



Exploring Innovations in Teaching & Technology at BU

# Lightning Talks

SPRING 2022 SPEAKER SERIES

## Reimagining the Grading Paradigm

Friday, March 18, 2022

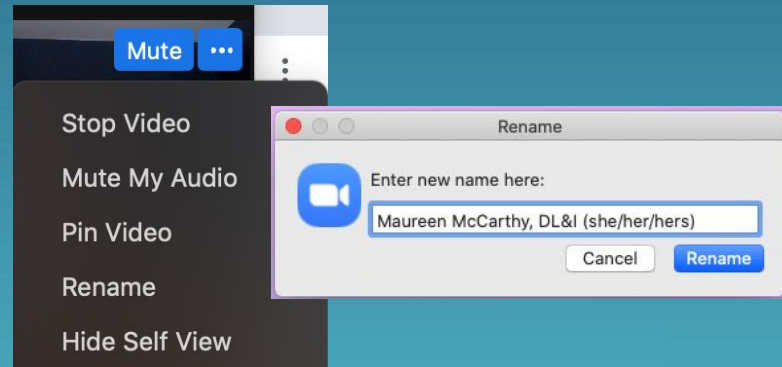
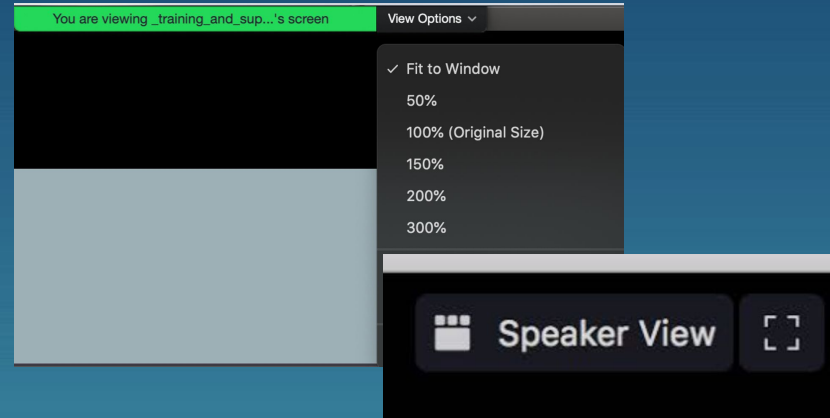
12:15 – 1:15 PM

# Quick Reminder

For optimal viewing experience, you can change your view options. We recommend **Speaker View** over Gallery View.



**Optional:** Add your department, program or school to your Zoom name.



# Recording

Today's Lightning Talks are being recorded and will be available for viewing via [bu.edu/dli](https://bu.edu/dli) later this month.

# Q&A

Please share your questions in the chat feature and the moderator will address questions at the completion of all presentations.

# Upcoming Event

Alternative Grading Practices for Learning and Equity  
with Author Susan D. Blum

April 19, 2022 | 3:30 - 4:45 PM

Event information: [bu.edu/ctl](https://bu.edu/ctl)



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# Lightning Talks

SPEAKER SERIES

## Reimagining the Grading Paradigm

Friday, March 18

12:15-1:15 PM



### Debbie Borkovitz

Mathematics &  
Mathematics  
Education  
BU College of  
Arts & Sciences



### Molly Monet-Viera

Romance Studies  
BU College of  
Arts & Sciences



### Moderator Carrie Preston

BU Kilachand Honors  
College



### Muhammad H. Zaman

BU College of  
Engineering



### Marie McDonough

Writing Program  
BU College of  
Arts & Sciences



### Christopher Schmitt

Anthropology  
BU College of Arts &  
Sciences



Marie Satya McDonough  
Senior Lecturer  
BU College of Arts & Sciences  
Writing Program

**Rethinking Grading Using DEI  
Frameworks**

The research about traditional grading demonstrates that it

- does not promote learning
- is neither a reliable nor a valid measure of student learning

What *does* traditional grading measure?

- Proximity to privilege
  - Quality of previous schools
  - Time and space to focus
  - Access to health care and educational support
- Proximity to dominant linguistic and behavioral norms



“Grading, because it requires a single, dominant standard, is a racist and White supremacist practice. There is no way around it.”

