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Expert Insights: Including Students in Assessment and Grading Practices

Ken O'Connor, MEd; Author and Consultant; Assess for Success Consulting, Inc [00:00:09] We can include students in the grading process, I think, in basically three ways. We can include them in the assessment process, sometimes by inviting them to suggest ways for us to assess, suggesting prompts or questions for tests and exams, suggesting ways in which they think they can best show what they know—in other words, giving ideas about the assessment itself. We can involve them sometimes in the co-construction of rubrics, which is a very powerful thing because if they're involved in the construction of a rubric, it will deepen their understanding. We can involve students in keeping track of their own achievement, which can be done fairly simply just in terms of recording scores over time. Probably one of the best ways to do that is with portfolios. And now we can do portfolios pretty easily as digital portfolios. And the third way I think we should be involving students is in communicating about their learning. So that could be with peer conferences. It could be conferences with the professor. Because when we communicate our learning, we are thinking about our learning and we're showing responsibility for our learning. What we should be aiming for is developing students who are self-directed, reflective learners. And we don't get that unless we're involving the process and unless they have some ownership of their own learning.

Joe Feldman, EdM; Author & Consultant; Crescendo Education Group [00:01:40] When students track their own grades, how they do on different assessments, and they also include whether they did a homework assignment or how they did on a particular classwork exercise, what they're able to do is—particularly when faculty support them in this—is to reflect on where they are in their learning, what the relationship is between the work that they did, the practice, all the formative work and their summative and help them set goals. So, for example, maybe I thought that I didn't need to do two of the homework assignments and then I didn't do well on the quiz, right? And I've been tracking this. What it allows me to do is then reflect and say, "OK, what did I think I knew to not think that I needed to do that homework assignment? And how can I become better at self-assessing homework assignments or formative assessment work or practice work so that I can make better decisions and have a much more accurate understanding of my own level of knowledge so that I make better decisions in the future about whether I need to do the formative practice preceding the summative." And that work takes additional time by faculty but building in the space for that reflection is hugely empowering and capacity-building for our students and gives them a greater sense of efficacy and ownership and self-regulation skills to be successful not just in my class, but in other classes and in wherever they choose to go in their lives.