

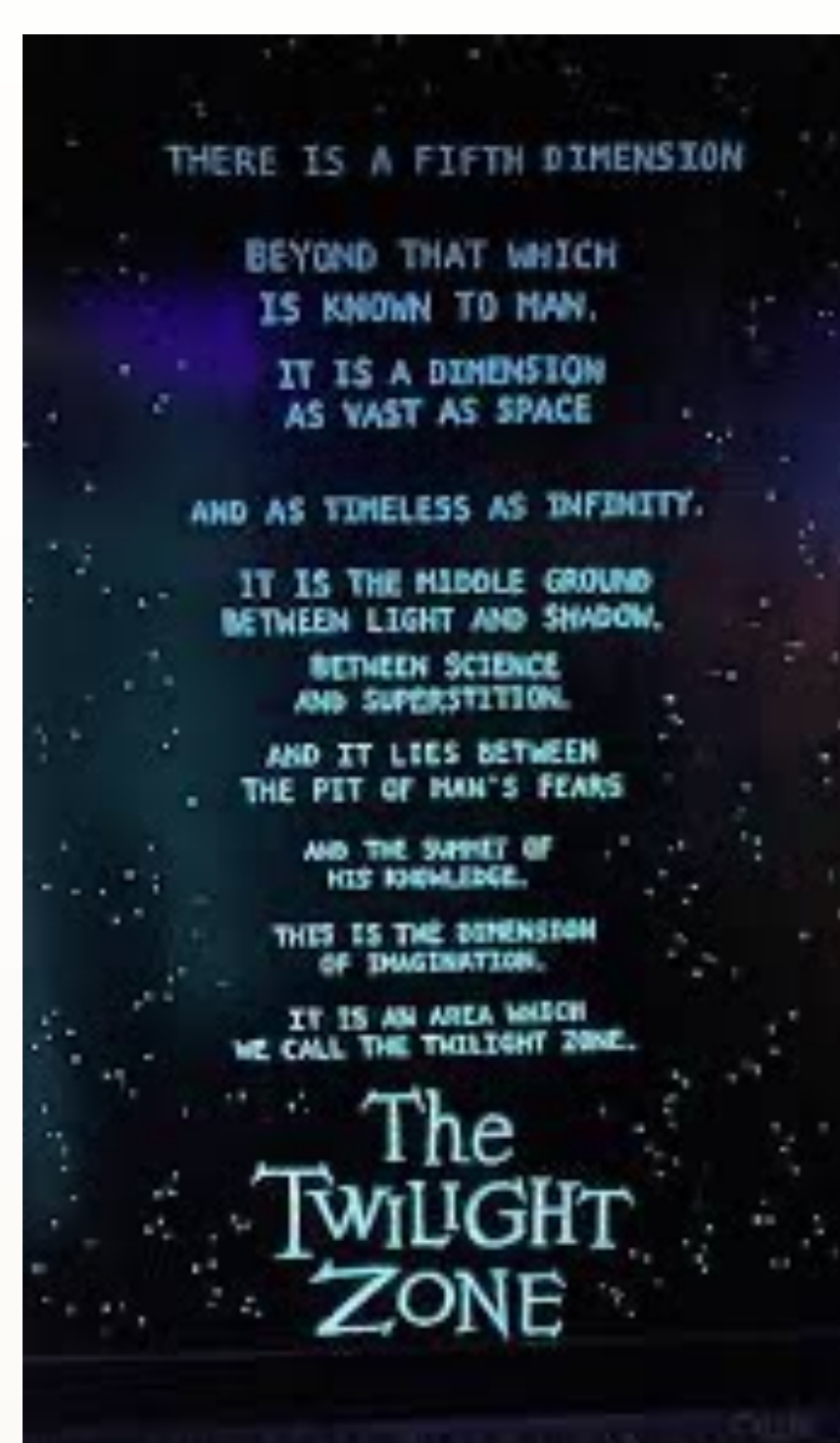
# You are now entering the twilight zone: an ungrading approach for drug information monographs

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## Key Points

- Students preferred the ungrading approach to traditional grading for a drug monograph project
- The enhanced feedback throughout the process was a major positive for students
- Results were from one school with a limited sample size
- The instructor found the ungrading approach more beneficial to help teach students, but it required more time



