

Chapter-12

INNOVATING WITHIN THE SYSTEM: TRANSFORMING GRADING PROCESSES IN ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

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ABSTRACT

As online learning continues to expand, both the online grading and feedback processes and instructor beliefs and perceptions associated with such processes take on increasingly important significance. By exploring the impact of grading feedback interventions, this chapter contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how the grading and feedback processes might be improved for the benefit of students in the neoliberal academy. The chapter explores pedagogical strategies, tools, and approaches, including a customizable feedback generator and an open access feedback bank, that have emerged out of a need and desire to push back against neoliberal imperatives and simultaneously provide additional supports in connection with the grading and feedback processes. These tools are shared as examples of the types of faculty-driven innovations that help both students and instructors thrive within, and simultaneously shift from the inside out, rapidly shifting university models and systems.

Keywords: Online Learning, Grading Feedback, Pedagogical Innovation, Neoliberal Academy, Faculty-Driven Tools, Feedback Interventions

INTRODUCTION

As learning environments change and as the machinery of the neoliberal business model academy continues to dominate, educators including adjunct faculty who are traditionally marginalized within the neoliberal academy, can innovate within existing systems as a way of both mitigating frustrations and initiating opportunities for stronger student-centered pedagogy. For example, for many, online learning has become the new normal when pursuing educational opportunities and experiences (Betts, 2017). At the same time, grading feedback, in both face to face and online teaching environments, has been simultaneously characterized as one of the most important but most challenging aspects of teaching, learning, and education (Boud & Molloy, 2013; Hattie, 2012a; Nilson, 2015; Tierney, 2013). Literature documents a variety of complex and multi-faceted challenges, including time, stress, variability, bias, and ambiguity as ever present in grading and feedback contexts (Hattie & Clarke, 2019; Schinske & Tanner, 2014; Tierney, 2013; van Ewijk, 2011).

As online learning continues to expand both its reach and its presence in learning spaces, both the online grading and feedback processes and instructor beliefs and perceptions associated with such processes take on increasingly important significance (Allen & Seaman, 2017). Given the commonly held understanding of the importance of grading feedback on

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