

Seminar Program
The Science of Teaching: Evidence-Based
Approaches in Biology Education

UC San Diego
Biological Sciences

Aligning Teaching Values and Assessment Practices with Scalable Specifications Grading



Renée Link, Ph.D.

Professor of Teaching
University of California, Irvine

Friday, November 18, 2022, 10:00 – 11:00 AM

1205 Auditorium, Natural Sciences Building

Zoom link: <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/933330075605>

Meeting ID: 933 3007 5605

A workshop and discussion with Dr. Link will take place immediately following the talk.

Abstract:

Assessing student work to assign final course letter grades has depended traditionally on points-based grading systems, often involving curves. This approach to grading in the college classroom is not ideal as it places emphasis on the extrinsic motivational factor of accumulating points rather than the intrinsic motivation of learning and meeting course learning outcomes. Although specifications grading has been used across numerous disciplines to support student-centered learning, examples of specifications grading often focus on smaller lecture courses. We first created a specifications grading system for one of three courses in an organic chemistry laboratory series and then scaled the grading format to support the full series of courses, with over 1,000 students enrolled in each course. After the success of specifications grading in the lab course, we also implemented a specifications grading system in a flipped, summer, online organic chemistry lecture course. This talk will describe the specifications grading system used in each course and how the system was perceived by the instructors, students, and graduate teaching assistants. This talk is also designed to be interactive to get you started on designing a specifications grading system for your course.

Hosted by:
Melinda Owens (mtowens@ucsd.edu)