## Introduction

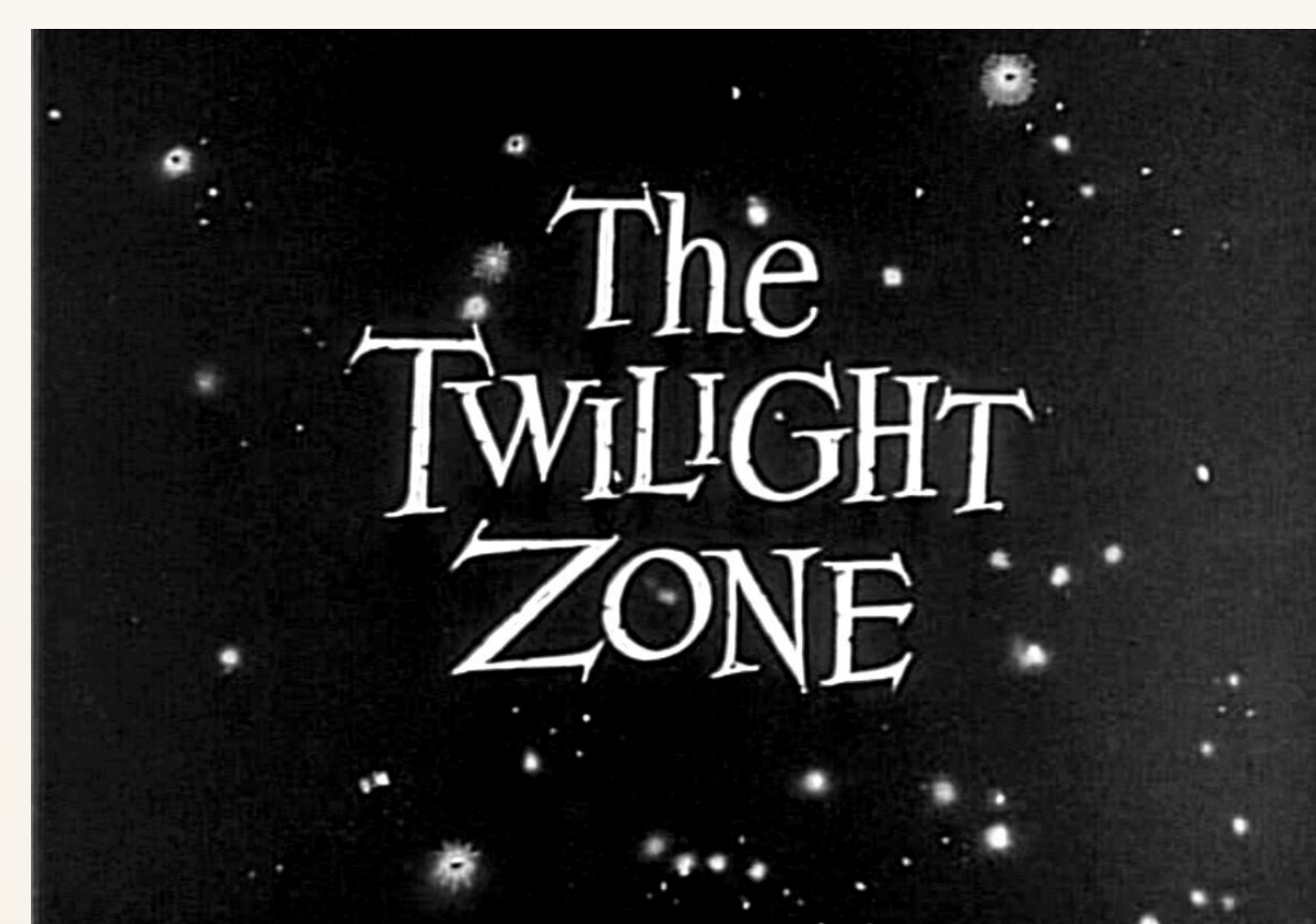
- You are entering the twilight zone where student work is not graded with a letter grade or rubric.
- Ungrading is not the absence of grading, but focused on formative feedback instead of summative feedback.
- The intent of the approach is to focus on development of student work rather than the final course or assignment grade.<sup>1</sup>
- This process also allows students to focus on the process of learning rather than completion of a task.
- Ungrading removes inconsistencies with grader or time of the grading.<sup>2</sup>

## Objectives

- To determine if a new assessment strategy for drug information monographs would be helpful to improve student satisfaction and learning.
- Null hypothesis: There will be no difference in student satisfaction and perceptions with an ungrading approach compared to traditional grading.

