



Specifications Grading: A New Perspective on Evaluating Success

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Session Objectives

- Define and explain specifications grading
- Discuss pros, cons, and special considerations
- Review examples
- Brainstorm applications

Barriers to Effective and Efficient Grading

Time

Providing
instructive
feedback

Students not
reading your
instructive
feedback

Formative vs.
Summative

Grade
grubbing

How can specifications grading help? (Nilson, 2014)

Reduces instructor time

Eliminates haggling over grades

Students receive clear feedback

Students have a more explicit sense of agency

Quality of student work improves



So...what is specifications grading?

Very clear and detailed specifications for passing (acceptable) work



Really?
Pass or fail?



Grading options

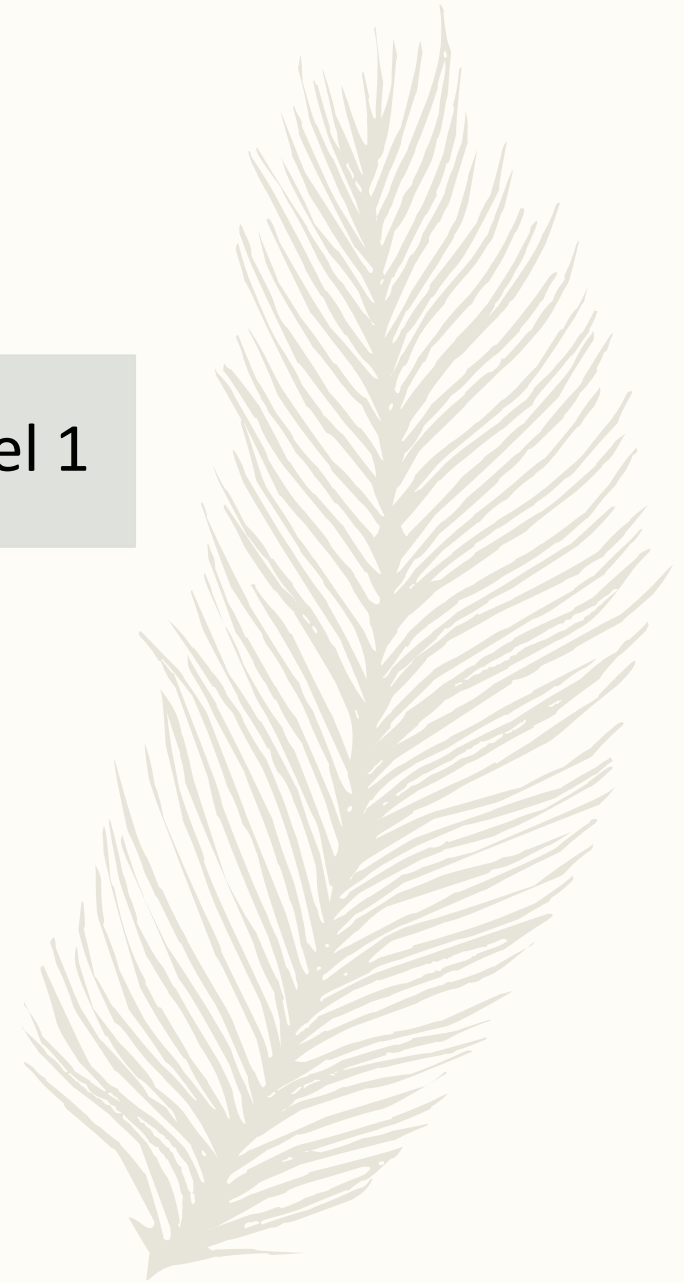
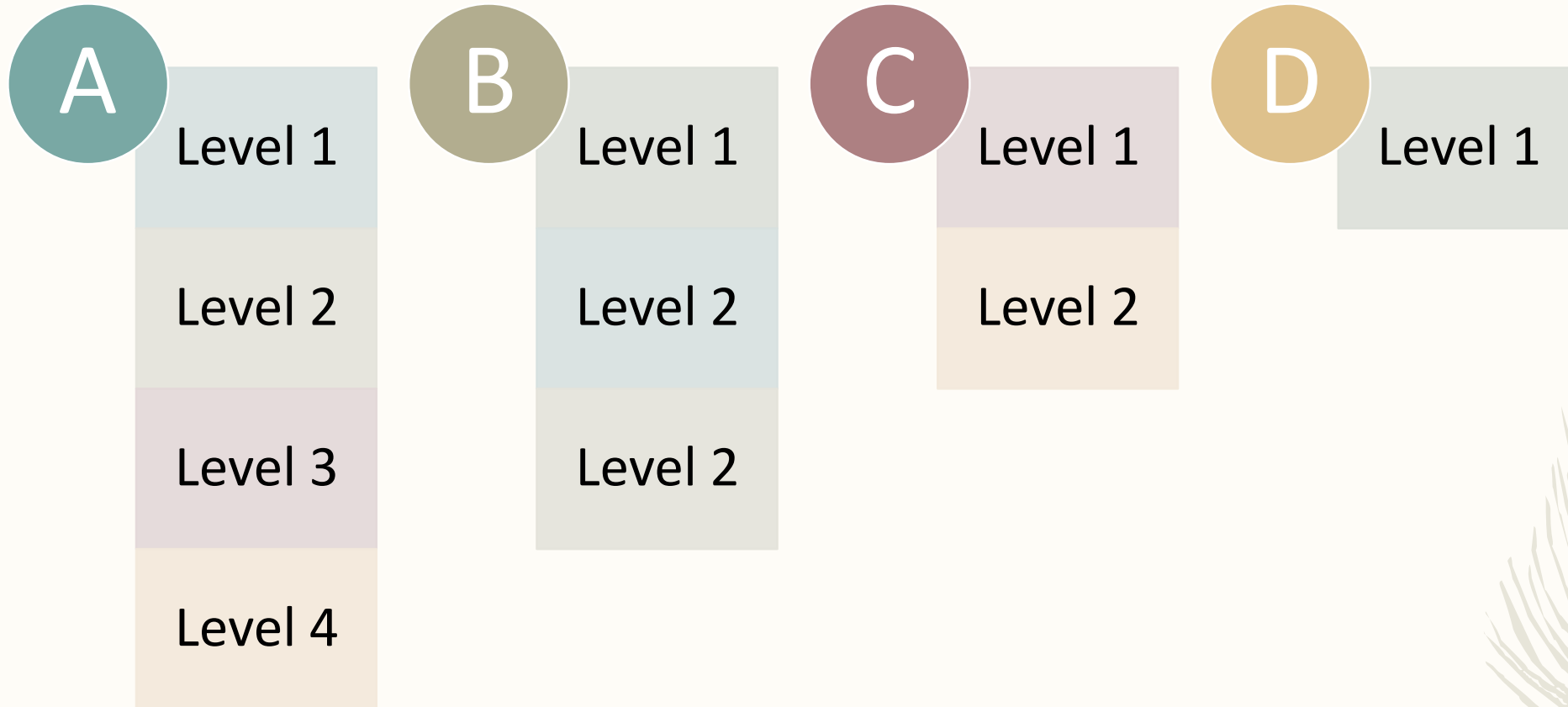
Points

