Dr. Rebecca Weaver 🏳️‍🌈 @WeaverRew

Dec 19, 2021 • 30 tweets • WeaverRew/status/1472637406239248397

Hey all, here is my report (THREAD) about my first #Ungrading semester, part 2 (pt. 1 can be found here:

Threadreader

Read and share Twitter threads easily!

• Share great threads easily outside Twitter!

• Save great threads to read later!

• To unroll, tweet "@threadreaderapp unroll"

❤️ unroll

Read and Share Twitter Threads easily!
Thread Reader helps you discover and read the best of Twitter Threads
https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1449462680658628616.html

) #ContractGrading #Pedagogy #DigPed #AcademicChatter #AcademicTwitter 1/
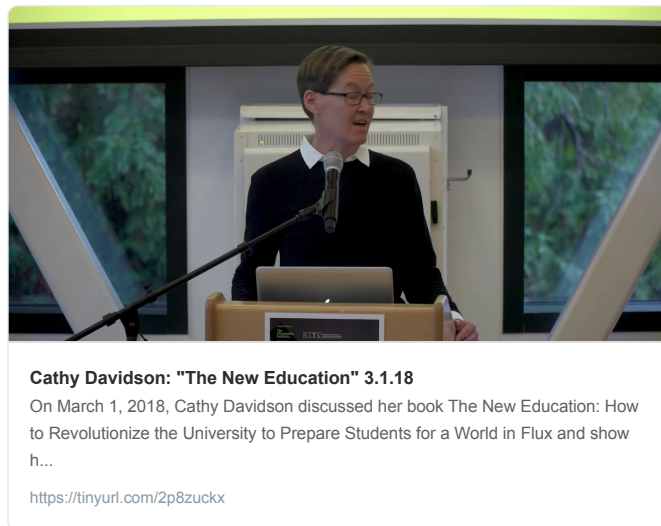
The biggest takeaway from this semester how easy it felt. Not ease of work--there was work, but how it helped conversations about student writing, which is literally my job, easier. #Ungrading #AcademicTwitter 2/

Here's how it worked! Materials: my 1101 syllabus, project rubric, semester "snapshot" template, portfolio assign. sheet, class grade agreement, & list of grade items is here: tinyurl.com/weaverungrade . #Ungrading #AcademicChatter #WritingTeaching 3/

They're also on my website (link at end), which has older "graded" syllabi for reference. In wk 12 (next sem I'm hoping for wk 4), we watched @CathyNDavidson discussing the history of grades in higher ed (25:10-29:00) in a talk on The New Education:

Cathy Davidson: "The New Education" 3.1.18
On March 1, 2018, Cathy Davidson discussed her book The New Education: How to Revolutionize the University to Prepare Students for a World in Flux and show h...

https://tinyurl.com/2p8zuckx

. 4/

I provided a link to Ketter & Hunter's "Student Attitudes toward Grades and Evaluation on Writing" in Stephen Tchudi's _Alternatives to Grading Student Writing_ in case students wanted to find out more (one did and quoted them in their portfolio!!) #Ungrading 5/

I showed them examples of syllabi (mine and a colleague's), and we discussed the graded things list as well as a set of questions to guide their discussions. #Ungrading 6/
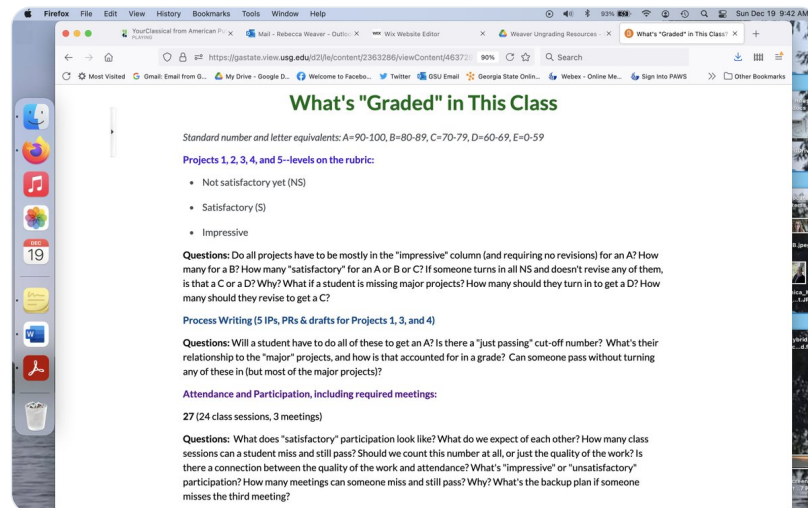

I broke each section (4 sections of 15-20 students) into groups assigned w deciding how grades would be applied to the things. They put their grade notes into a google doc shared across sections. By the end of that week, there were 4-5 entries for A, 4-5 for B, and so on. 7/

Next class session, I randomly assigned each section a letter (D & F together), and the section's job was to unify and clarify all of the entries for that letter into a "synthesis grade" at the top of that same doc. #Ungrading #AcademicTwitter #TeamRhetoric 8/

