starting points to learn about translingualism and visual literacy:

References

Canagarajah, S. A. (2013). Negotiating Translingual Literacy: An Enactment. *Research in the Teaching of English* 48(1), 40-67. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24398646

Kędra J. & Žakevičiūtė R. (2019). Visual Literacy Practices in Higher Education: What, why, and how? *Journal of Visual Literacy* 38(1-2), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.1080/1051144X.2019.1580438

Lu, M.-Z., & Horner, B. (2013). Translingual Literacy, Language Difference, and Matters of Agency. *College English*, *75*(6), 582–607. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24238127

https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/27/learning/how-to-teach-with-whats-going-on-in-this-picture.html

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Countering Procrastination: Ahmad Banki (Economics)

==Summary:==

We can leverage community dynamics to help students develop the willpower to resist the tendency to procrastination and instant gratification. By stepping aside from students' conversation, the teacher can foster not only content learning, but also process learning.

==Practical strategies:==

- A course journal to develop metacognition, either individually or collectively.
- A guided online forum where students ask, answer and evaluate among each other.
- A token system as a substitute to the punitive teacher model.

==References:==

- Linda B. Nilson, *Creating Self-Regulated Learners*, 2013.
- Carol Garhart Mooney, *Theories of Childhood: An Introduction to Dewey, Montessori, Erikson, Piaget and Vygotsky*, 2nd ed, 2013.

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Collaborating with Community Partners: Sara Kendall (Geography)

SUMMARY: How do we design assignments that support critical thinking and student engagement? Bean & Melzer suggest that effective meaning-construction tasks often include two dimensions. First, that they present students with "authentic," problems to consider -- "intriguing, beautiful, or important problems" relevant to their lives and the real world. And second, they give students a real purpose/role and an audience to consider, situating the task within a rhetorical context.

QUESTION: How might we construct assignments that have a life beyond the classroom, so that the problems students are grappling with, the roles they take on, and the audiences they are considering are not hypothetical, but real? This kind of community-based learning includes building reciprocal relationships with community partners, and connecting student learning to public purpose.

STRATEGIES (experiments!): I have been collaborating with two environmental justice organizations to design an assignment that will lead, ultimately, to student-developed curriculum that these organizations can use in their work. In this process I am exploring these strategies:

1. Collaborating with community partners to co-develop meaningful and relevant "problems" for students to explore and conduct research about, connected to the partner's work;
2. Co-developing assignment prompts with these community partners so that student work can be shared with the organization, with potential real-world impact;
3. Inviting our community partners into the classroom throughout the semester to provide context and give feedback on the work we are doing in the classroom.

USEFUL RESOURCES:

Bean, John C., and Dan Melzer. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. Third edition., Jossey-Bass, 2021. Chapter 4, Formal Writing Assignments Situated in Rhetorical Contexts.

Melaville, Atelia, Amy C. Berg and Martin J. Blank, *Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship.* Partnerships/Community, 40: 2006.

Dawson Oral History Project, https://dohp.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/

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