- Pass/fail, but all or no points
- Students can use tokens to revise
- Best to set total points possible than total points needed (i.e., 120 points possible, but need 91-100 points for an A)

Bundling

- Choice of grade and necessary workload
- Choice of token use
- Choice of assignments or aspects of assignments
- Choice of deadlines

Bundling Example





Other bundling options

A = completion of 7/8 bundles

B = completion of 6/8 bundles

C = completion of 5/8 bundles

D = completion of 4/8 bundles

Completing fewer than 4 bundles will result in an F in this course

C = student must have an average of 70% or higher on all exams

B = student must meet the requirements for a C, plus complete module B

A = student must meet the requirements for a B, plus complete module A

Identify, define, and analyze	Students will identify, define, and analyze DSM-5 characteristics of ASDs across the lifespan. (2, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, 5)
Develop	Students will develop an assessment and anticipate potential modifications to diagnostic materials, testing environment, and sensory input, as needed. (2, 3a, 3b)
Interpret	Students will interpret assessment information/data, differentially diagnose, and defend their analysis/conclusion. (2, 3a, 3b, 3c)
Distinguish	Students will distinguish between various treatment approaches and their theoretical foundations, including pseudoscience and non-evidence-based interventions. (1, 2, 3c, 4a, 4b, 5)
Construct	Students will construct a treatment plan and justify their treatment approach and intervention techniques. (3c)
Identify	Students will identify potential areas of counseling specifically related to ASDs across the lifespan and the impact of ASDs on family members. (2, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b, 5)