Each group got 2-3 bullet points & these 4 guidelines: list what all the entries for the letter grade have in common, unclear or questionable ideas, directly conflicting entries, and suggestions for compromises solving the conflicts. #Pedagogy 9/

I took the "synthesis" grades and put them in a new page in our CMS, collating them into a common template for each grade and editing to smooth out/clarify language. You can see the "class grade agreement" doc here:

Final Grade Doc F21.pdf

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gHLsxuHnJdoQ8_4JW8sr_Krb…
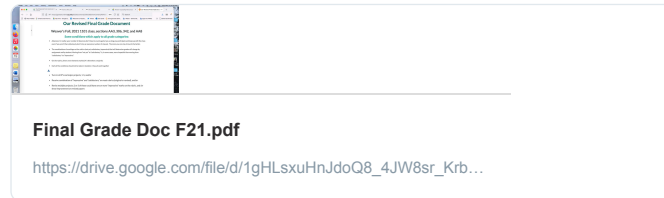
10/

I showed them the doc & asked for clarifications. There weren't many. While I designed this process to be inclusive, I'm aware that some sts might not have felt comfortable voicing disagreements. Next semester, I'll provide an anon CMS discussion for sts to raise concerns. 11/

During finals, they turned in the reflective portfolio 24 hours before their meeting. I wrote for them a "semester overview snapshot" that listed the assignments they turned in, their rubric statuses, their peer reviews, previous meetings with me, and attendance. #Ungrading 12/

Their cover letters were reflective and showed real growth in their writing processes—everything this class should be about. Next sem. I'll tweak the assignment & ask sts to reflect on a class text and to think about their writing process goals for next semester and beyond. 13/

I wrote a sentence or two of commentary at the end of the snapshot. Most students read them before our meeting, and that helped us stay on task. We talked about the letter and portfolio during the meeting and ended the meeting with an agreement (thanks again @SusanDebraBlum!) 14/

The (virt) meetings were overwhelmingly delightful. Some sts used them to talk about writing! Students' anxiety—not knowing what grade they were going to get—lessened because they knew (most of them) going into the meetings what their grade was. #Ungrading #ContractGrading 15/

The snapshot writing went ok, though some couldn't turn their portfolios in 24 hrs ahead, so I'd write their snapshots the day of their meeting, sometimes in the 30 min breaks I scheduled btwn meeting clusters or in the 15 minutes where a student didn't show. 16/ #Pedagogy

In early finals, I wrote no shows a quick email asking them to reschedule. If a sts didn't show during the last 3 days of finals, I emailed they'd missed their meeting, and I'd given then a snapshot overview and to let me know if they had questions. 17/ #Ungrading

But the meeting schedule was (predictably) packed more at the end than at the beginning. I would like to spread this out more next semester. It would really help if we had a "reading day." 18/

I shd also be clearer at the beginning of the process that I do my best to honor the agreement. There were some hard conversations abt grades at the end: some students were surprised with how much I tried to honor the class grade agreement. #ContractGrading 19/

Those who asked me to break the agreement (and seemed surprised when I wouldn't) were students who mistook turning something in for a minimum passing requirement, which their colleagues had specifically written the grade agreement against. 20/

The sts created a firm line in the agreement between turning things in (D) and meeting assignment reqs (C and above). This initially surprised me, bc of the prevalence of the belief about education being transactional. But the students themselves rejected it. 21/ #Ungrading

The one time I felt consistently comfortable pushing back against the agreement was at the high end: convincing sts that their work, per the agreement, w one exeption I'll have to correct for next semester—was in the "A" range. I had this conversation over and over. 22/

The exception: I hadn't yet written the portfolio assignment when sts wrote the grade agreement. The portfolio invited students to submit new revisions, but the agreement didn't account for this. 23/

I felt that the students who took the time to work on revisions (during finals!) fulfilled the spirit of the agreement. Next semester, I will mention this as they work on the agreements. 24/ #Ungrading

My neighbors' yard is now festooned with Christmas decorations, including some unexpected yet delightful pleasures such as a Christmas dinosaur . . . 25/

And a flying pig pushing a sleigh. Pigs fly! #Ungrading is not just doable—it might also now be necessary—and incredibly rewarding. 26/

As I mentioned in my first #ungrading thread, this whole process has made me a calmer, better teacher. Given the semester we've just had (see @cjdenial's piece abt this: tinyurl.com/2p8jkhcy), the genuine conversations w sts were life-giving, peace providing, and humbling. 27/

We created a space of trust, and I'm so, so grateful to my students for that. It made the semester bearable when so much about this fall . . has not been. #Ungrading #Pedagogy 28/

I'm also grateful to y'all on here who've been in this convo & work for a long time and who are just joining. I hope that wherever you are, you're finding some time to rest and heal and reflect. As always, I'd love to hear your thoughts or Q about this. 29/end

@threadreaderapp unroll

...