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Ungrading the Writing Process: Crafting an Educational Philosophy Statement

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Open Pedagogy Fellowship | Spring 2022
EDC 200 | Social Foundations of Education
 Philosophy Statement Assignment
 Delia Hernandez

Project

Ungrading the Writing Process: Crafting an Educational Philosophy Statement

My students engage in a semester-long process of crafting an educational philosophy statement. It is the major writing assignment for my course, EDC 200 | Social Foundations of Education. The process evolved over time and is grounded in the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) initiative, as well as the literature on reflection and ungrading.

My Open Pedagogy Fellowship project includes a timeline of this process, the assignment guidelines, and a rationale. The rationale focuses on the value of embedding reflection and elements of ungrading into this constructivist process as preservice teachers recognize, articulate and refine their teaching philosophies.

My goal is to share a perspective and framework which may be applicable to a range of disciplines.

Timeline - 4-Stage Process

Stage	Time	Task	Assessment	Feedback	Grade
1st draft*	1st day of class	Students write responses to four questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is the purpose of education?</i> • <i>What is the role of a teacher?</i> • <i>What are your goals for your students?</i> • <i>What is your implementation plan?</i> 	Drafts are reviewed for completion - all questions from the task must be answered. Note: "I don't know." or "I don't understand this question." are perfectly suitable responses for question 4.	<i>Please finish by responding to question/s...</i> OR <i>You have earned 5 points for completing the first draft!</i>	LBG** Students receive credit for completion.
2nd draft*	2/3 into semester	Students review their 1st draft and craft a 2nd draft using instructor-designed resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - detailed assignment description - editing checklist - spelling/grammar guide 	Self-assessment*** Reflective Statement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the differences between your 1st and 2nd drafts? - What helped you make these revisions? - What did you learn in this process? 	<i>You have earned 5 points for completing the second draft and reflection!</i>	LBG** Students receive credit for completion. Partial credit if missing reflection.

Stage	Time	Task	Assessment	Feedback	Grade
Peer Review	1 week later	Students meet in small groups to give and receive feedback using a peer-review guide based on the assignment.	Instructor circulates for informal observational assessment and takes notes on engagement, comprehension, needs and trends.	Peer & Instructor Feedback Groups: Instructor addresses any confusion or questions while circulating. Whole class: Instructor provides general feedback and clarifies what belongs in each section of the paper for the whole class.	LBG** Full credit for students who give + receive feedback. Partial credit for those who don't complete a 2nd draft and only give feedback.
3rd Draft*	2 weeks later	Students craft a 3rd draft by incorporating peer feedback and referring to the handouts provided for the 2nd draft. Students are encouraged to visit the Reading & Writing Center to review their draft with a Writing Fellow. Turn in peer-review sheets and reflections with the 3rd drafts.	Self-assessment*** Reflective Statement: - What revisions did your partners suggest? - How did you revise your 2nd draft? - What did you learn in this peer-review process?	Individual feedback: Instructor reviews drafts and provides extensive written comments to guide further development. Whole group feedback: Instructor shares general feedback and guiding comments with the class.	LBG** Full or partial credit for completion. Extra credit for working with a Writing Fellow.
Final Draft*	Finals week	Students craft a final draft. Turn in 3rd drafts (with instructor comments) with their final drafts.	Self-assessment*** Checklist + Grade: Students complete a culminating checklist (with space for additional notes/comments) that addresses their work and learning at	None	Students earn a final grade for the entire project 5 points for each stage - 1, 2 & 3

			<p>each stage of the process.</p> <p>They grade themselves for each stage of the process, as well as an overall grade for the project and provide a rationale.</p>		<p>10 points for the final draft + self-assessment</p> <p>.</p> <p>Full or partial credit based on the quality of their work.</p>
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Notes: *Drafts are a form of ungrading. **Labor-based grading. ***Self-assessment is a form of ungrading.

Assignment Handouts

[Philosophy Statement 2022 - First Day](#)

[Philosophy Statement Guidelines 2022](#)

Rationale

College students enrolled in their very first education course begin to examine their own school experiences as they explore educational theory and think about the type of teacher they will become. The educational philosophy statement is an important product of this process.

The scaffolded, multi-stage project described above consists of key elements that are designed to foster development and growth. First, working on the essay over time allows students to evolve and refine their thinking and writing. This is integral to the writing process and a requirement of the Writing Across the Curriculum program (WAC) as my course is a writing intensive course. Next, providing resources and an opportunity for collaboration and peer review empowers students to actively engage in shaping their learning. It fosters a dialogic process of acquiring and refining knowledge through communicative interactions. Last, removing grades from the process while incorporating reflection frees students to think and work as it pushes them to think critically in recognizing and assessing their growth. These ideas are supported by the UNgrading movement.

As the manager of this process, the instructor serves as a coach and facilitator working alongside the students - rather than the wielder of the red pen. This mindset or role shift is perhaps the most impactful result of this project.

Resources

Feedback:

Lipnevich, A. A., & Smith, J. K. (2009). "I really need feedback to learn:" students' perspectives on the effectiveness of the differential feedback messages. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 21(4), 347-367.

Lipnevich, A. A., & Smith, J. K. (2008). Response to assessment feedback: The effects of grades, praise, and source of information. *ETS Research Report Series*, 2008(1), i-57.

Philosophy Statement:

Caukin, N. G., & Brinthaupt, T. M. (2017). Using a Teaching Philosophy Statement as a Professional Development Tool for Teacher Candidates. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 11(2), n2. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1150506.pdf>

Huss, J. A. (2007). Using constructivist teaching to shift the paradigm for pre-service philosophy of education statements. *Essays in Education*, 21(1), 7.

<https://openriver.winona.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1207&context=eie>

Ungrading:

MACKENZIE, A. (2021). 5. Ungrading-But What Will People Think?. *On Assessment*, 21.

[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Amel-](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Amel-Belmahdi/publication/351335345_On_Assessment/links/6091de0492851c490fb6fbf6/On-Assessment.pdf#page=27)

[Belmahdi/publication/351335345_On_Assessment/links/6091de0492851c490fb6fbf6/On-Assessment.pdf#page=27](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Amel-Belmahdi/publication/351335345_On_Assessment/links/6091de0492851c490fb6fbf6/On-Assessment.pdf#page=27)

Mitchell, K. M. (2021). Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to do Instead). Susan D. Blum (Ed). West Virginia University Press, 2020. *Discourse and Writing/Rédactologie*, 31, 121-125.

Stommel

<https://www.jessestommel.com/how-to-ungrade/>

Reflection

Dewey, J. (1933). *How We Think: A Restatement of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*. Boston: D. C. Heath.

Jones, J. L., & Jones, K. A. (2013). Teaching reflective practice: Implementation in the Teacher-Education setting. *The Teacher Educator*, 48(1), 73-85.