

Standards-Based and Specifications Grading (SBSG)

OVERVIEW

Instructors give students a flexible path towards the grades they want

Grade Bundles allow students to understand their progress

Specifications detailed and challenging enough for students to demonstrate high quality work and know how to show it

“Satisfactory” work means course standards were met, and students may challenge themselves to excel

Addresses concerns of bias, subjectivity, and guesswork

More prep time before semester; Less effort and time spent grading

Goals

Explicit learning goals become your standards of performance

Students know, in detail, what they must do to work for the grade they want

Specifications

Develop clear and actionable specifications to show students how they can succeed

Less ambiguous specs means faster grading!

Pass or Revise

Assignments that meet specifications receive a ‘Satisfactory’
Assignments that do not meet criteria can be revised

Bundle

Bundle letter grades with assignment sets

Higher level ‘bundles’ are increasingly complex and demonstrate mastery

Tokens

Award Tokens for students to negotiate your specifications

Tokens can be awarded for extra efforts in and out of class

“A couple of the students who earned A’s in the spring did not do so by producing conventional “A” work. But they met all of the expectations I laid out for the course, worked consistently hard to meet those goals, and clearly demonstrated that they learned a lot throughout the process—perhaps they learned even more than the students who came into the class highly prepared to succeed.”

–Jason Mittel