

Dipping Your Toe in the Water: A Visual Metaphor for Ungrading in OWI

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**Interested in
Ungrading?**



**Phase 1: Dip your
toe in the water**



**Phase 2: Put
both feet in**



**Phase 3: Go in up
to your neck**



**Phase 4: Swim
with the sharks**

Dip your toe in
the water



Practices

Integrate completion grades for low-stakes or invention work

Instead of providing evaluative feedback on low-stakes or invention work, like a discussion board post, simply comment on the content of the post

Select some low-stakes or invention work not to grade; just give feedback or invite students to present their work to each other for the purposes of invention rather than evaluation

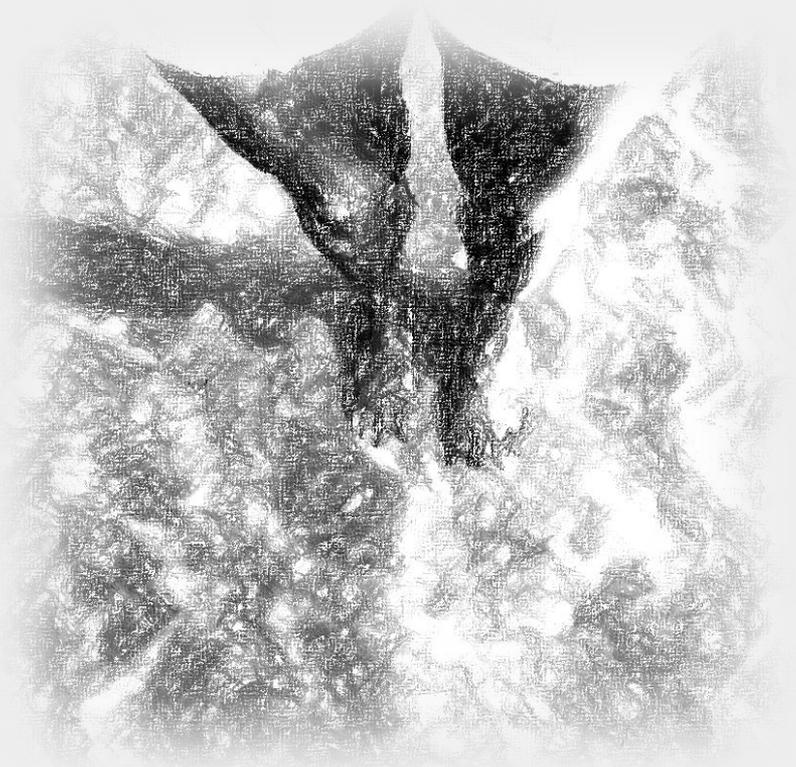
Be Prepared

Students may be uncomfortable with ungrading. There will be necessary adjustments for you and for them, many of which you may not foresee.

Especially students who are traditionally high-achieving may feel frustrated to not get the As they're used to in the ways they're used to.



Put both feet in



Practices

Adopt a single-point rubric or a community-developed assessment tool

Use audio feedback to respond to student writing, focus on strengths and transfer to future writing opportunities

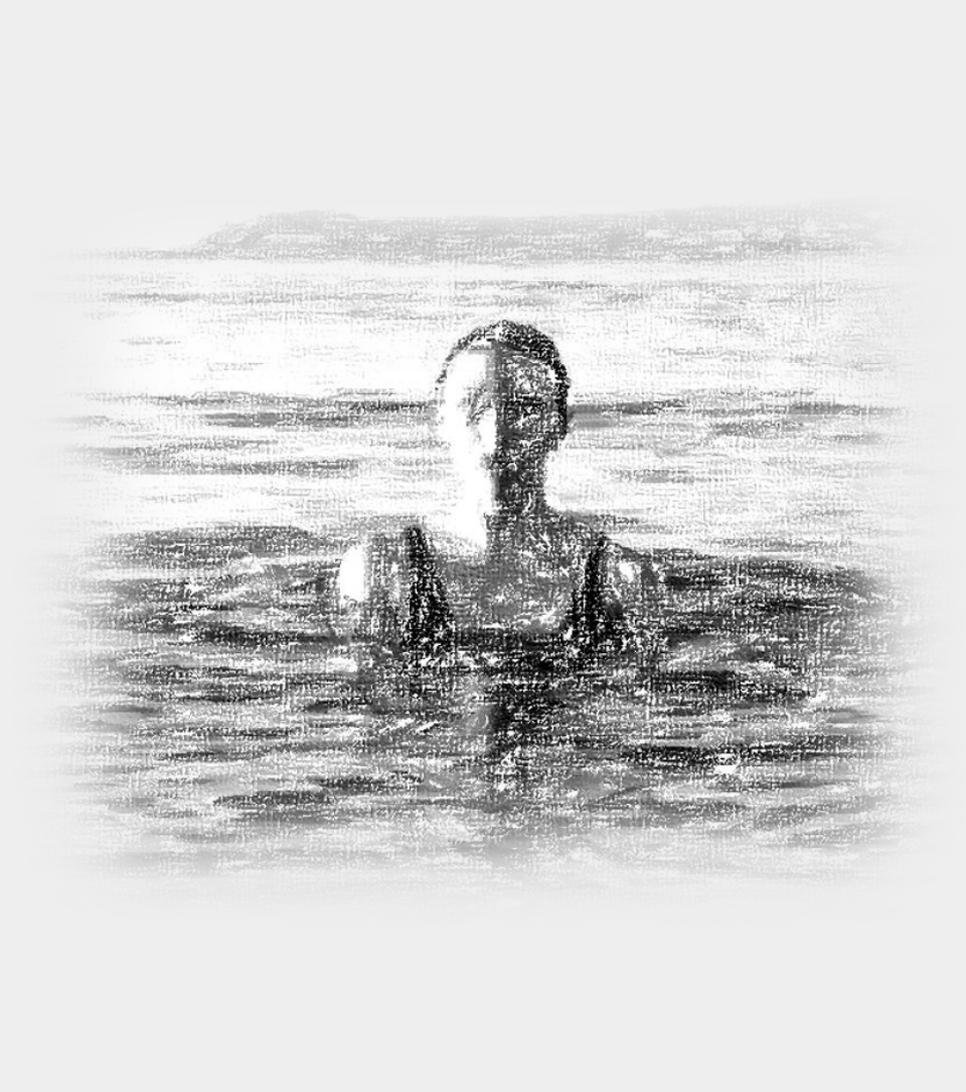
Simplify your grading system; instead of offering 1-100 grades on papers, consider smaller windows, A-D, for instance.

Be Prepared

Grading may start to feel arbitrary when you put both feet in the ungrading waters. Stick with the framework you've set out for students at the beginning of the semester, and actively reflect on changes you might make in future courses.



Go in up to your
neck



Practices

Assign fewer grades overall

Adopt grading contracts that specify what activities students need to complete to earn particular grades

Adopt the Learning Record, in which students assign themselves grades based on the work they've completed in the course

Integrate reflection so that students take charge of deciding whether or not they have met the course objectives

Be Prepared

Students may not believe you that you're not going to assign A-F grades based on your impression of their work. You'll have to reiterate your approach and be ready to describe it in different ways.



Swim with sharks



Practices

Grades are only assigned as required by your institution

Students self-assign grades based on reflection

Assessment is based on project completion

Be Prepared

You may become an insufferable colleague and may not be able to understand why others aren't doing the same as you :).



Resources

Rethinking OWI Assessment

Annotated Bibliography

Sample Grading Contracts and Feedback Models