



Common Challenges & Misconceptions

Joe Feldman, EdM; Author & Consultant; Crescendo Education Group [00:00:00] A common belief is that if we don't include something that we ask students to do in the grade, students won't do it. Traditionally in our grading, what we do is we atomize every aspect of learning. So you come in today to the classroom, we're going to do a class activity. You get some points for that. You're going to get a homework assignment. You get points for that. We're going to do a formative assessment. You get points for this, et cetera, et cetera. Everything is independently rewarded or punished. And what that does is, as I said, it atomizes the learning process. When we know that the reason why we're doing this homework, or we're doing this problem set in class, or we're doing this class activity is because we see a clear means-and-ends relationship. When you practice and learn these skills and make some mistakes, ultimately, you will show a high performance on the assessment. When you do this formative work, you will do well when it's time to perform. And students actually understand this means- and-ends relationship. Students will shoot free throws for hours. They know that they don't get any points for making those free throws. No one says, "Write down the number of free throws that you got, and we're going to add it to your score in the game." Right? Students understand there is a means-and-ends relationship: "I practice so that I have a higher performance." And faculty worry that by not including all of this work prior to the assessment in the grade that students won't do it. They worry that if I don't give points for problem sets, students won't do the problem sets. And what happens every time is that there is a little bit of a dip at the beginning, that students say, "Oh, OK, great, it's not graded. I won't do it." And then what happens is, they don't do well in the assessment. And then they realize that the assignment was for them, not for the teacher. And then homework completion and task engagement goes back up and even goes higher because students now understand the purpose of the work.