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An Exploratory Study of the Use of Grade Contracts in Undergraduate Family Science Courses

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ABSTRACT. Contract grading can provide an alternative to traditional grading systems. The goal of this exploratory study was to determine students' reactions to grade contracts as well as their perceived usefulness in undergraduate courses. Contract grading is becoming more popular in higher education. Using a sample of 41 students across three undergraduate courses, data were collected on students' perceptions of grade contracts and their utility, the degree to which students believed that grade contracts may have improved their sense of efficacy and control over their learning, and the ease with which students understood grade contracts compared to traditional grading. Students responded positively to the use of grade contracts and liked the sense of control that grade contracts provided but had difficulty understanding the more technical aspects of the contracts. Implications for instructors as well as future research are discussed.

Keywords: grade contracts, contract grading, self-efficacy, scholarship of teaching and learning, alternative grading

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For many instructors in higher education, the classroom culture has shifted from being predominantly lecture-based to an environment where student learners are often expected to take a leadership role in class sessions and co-construct knowledge (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). However, college students have many responsibilities and priorities that conflict with their coursework, such as full-time employment, caregiving responsibilities, and college athletics (Spaulding et al., 2016). These non-academic responsibilities may result in varying levels of student engagement. One way in which instructors have adapted to shifts in higher education has been with the implementation of alternative grading systems for students, such as grade contracts. This exploratory study aims to determine students' reactions to grade contracts in undergraduate family science courses. The intent of this study is to provide evidence for the feasibility of grade contracts in these courses, determine student perceptions of grade contracts, and create implications for larger-scale research on grade contracts.

The concept of contract grading is not new in higher education but has been gaining more attention (Hara, 2010). The use of contract grading has not been well-studied in family science. However, in recent years, scholars have not only articulated a need for alternative grading methods in higher education but have also invested significant time in developing scholarship that assesses the effectiveness of these alternative methods (Gannon, 2017; Supiano, 2019).

Scholars, primarily in humanities, have proposed and experimented with models that resemble contract grading (Gannon, 2017). While there is not currently a unified definition of contract grading, it is typically based on the A-B-C-D-F grading system normalized in the United States (Nilson, 2016). For our study, we broadly defined a grade contract as an agreement which a student enters into with an instructor at the beginning of the semester, where students complete a prescribed set of assignments to earn a grade of A, B, or C, based on tiered levels of work. Rather than earning a cumulative grade, a final course grade of a 'C' or higher is awarded based on the workload and labor consistent with the contracted grade.

Scholarship on teaching practices that utilize some forms of grade contracts is underdeveloped, especially in family science and closely related social science disciplines (e.g. psychology, child development). The research on contract grading shows that graduate and undergraduate students responded to the implementation of grade contracts in an overwhelmingly positive manner. Students favored having clear expectations and control over course grades (Fraser, 1990). Other scholars have pointed out that their use of grade contracts has resulted in an evaluation of student work that has shifted from results-based grading to process-based evaluation, which more highly emphasizes multiple drafts of assignments, revisions, and peer review (Danielewicz & Elbow, 2009). Compared to courses that utilize a traditional grading system, researchers have found that the introduction of grade contracts increased students' motivation and investment in their learning (Frank & Scharff, 2013), resulting in higher student achievement and fewer failing students (Lindemann & Harbke, 2011). Inoue (2019) contextualized the use of labor-based grading contracts infused with compassionate teaching practices as an alternative to skills or mastery-based assessments in writing courses. They argue that the energy or labor exerted in academic work is an important piece of learning to consider along with typical outcomes such as demonstrating knowledge of course material.

A small body of scholarship suggests that students may also feel resistant toward aspects of contract grading. Although students find value in grade contracts, researchers note that students may oppose the use of contract grading if they perceive it as too onerous or may not understand the inherent

flaws of more traditional grading methods (Litterio, 2016; Spidell & Thelin, 2006). . Our exploratory study of the use of grade contracts in Family Science undergraduate courses is both timely and relevant.