Learning Outcomes for CSD 742: Autism Spectrum Disorders



1. Fishbowl



2. Classwork



3. Cumulative project

- a) Overview
- b) Diagnosis
- c) Intervention



4. Reflections

- a) Movie/TV show
- b) Book



5. Art Exhibition

Course Assignments

B-	B	B+	A-	A
Complete assignments 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 3c	Complete assignments 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 3c competently	Complete all the requirements for "B" competently	Complete all the requirements for "B" competently	Complete all the requirements for "B" competently
Competence not met, even after use of 2 tokens	All competencies are met, but 2 tokens may be used to achieve mastery	Complete 1 of the 2 reflections competently, your choice (4a or 4b)	Complete both reflections competently (4a, 4b)	Complete both reflections competently (4a, 4b)
		All competencies are met, but 2 tokens may be used to achieve mastery	Complete art project and explanation competently (5)	Complete art project and explanation competently (5)
			All competencies are met, but 1-2 tokens may be used to achieve mastery	All competencies are met on the first attempt

Assignment Bundle

Criteria for Cumulative Project--Intervention

Functional STOs

Well-written, functional, measurable STOs; STOs included a strong verb, context, cues, and objective measure

STO Selection

All STOs demonstrated solid knowledge of ASD and prioritization of therapy needs; strong rationale

Activity Justification

Activity justification was well-founded, functional, and matched client interests/needs

Techniques

Excellent and comprehensive understanding and implementation of principles of client-focused and clinician-directed techniques; techniques were appropriate for client and therapy objectives; examples were given

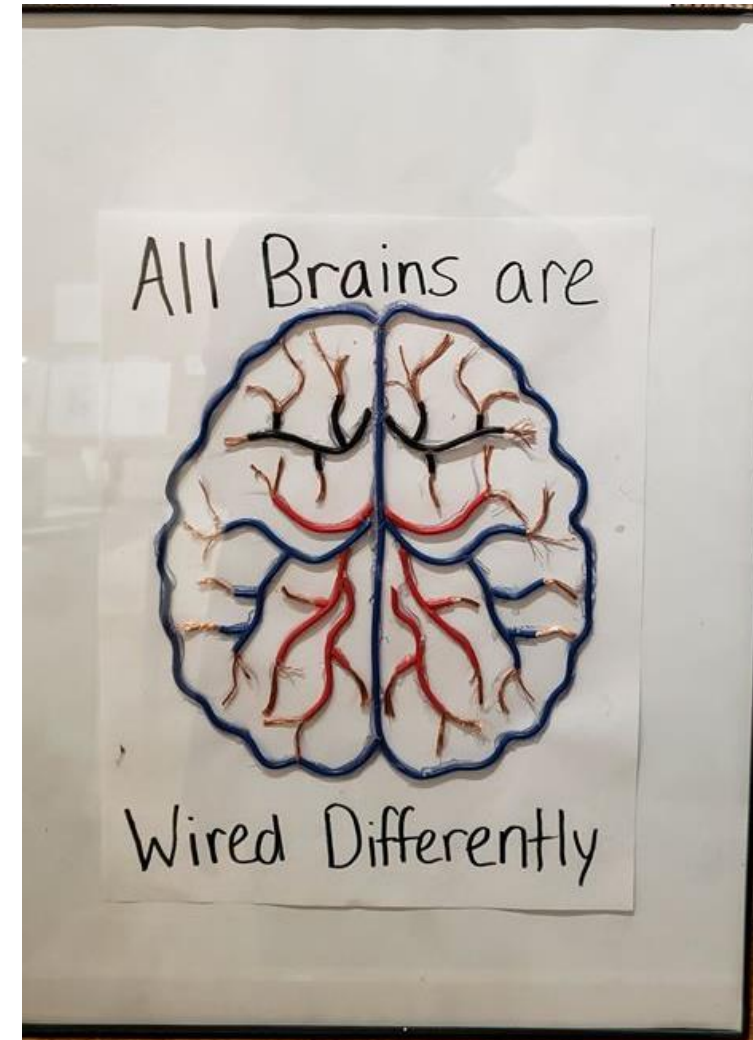
Behavior-Sensory/Carryover and Education

Considered and addressed potential behavior and sensory-motor issues in a proactive and appropriate way; Considered how to promote carryover of skills through appropriate education of caregivers and/or client home program and provided at least one example.

Criteria	Ratings	
<p data-bbox="180 278 382 321">Artwork</p> <p data-bbox="180 406 828 642">Made some type of art to display in recorded or visual form. The art was thoughtful and intentional.</p>	<p data-bbox="919 278 1312 321">Met competency</p>	<p data-bbox="1633 278 2191 321">Didn't meet competency</p>
<p data-bbox="180 745 624 788">Written description</p> <p data-bbox="180 873 904 1170">The description provided additional insight to the artwork and expressed a clear understanding of some aspect of autism.</p>	<p data-bbox="919 745 1312 788">Met competency</p>	<p data-bbox="1633 745 2191 788">Didn't meet competency</p>

All Brains are Wired Differently

I chose to represent the concept that “all brains are wired differently” because it has been an important theme throughout the class. I learned to see behaviors associated with autism and differences and that these differences do not make a person less than anyone considered “neurotypical.” In understanding that autism is a difference in wiring of the brain, we as SLPs can search for the underlying meaning in differences, rather than correcting them. I also learned to look at what everyone can bring to the table because of differences in wiring, such as unique problem solving, emotional insight, and humor. This piece is meant to be a reminder to celebrate the difference in wiring in yourself and others.