## Methods

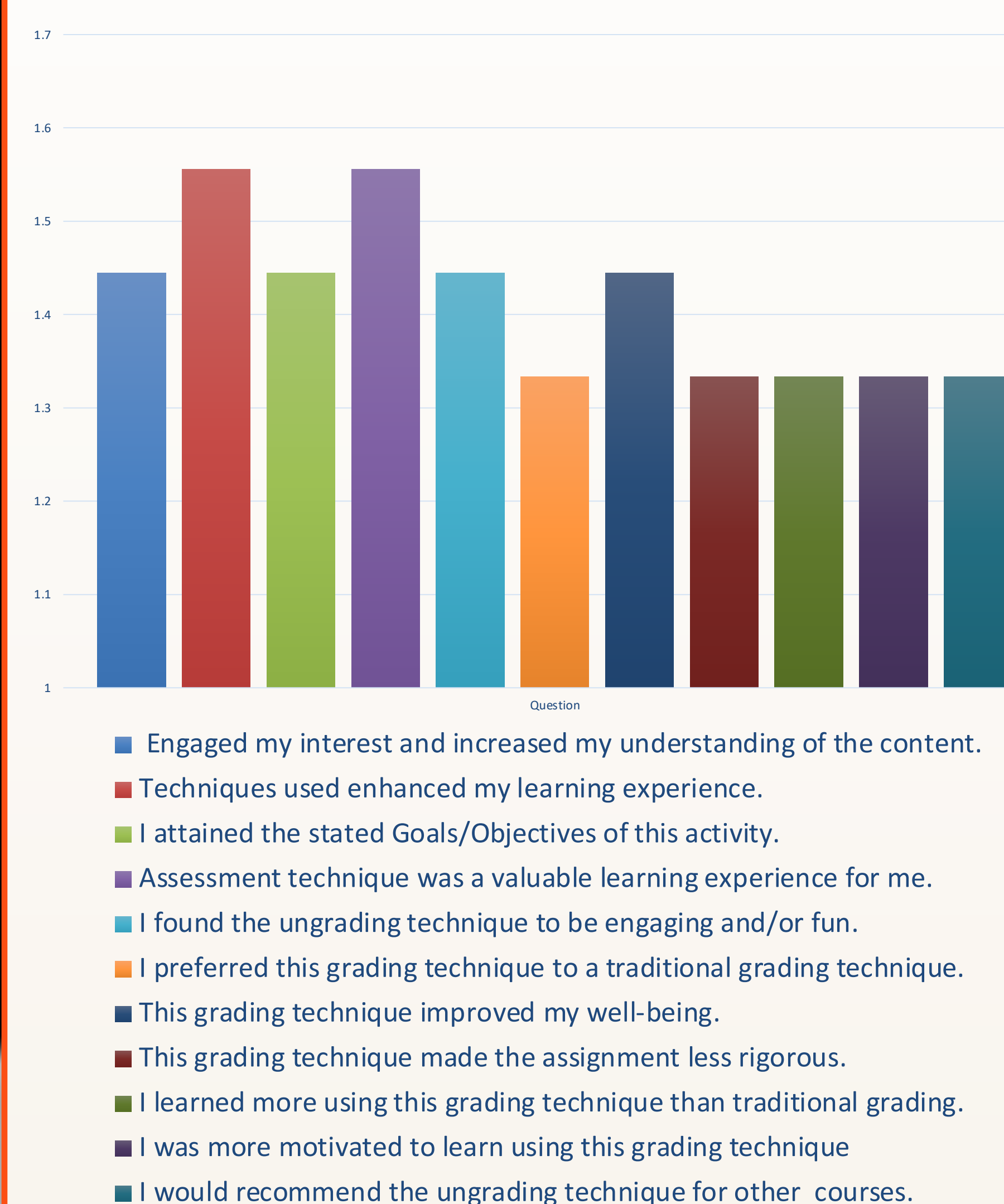
- Students completed a drug monograph project in their gastrointestinal pharmacotherapy module
- Assessment was done using a new technique based on principles of ungrading.
- The ungrading process is focused on individual development and learning through personalized feedback, reflection, and multiple drafts of a project.
- Students who completed each draft and final submission received a passing score rather than a letter grade
- Each student was provided copious feedback through written and verbal notes as well as individualized meetings with the instructor.
- A survey was distributed to students to determine their perceptions of the ungrading technique.
- A likert scale was used with 1 = strongly agree, and 5 = strongly disagree



## Results

- 100% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the ungrading approach was a valuable learning experience for them
- 100% of students preferred this assessment method to traditional grading.
- 77% of students felt they learned more and were more motivated using ungrading. Comments from evaluations were generally positive and focused on how they valued the enhanced feedback mechanisms
- Students mentioned they felt less stressed and had more time to reflect on their work.
- Some students were more motivated with ungrading, while others believed they had the same level of motivation.

Figure 1. Ungrading Survey Results (n=9)



## Discussion

### Pros

- Enhanced feedback that students loved
- More interactions with students to understand key struggle points
- Less time spent deciding between rubric points
- Students preferred ungrading approach
- More student reflection on work and strengths/weaknesses
- Less stress on students

### Cons

- More overall time spent using the ungrading approach mostly due to more time in meetings and providing feedback
- Limited sample size
- Less discernment between best and good work
- Can be difficult to implement depending on grading culture

## Conclusion

- Students preferred the ungrading approach due to its enhanced feedback, but further research is needed in a larger sample
- The ungrading twilight zone was successfully navigated and exited.

## References

1. Center for the Integration of Teaching, Learning and Scholarship. What is ungrading? Available from: <https://citls.lafayette.edu/what-is-ungrading/>
2. Schinske J, Tanner K. Teaching More by Grading Less (or Differently). CBE Life Sci Educ. 2014; 13(2): 159-66.