- Asao B. Inoue

## Principles of inclusive grading:

- Meet students where they are
- Trust students
- Build a relationship in which you are allies rather than adversaries (respect, collaboration, and care)
- Honor and value diverse experiences
- Empower students to take control of their learning
- Assess students not in relation to other students or to a purported objective standard, but in relation to your goals for them and their goals for themselves

**Thank You**



Debbie Borkovitz  
Clinical Professor of Math/Math Ed  
BU College of Arts & Sciences

**From Wheelock to BU:  
Perspectives on Grading and  
Gatekeeping in Math**

# “Wheelock Math”



# Assessment Systems: Five Lenses

1. Motivation: Intrinsic/Extrinsic
2. Measurement: Better Validity/Out of the Way
3. Relationship: Trust/Policing
4. Boundaries: For Students/For Instructor
5. Goal: Inclusion/Gatekeeping

**Thank You**



Muhammad Zaman  
Professor,  
Biomedical Engineering

**Rethinking Grading in STEM:  
Equity, Access and Opportunity**



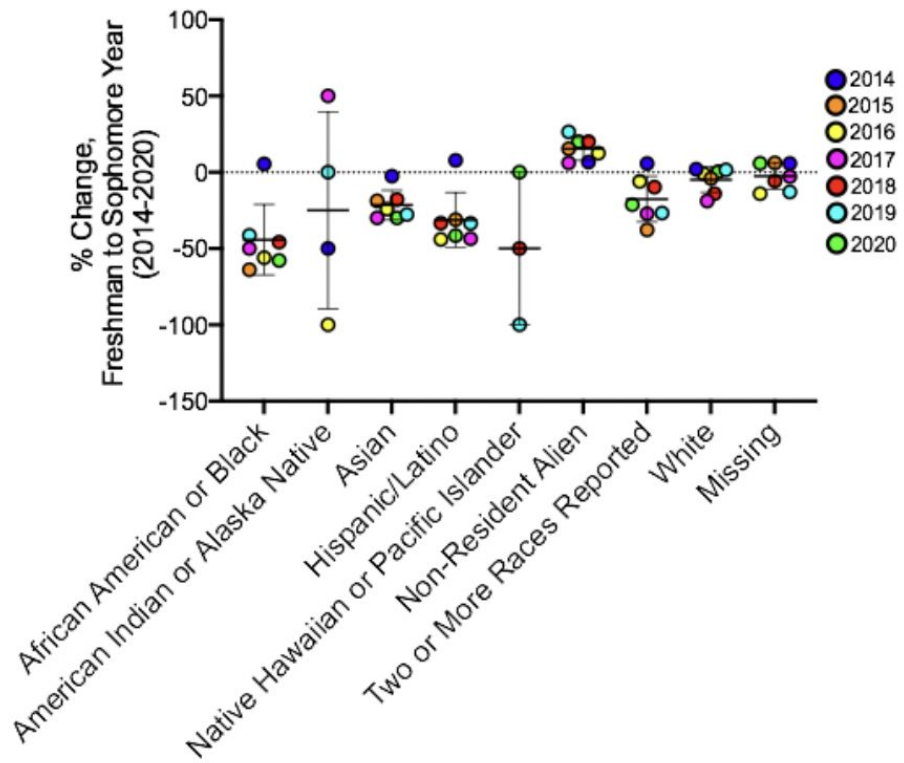
# STEM Grades and Inequity

The curve that rewards privilege

Reliance on AP grades and socio-economic disadvantage

Research opportunities and impact on grades

Attrition



The other side of the equation

The “right answer” paradigm

Where is the data?

Culture change

Is getting rid of grades viable?

**Thank You**



Christopher Schmitt  
Assistant Professor of Anthropology  
and Biology  
BU College of Arts & Sciences

**Reducing Coding Anxiety through  
Self Assessment (and Drag  
Queens): Ungrading CAS AN/BI 588**

# CAS AN/BI 588: Project Design and Statistics in Biological Anthropology



- Statistics via R-based coding
- Active learning/learn by doing
- Students may use their own datasets

**BUT...** so much anxiety!

# Anxiolytic Course Modifications



- Flipped course - coding modules on course webpage
- Troubleshooting session at beginning of each seminar
- Peer commentary on homework assignments
- Study replication assignment & group teaching assignment
  
- **Ungrading**

## Self-assessment



Construct a webpage to  
series of questions to  
skill attainment over  
course.

of the process, they  
a letter grade.

- If I disagree, we discuss.

<https://fuzzyatellm.github.io/bioanth-stats/overview.html>

- Of 32, only 5 grades needed discussion (3 ↑, 2↓).
- This included C's and D's, which were appropriately self-assessed!





Molly Monet-Viera  
Master Lecturer, Spanish  
BU College of Arts & Sciences

**Three Different Ways to Ungrade:  
Contract Grading, Completion  
Grading, and Self Grading**

# Self Grading

## Pros:

High student engagement

Students hold themselves accountable

Teaches them self assessment

## Cons:

Student doubt or overconfidence

Time consuming

# Contract Grading

## Pros:

Rewards students for their effort

Students choose their own grade

Students can still do peer and self assessments

## Cons:

Very detailed

Can be confusing

# Completion Grading

Pros:

Simple

Students always know what their grade is

Rewards effort

Students still do peer and self assessments

Cons:

Some students want to be rewarded for their perceived “quality”

**Thank You**

**Q&A**



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# Lightning Talks

SPEAKER SERIES

Thank You for your participation in the  
Lightning Talks Speaker Series.

Questions or Comments?  
Email [digital@bu.edu](mailto:digital@bu.edu).