Hand Clapping

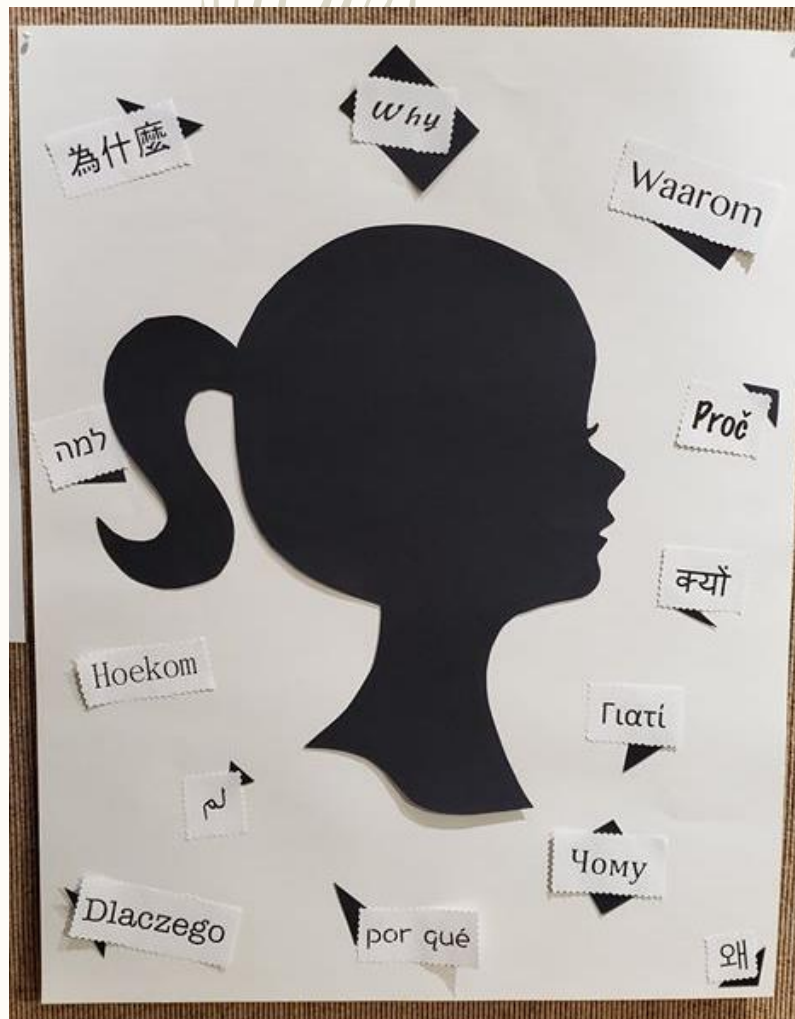


Finger Flicking




Hand Flapping





“Why” is a question that does not get asked enough especially when interacting with people who have autism. Why is he stimming? Why is she making noises? Why is he playing alone? Instead of trying to stop behaviors it is important to figure out why those behaviors are happening. The word “why” is written in several different language because autism does not just affect those in the US, but it is seen worldwide. I am curious to know how people on the spectrum are viewed in other cultures or countries. The fonts used are all different representing the differences seen in people with autism. Everyone with autism is a unique individual, no two people on the spectrum are the same. Girls are underdiagnosed with autism, so I chose to have a young girl’s silhouette in the middle of my project. Our society thinks it is common for girls to be quiet and shy so that type of behavior in girls is seen as normal. Many girls do not get diagnosed until they are in college. I decided to have everything in black and white print because many people with autism have dichotomous thinking. They have a difficult time understanding sarcasm and jokes; they take everything literally. This project brings together important concepts that I have learned throughout the semester, but to me the most important is asking “why” questions.



