

**From One-and-Done to Feedback Loops: Implementing Resubmissions in Undergraduate Courses**

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### **Introduction**

Traditional undergraduate courses often include one-and-done assessments, where students are not allowed to revise work, or may receive penalties related to their grade if revisions are permitted (Clark & Talbert, 2023). These practices are grounded in traditional grading practices, which can create challenges for students, as they often only have one opportunity submit an assessment and do not have the ability to demonstrate growth or proficiency after that point (Blum, 2020; Nilson, 2015). As a result, current assessment and grading methods frequently prioritize grading assignments over assessing what students know by the end of the course and providing feedback to support learning (Blum, 2020; Nilson, 2015). From a student perspective, traditional grading practices are linked with lower levels of motivation, mental health, attention to feedback, and overall enjoyment of the course (Blum, 2020; Nilson, 2015).

In contrast, alternative grading practices shift the focus of assessment toward student learning and growth. Clark and Talbert (2023) developed a conceptual framework that synthesizes commonalities of alternative grading through four pillars: clearly defined standards, helpful feedback, marks that indicate progress, and reattempts without penalty, with the pillars illustrated as supporting a roof that represents feedback loops. Feedback loops are characterized by students getting feedback, thinking about the feedback, and making changes (Clark & Talbert, 2023). This innovative idea focuses on the pillar of reattempts without penalty, where students are allowed to resubmit work when they receive less than 100% or do not demonstrate proficiency. By allowing resubmissions, students have opportunities to move from a fixed to a growth mindset (Tila & Levy, 2023), particularly when revisions take place after feedback discussions with the instructor (Epstein, 2024).

### **How it Works**

Resubmissions were allowed for assignments or quizzes where students received below 100%. Students were encouraged to meet with the instructor or teaching assistant prior to resubmitting to ask questions about the feedback provided. During the initial implementation of resubmissions, there were no limits on the number of attempts students could submit or the length of time they could take to resubmit their revisions. In later semesters, the policy was refined so students had seven days to resubmit their assignment after receiving feedback.

Additionally, students were required to provide an explanation of the revisions they made and mark all edits within their resubmission. For written responses, revisions were made using the highlight function in word-processing software or annotated by the student. For recorded video assignments, students could indicate revisions by annotating transcripts or slides or providing before and after screenshots. For quizzes, the students scheduled a time re-take only the part of the quiz related to the objectives or standards they did not meet the first time, with the instructor providing alternate questions that measured those same standards. Overall, the resubmission process allowed students to demonstrate mastery and provided opportunities for student growth.

### **Results to Date/Implications**

Overall, the use of resubmissions for assignments and quizzes has contributed positively in regard to student learning for students and instructors. This approach has been implemented

across three semesters of a curriculum design course and two semesters of a program planning course for preservice agricultural educators. Each semester allowed for opportunities to refine the resubmission process, improving clarity, workflow, and clarity for students and the instructor and teaching assistants.

In end-of-course surveys, students consistently reported that the opportunity to revise their work helped them learn and understand course content on a deeper level. Students also mentioned that revising their work helped them better understand their own thought process and focus more on the learning process. Additionally, students noted the ability to resubmit work reduced stress by creating space for improvement. For example, one student shared, “I really enjoyed the submission and feedback process within this class. It allowed me to focus more on learning and the process of getting better as a teacher and less on feeling like I should be perfect in my initial attempt.”

Some students noted areas for improvement related to the quality and timeliness of feedback they received. A few students noted that managing resubmissions alongside upcoming assignments was at times stressful, also known as the “snowball effect” (Talbert, 2023). Additionally, select students shared frustrations when feedback felt incomplete or when new comments appeared on subsequent submissions.

### **Future Plans/Advice to Others**

As course content advances, work can pile up quickly for instructors and students as they manage assignments and resubmissions. For the instructor ensuring that feedback is given within seven days of the assignment due dates and work can become more challenging to stay caught up for instructors as well as for students. Staying on top of assignments and timelines is important.

#### **Advice for students**

- Communicate with the instructor if there are questions or guidance is needed for the resubmission.
- Ensure that the process of resubmission is done in its entirety and within the time frame.
- View feedback with a growth mindset, not a criticism.

#### **Advice for instructors**

- Provide an outline of the process, clear expectations of the resubmission grading system, such as time allowed between submissions, what type of feedback to expect, and any specific instructions needed to resubmit. For example, a one-pager for students to refer to.
- When providing feedback, focus on clarity and share the why.
- If, after the second submission of the assignment, additional feedback is needed, request a meeting with the student to discuss the assignment and provide clarity.
- Encourage reflection of the assignment before and after the resubmission has been finalized.

### **Costs/Resources Needed**

The resubmission technique does not require any monetary costs, although it can take a substantial amount of time to give high quality feedback in a timely manner. A learning management system (Canvas, Google Classroom, Blackboard, etc.) can be used to manage resubmissions and provide feedback.

## References

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