

## Faculty Inquiry Group Proposal Form

### 1) Facilitator Information:

Name: Rachel Knighten Department: Languages  
Daytime Phone: 920/475-2815 (personal cell, please don't share!)  
Email: [knightenr@lanecc.edu](mailto:knightenr@lanecc.edu)

### 2) Member Information (4 minimum, 8 maximum, including facilitator)

Please list names, departments and email addresses of participants.

Rachel Knighten	Spanish	<a href="mailto:knightenr@lanecc.edu">knightenr@lanecc.edu</a>
Michael Woods	Spanish	<a href="mailto:woodsm@lanecc.edu">woodsm@lanecc.edu</a>
Ingrid Nordstrom	English	<a href="mailto:nordstromi@lanecc.edu">nordstromi@lanecc.edu</a>
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Aryn Bartley	English	<a href="mailto:bartleya@lanecc.edu">bartleya@lanecc.edu</a>

### 3) Briefly explain the topic, issue, question, concern, project, and/or problem that the group will address.

Grading is a fraught activity that is both at the center of the work instructors and students engage in and yet also too often a distraction from the learning goals that should be the focus of our collective endeavors. Although it occupies a majority of our time and energy, grading is also frequently viewed as tedious and unrewarding. Likewise, students often experience anxiety about grades, viewing them as something done to them rather than seeing grading as an integral part of the learning process. Traditional grading methods center the instructor in the evaluation of student work, effectively disempowering students in their own learning. Moreover, grades often measure student learning indirectly, at best, focusing instead on judging and sorting students.



In this FIG, we would like to read about Ungrading and other philosophies/methods that have been adopted in different contexts (disciplinary and institutional) in order to explore alternatives to traditional grading practices. We would read *Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead)*. This book is a collection of essays by a diverse group of educators describing their experiences as they explored alternative methods in order to focus on learning.

This book features essays by a diverse group of instructors, k-12 and post-secondary, across a range of disciplines including STEM, social sciences, and humanities. The instructors describe their experiences as they shift from traditional grading methods in order to focus on learning. The essays include honest assessments of the challenges while reflecting on the transformations they have witnessed in their classes.

As a companion to the book, we would also listen to some episodes of season 2, #UNGrading, of the podcast series [Beyond the Curriculum](#), which features some of the authors from the book. Finally, we would also view a pre-recorded webinar from the University of Illinois' Center for Language Instruction & Coordination, "[Using Contract Learning to Improve Learner Motivation in a Language Composition Course](#)".

**4) Briefly explain how investigating this topic will help to improve teaching and learning in your department/s and/or at Lane.**

We would like to explore different philosophies and strategies for assessing, evaluating, and grading student work. We'd like to learn more about recent movements such as "ungrading", "going gradeless", and "contract grading", especially as they apply to student motivation and accountability, in order to explore methods that foster learning.

**5) Provide a tentative outline of planned activities, meetings and/or topics.**

Due to the combination of readings, webinar, and podcasts, I think this FIG would work best if we had two terms to complete our conversations. A tentative calendar would look like this:

**Beginning of Fall term:** Pending approval of funding: order books

Week 3: Distribute books

Week 5: Meet to discuss the Introduction and Season 2, Episode 1 of Beyond the Curriculum: [Introducing Ungrading with Dr. Susan Blum](#)

Week 7: Meet to discuss Part I (Foundations and Models)

Week 9: Meet to discuss Part II (Practices)

**Winter Term:**

Week 3: Meet to discuss webinar "[Using Contract Learning to Improve Learner Motivation in a Language Composition Course](#)" and any of the podcast episodes from season 2 of Beyond the Curriculum (they parallel the essays in part II of *Ungrading*)

Week 5: Meet to Discuss Part III (Reflections)

Week 7: Wrap up discussion ideally with celebratory refreshments. Central question: How can we adapt what we've learned to our own context?

We will likely meet 1-2 additional times to plan a contribution to the 2022 Spring Symposium or similar college-wide event.

**6) What do you see as potential outcomes of this FIG?**

Greater shared understanding surrounding grades and grading practices. Strategies for grading practices that foster student learning that can be incorporated into our classes across all modalities.

**7) Please indicate the term/s you are willing to run the FIG.**

Fall 2021 and Winter 2022 with a goal of offering a session at the 2022 Spring Symposium.

**8) Please share any additional information you feel we should know.**

The book, podcast, and webinar were recommended by highly regarded colleagues on the Spanish Language in Higher Ed Facebook group as part of a lively discussion about grading practices. The instructors in the group teach a range of classes (language, literature, linguistics), which suggests that these materials are relevant to instructors teaching a wide array of classes, disciplines, and levels.

**9) Provide a brief overview of proposed budget.**

Books	7 x 26.00 (Amazon)	182.00
Refreshments	7 x 9.00	65.00
Honoraria	7 x 300.00	2100
		2,347.00

**Electronic Signature:**

By typing my name here, I confirm that I have read and understood the program guidelines.

*Rachel S. Knighten*

5/25/2021