Why I like specifications grading

- Huge time saver!
- Students have more control/agency
- Beneficial in times of crisis for student
- Anecdotally, improved work and allowed more risk-taking by students
- Afforded more opportunities for expression and creative exploration to internalize and synthesize course content

Caveats



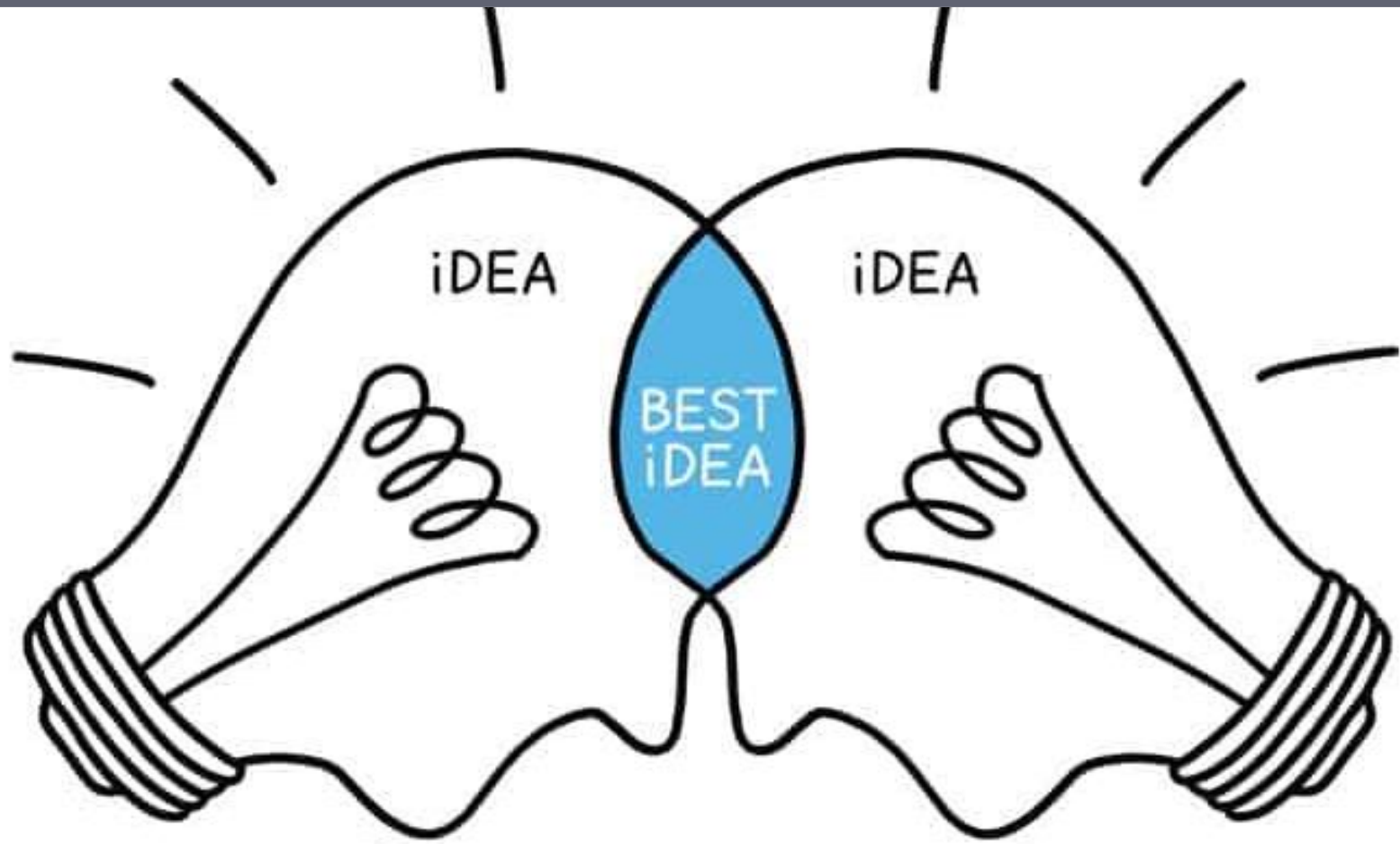
MORE WORK UP
FRONT



SOME STUDENT
PUSHBACK TO A
NEW WAY OF
GRADING



NEED FOR VERY
CLEAR
ASSIGNMENT
INSTRUCTIONS
AND RUBRICS





Thank you! |



References

Hall, M. (2018). What is specifications grading and why should you consider using it? Retrieved from <https://ii.library.jhu.edu/2018/04/11/what-is-specifications-grading-and-why-should-you-consider-using-it/>

Nilson, L. B. (2014). *Specifications grading: Restoring rigor, motivating students, and saving faculty time.* Virginia: Stylus.

Nilson, L. B. (2016). Yes, Virginia, there's a better way to grade. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/01/19/new-ways-grade-more-effectively-essay>