An illustration of a desk setup. A laptop is open on the right, displaying a play button icon on its screen. To the left of the laptop are a pair of glasses, a dark coffee cup on a saucer, and a smartphone. The background is a solid blue color.

Teaching and learning during a pandemic: Design for flexibility and authenticity

2020-21? We've Got this!

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A photograph of a desk setup against a light-colored brick wall. On the left, there are several books, a green apple, a white coffee cup with a black lid and a small green plant on top, and a metal mesh pencil holder filled with colorful pencils. A black pen lies on the desk in front of the pencil holder. To the right, a laptop is open, displaying text on its screen.

PEOPLE FIRST.
CONTENT SECOND.
TECHNOLOGY THIRD.



Challenges faced by students during COVID-19

Economic
Family
Health
Living situation
Remote schooling
Work duties





Flexibility & Authenticity



Two pedagogical approaches to meet student needs

1. Renewable assessments
 - A form of open pedagogy
2. Specifications grading
 - Competency-based

WHAT is graded

HOW it is graded





ENGAGING STUDENTS IN
OPENNESS

STUDENTS AS
KNOWLEDGE OWNERS
AND AUTHORS

OPEN PEDAGOGY AND OPEN ASSESSMENT

RENEWABLE ASSESSMENTS

A “renewable assessment” differs in that the student’s work won’t be discarded at the end of the process, but will instead add value to the world in some way.

David Wiley

(<https://opencontent.org/blog/archives/4691>)

A “TRADITIONAL” CLASS

Pedagogy:

Focus on Dissemination

- Lecture
- Discussion

Assessment:

Focus on Repetition

- Tests
- Papers

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Open pedagogy:

Focus on students as creators

Renewable assessment:

Creation with a purpose beyond the class

EXAMPLE: AUTHENTIC OUTCOMES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

What do teachers do / create?

- Lesson plans
- Learning materials
- Learning activities
- Assessments

THE VALUE OF AUTHENTIC, RENEWABLE ASSESSMENTS

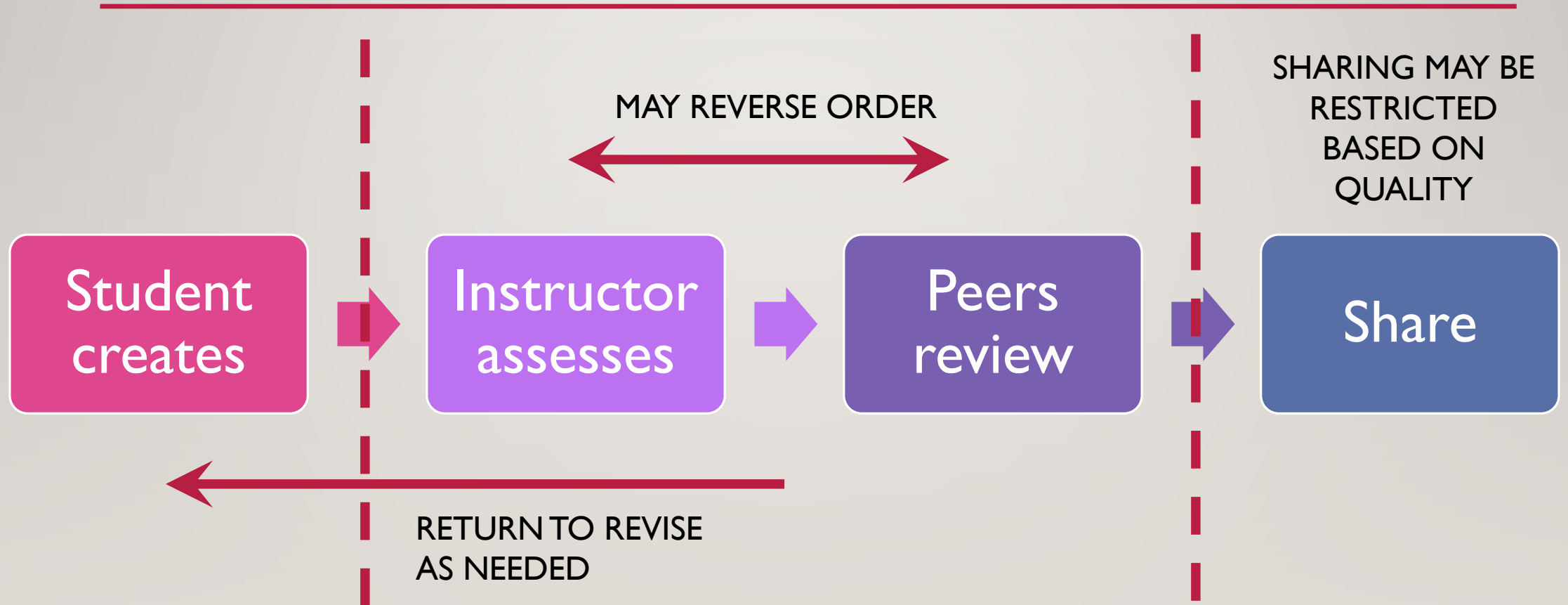
- Students are motivated
- Students practice what they will do professional or in other contexts
- Students build portfolios of work
- Others can benefit from student creations

