Student Perceptions of Standards-Based Grading in a Required, Introductory Transportation Engineering Course

Presentation Abstract
Alternative grading has received much attention in academics with the publication of books such as Nilson’s (2014) “Specifications Grading”, Blum’s (2020) “Ungrading”, and Clark & Talbert’s “Grading for Growth”. One type of alternative grading is standards-based grading (SBG). The goal of SBG is to help students focus on understanding and learning over grades and to allow students to learn and correct from mistakes. Final course grades are determined by students’ accomplishments in a hierarchy of “assignment bundles”. The purpose of this study is to determine how students perceive SBG in one section of a required, introductory transportation engineering course offered in the spring 2023 semester. A mixed-methods study using a paper-based survey and semi-structured interviews with one to three students was used. Twenty-five students participated in the paper-based survey. Two students participated in the semi-structured interviews. The results of this study found that students felt that SBG made grading expectations clear, helped them improve their assignments, promoted grading consistency, upheld them to high academic standards, motivated them to learn, and discourage them from cheating. Overall, students preferred SBG to traditional point-based grading.

About the Speaker
Elizabeth “Libby” Jones holds a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering and currently serves as the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Programs for the UNL Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering. Dr. Jones’ research has three thrust areas: 1) transportation operations, 2) humanitarian engineering, and 3) engineering education. Her research in transportation has included work on intelligent transportation system, connected vehicles, highway capacity, highway-rail grade crossings, and traffic flow theory. Her humanitarian research comes from work she has done in Madagascar and Zambia with the University of Nebraska’s Engineers Without Borders chapter that she serves as a faculty advisor. Most recently, her research has focused on engineering education. She teaches transportation courses at the undergraduate and graduate level along with a course on GIS and surveying.

Join us in person:
Friday, October 20, 2023
11:00 - 11:50 AM Central Time
Nebraska Hall (NH) Room 404 (in person), Lincoln
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