APPROACHES TO RENEWABLE ASSESSMENTS

Create resources that

- Teach fellow students
- Are used by other classes
 - Other classes may be consumers, remixers, or future producers who add on
- Meet an external entity's need

THE PATH OF RENEWABLE ASSESSMENTS



RENEWABLE ASSESSMENTS AT SCALE

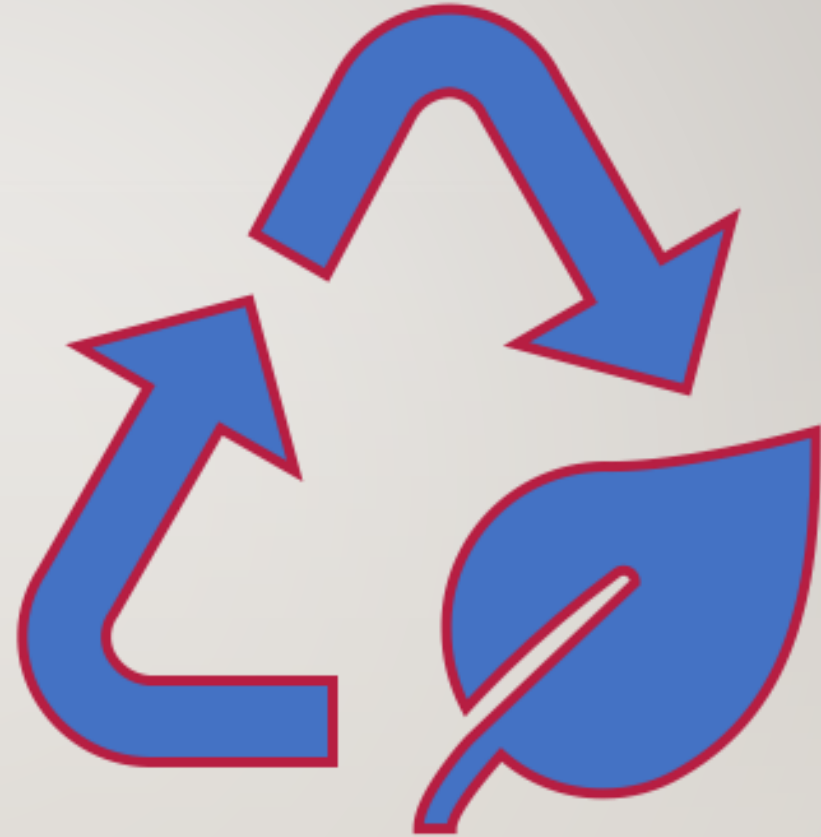
- Use for capstone course experiences
- Consider group or class projects
 - Provide a service or meet a defined need
- Rely on peer feedback
 - Critique and evaluation skills may be among course objectives
- Develop projects across classes
 - Use archives and create legacies

RENEWABLE ASSESSMENT & THE PANDEMIC

Find ways for students to APPLY
learning concepts in authentic
contexts

... to help THEMSELVES

... to help OTHERS

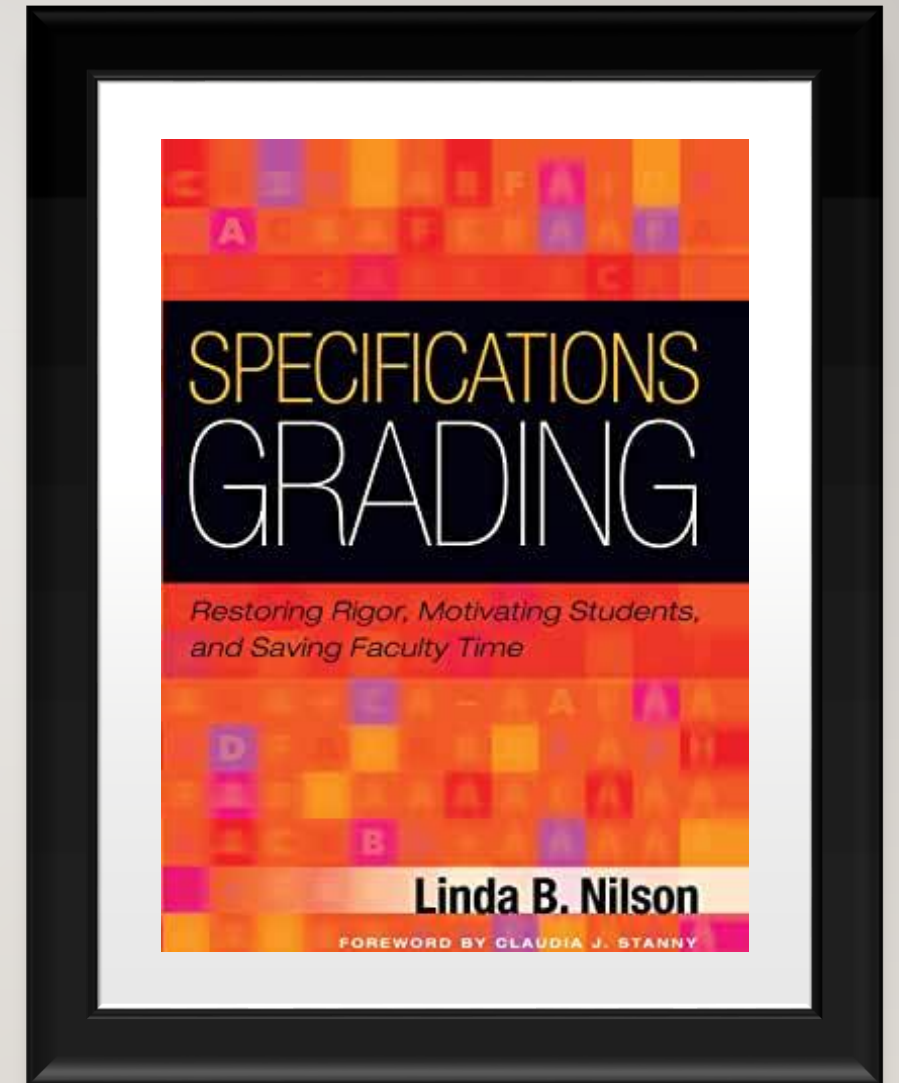


AN ALTERNATE PHILOSOPHY OF GRADING

SPECIFICATIONS GRADING

WHAT IS SPECIFICATIONS GRADING?

- A form of competency-based learning ("specs")
- Assignments graded on a pass/fail basis
 - Competencies fully met or not fully met
 - Competencies met \neq perfect
- Final letter grade corresponds to competencies demonstrated



WHY SPECIFICATIONS GRADING?

- Assessments align with learning outcomes
- Requires clear expectations
- Promotes mastery learning
- Increases student control
- Simplifies the grading process





GOT TOKENS?

- Students are afforded assignment tokens to:
 - Revise or redo assignments
 - Submit assignments late
 - Drop low grades
 - Waive assignments (typically low-point, participation assignments)

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE OVERVIEW

- Applied educational technology course designed for preservice teachers
- Learning objectives:
 - Software skills
 - Design skills
 - Technology integration knowledge
- Multi-section course
 - Face-to-face and online sections
- Meets the university's computer competency requirement

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE TOKENS

- 2 late assignment tokens
- 3 assignment revision/redo tokens
- 1 waived blog post token
- 1 waived graded in-class activity token

UNDERGRADUATE ASSIGNMENT EXAMPLE

- Assignment: PowerPoint for Information Dissemination
- Point Value: High Pass (5 points), Pass (3.5 points) and Fail (0 points)
- Deliverables:
 - PowerPoint presentation
 - PowerPoint show

UNDERGRADUATE ASSIGNMENT EXAMPLE

Pass Specifications (3.5 points):

- A title slide including the topic & your name
- At least 6 content slides presenting instructional material
- A closing slide that summarizes the important points and states the conclusion
- At least 4 images/graphics
- At least 3 different slide layouts used throughout the presentation
- At least 1 traditional bulleted list
- Animations on at least 2 slides
- Slide design adheres to the Contrast, Repetition, Alignment and Proximity principles
- Slides have few spelling or grammar errors
- Narration on PowerPoint show is clear and easy to hear (quality audio recording)
- TOTAL SLIDES: 8

UNDERGRADUATE ASSIGNMENT EXAMPLE

High Pass Specifications (5 points):

Meets ALL the criteria for PASS in addition to the following criteria:

- At least 10 content slides presenting instructional material
- At least 6 images/graphics, including an original graphic created using SmartArt
- Add 1 slide layout to the existing Slide Master, name it 'Your_Name', and use this slide layout for at least 1 slide
- At least 4 different slide layouts used throughout the presentation
- Slide number appears on all slides
- File is set up so handouts will print with 'Your_Name' in the footer.
- PowerPoint presentation file includes speaker notes for each slide indicating what the presenter will be doing and saying while the slide is projected.
- Slides are free of spelling and grammar issues
- Narration on PowerPoint Show is scripted and well organized
- TOTAL SLIDES: 12

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a desk. A pair of black-rimmed glasses is resting on a stack of papers. A red pen is visible in the lower-left foreground. The overall lighting is soft and the colors are muted, creating a professional and academic atmosphere.


MY PANDEMIC EXPERIENCES

Renewable Assessment

- Overwhelmed students could seek ways to merge work/home and school
- Schoolwork felt meaningful

Specifications Grading

- Students felt in control of final grade
- Students could make informed decisions about assignments
- Tokens offered equal flexibility to all without asking

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