Theoretical Framework

There is currently no unifying theoretical underpinning for the use of contract grading. Humanities scholars have offered that contract grading is a socially just and compassionate teaching practice based on Marx, Freire, and other critical scholars (see Inoue, 2019). The 2001 revision of Bloom's Taxonomy informs our theoretical framework (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Armstrong, 2010). The theoretical framework is also loosely grounded in developmental psychology, specifically instituting grade contracts to enhance students' self-efficacy and self-esteem (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Armstrong, 2010; Bandura, 1994). There is some social science research that directly relates Bandura's (1994) theory to contract grading. Research in the humanities and English has explored how contract grading models impact psychological factors, such as emotions and motivation, that are adjacent to self-efficacy. In these studies, grade contracts were used to separate numerical grading with the value and quality of student writing (Inman & Powell, 2018), as well as to increase mindfulness and lessen student distress around writing assignments (Consilio & Kennedy, 2019).

Our purpose for implementing grade contracts has been to promote a greater sense of shared authority and control over final grade outcomes among student learners in the A-B-C-D-F grading system, consistent with learning environments that encourage students to co-construct knowledge (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). Preceding data collection, we designed and implemented grade contracts around three key principles. First, Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Armstrong, 2010) was used as a guiding framework for developing different grade contract tiers in the A-B-C-D-F system. This was achieved by scaffolding higher-grade contract requirements that align with higher levels of thinking and learning. For example, the baseline C-contract, which in an A-B-C-D-F system typically constitutes satisfactory or average work, encompassed memorization and comprehension of core course content, the lowest level of Bloom's Taxonomy. The next tier, the B-Contract, drew upon higher levels of thinking by requiring further analysis and evaluation of core content. Lastly, the highest tier, the A-Contract assignments, also required synthesis and creation above and beyond the lower contract requirements. See Table 1 for examples of tiered assignments.

The second key principle was that our grade contracts would mimic experiences our graduates would encounter in the workforce, such as working independently, taking leadership roles, and negotiating employment contracts. This principle was achieved by structuring course requirements to have students commit to their chosen workload at the start of the semester instead of accumulating points. In addition, students were encouraged and expected to meet with instructors to discuss and develop their assignments, especially in the 'A' contract tiers.

Lastly, we built grade contracts on the principle that they may improve students' intrinsic sense of self-efficacy. This was achieved in three ways: first, by encouraging students to set and achieve high goals through the development and implementation of course projects that they are deeply interested in; second, by creating opportunities to overcome perceived failure or harsh feedback through assignments with multiple benchmarks; and finally, by providing a course structure that in many ways challenges students to co-create course projects with instructors (Bandura, 1994; Consilio & Kennedy, 2019; Inman & Powell, 2018).

Methods

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected by administering an online Qualtrics survey to a convenience sample of undergraduate students enrolled in three undergraduate Family Science courses that utilized a contract grading system. The study was not designed before employing grade contracts, but instead, a decision was made part-way through the semester to collect data on grade contracts to ascertain students' reactions to their use. Neither time nor funding allowed for an ideal experimental design with a control group of similar courses.

Our survey instrument (Appendix A) included 21 questions and took participants approximately 10 minutes to complete. There were three courses that employed contract grading at the time of the study. Potential participants were invited to complete the survey after the semester had ended and final grades were entered. We followed this process to ensure that student participation was voluntary and not predicated on receiving a final course grade. The study was classified as exempt by our institution's IRB.

The survey primarily consisted of Likert scale questions with four response options ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*. The questions explored students' perceptions of grade contracts, their like or dislike of the contract system, their understanding of how grade contracts work, and students' beliefs about their academic success in the course. The survey also includes questions designed to separate negative perceptions of grade contracts from particular assignments we believed would be perceived as highly challenging to students, such as service learning. The survey also included questions that aimed at learning if students used grade contracts to circumvent difficult assignments. Additionally, the survey included three questions that asked participants to provide one-word text answers, such as specifying one word that first comes to mind when thinking about grade contracts. These questions were designed to allow for unexpected responses and to add context to survey questions.

Out of a pool of approximately 60 students across the three courses, recruitment efforts resulted in 42 completed surveys. There were no missing data for the Likert scale questions. One respondent, who was the only respondent to have failed their course, indicated *Strongly Disagree* for every survey question, including survey items in which strongly disagreeing indicated a positive response to grade contracts. This respondent's survey was excluded as an outlier, resulting in a final sample of 41 participants.

Sample

Of our sample ($n = 41$), 86% were in their junior or senior year. We did not collect in-depth demographic data on students, such as gender, age, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. The university's population and Family Science program, where data collection took place, are mostly homogenous across numerous demographics. Students in the Family Science program where data collection took place are overwhelmingly White, female, and between the ages of 18 and 22. Although the University's population fits within a traditional age demographic, nearly 40% of students at this university are first-generation students. For all participants, it was their first semester taking a course that had utilized a grade contract instead of traditional grading.

Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Due to the exploratory scope of the study, the small sample size, and the use of convenience sampling, this methodological approach was most appropriate for data analysis. We conducted chi-square analyses among key variables to rule out the possibility that perceptions toward grade contracts were contingent

on factors such as college major and differences in assignment type across the three courses. Thus, statistically significant chi-square results (which did not occur) would have indicated results extraneous to implementing grade contracts.

Procedure

To explore the use of grade contracts, we replaced traditional grading systems with grade contracts in three upper-level undergraduate Family Science courses at a land-grant university in the United States. The three courses were a family violence course, an early childhood course, and the program’s capstone/senior seminar course. At the beginning of the semester, students were asked to self-assess the work they wished to do throughout the semester. After students committed to a grade contract, they could move to a higher contract if they made sufficient progress in the class.

Our grade contracts followed a tiered system, where students wishing to earn a ‘C’ were required to complete a baseline workload of content considered fundamental. Students wishing to earn a ‘B’ were assigned projects in addition to the ‘C’ contract workload, typically research papers or reflective essays. Finally, students wishing to earn an ‘A’ were responsible for a major project in addition to completing the ‘C’ and ‘B’ contract workloads. In two of the three courses, the ‘A’ contract workload required an experiential service-learning component. See Table 1 for a description of the grading tiers.

Table 1
Tiered Grade Contract Example

C Contract Requirements	B Contract Requirements	A Contract Requirements
Completion of Weekly Unit assignments, earning scores of 8 or higher (or a total average of 80%).	Completion of Weekly Unit assignments, earning scores of 8 or higher (or a total average of 80%).	Completion of Weekly Unit assignments, earning scores of 8 or higher (or a total average of 80%).
Successful completion of a ‘Student Portfolio’ on Google Drive that consists of a polished CV, a LinkedIn profile, and a Synthesis Paper outlining your learning throughout the program.	Successful completion of a ‘Student Portfolio’ on Google Drive that consists of a polished CV, a LinkedIn profile, and a Synthesis Paper outlining your learning throughout the program.	Successful completion of a ‘Student Portfolio’ on Google Drive that consists of a polished CV, a LinkedIn profile, and a Synthesis Paper outlining your learning throughout the program.
On-time Submissions.	Successful completion of the ‘Final Research Paper’ including a successful outline and submission of one draft. <i>On-time Submissions.</i>	Successful completion of the ‘Final Research Paper’ including a successful outline and submission of one draft. Successful completion of a service-learning project (includes successful progress on the outline, proposal, and regular check-ins). On-time Submissions.
Students successfully completing the C contract will earn a course grade of C-, C, or C+	Students successfully completing the B contract will earn a course grade of B-, B, or B+	Students successfully completing the A contract will earn a course grade of A- or A

Each tier in the grade contract was modeled after Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Armstrong, 2010), meaning higher grade contract requirements aligned with higher levels of thinking and learning. For example, the baseline 'C' contract encompassed tasks such as memorization and comprehension of core course content, the 'B' contract entailed deeper analysis and application of core content, and the 'A' contract assignments called for students to engage in evaluation and creation.

The assignments for the 'B' and 'A' contracts were more iterative than those of the 'C' contracts. Major writing assignments that moved students to a minimum of a 'B' usually required the submission of multiple, smaller drafts throughout the semester instead of a single submission of a massive product at the end of the semester. The practice emphasized a lower-stakes, labor-based approach to learning. The 'A' contracts tend to have the most flexibility regarding student-led work and determining the parameters of major assignments. Examples of student-determined and student-led 'A' contract projects included a fundraiser for a local family violence agency, a small survey research project that culminated in a poster presentation at a university event, and a group of students organizing a self-defense class that was preceded by a short lecture about date rape. Projects of this scope required multiple check-in sessions with instructors and project reports, which in turn provided students with frequent feedback, helped them keep on track with their course requirements, and created more instructor intervention opportunities when they fell behind.

Grade contracts also helped students and instructors to easily assess student progress. When student progress was unsatisfactory, instructors used the grade contract to provide feedback on what was needed to improve. Students were held accountable for missing or poor work by asking them to review the contract requirements to which they agreed. Then, in a discussion with the instructor, students would either 1) agree to move to a lower grade contract or 2) formulate a plan to achieve future benchmarks. A grade penalty was spelled out in the contracts to ensure that students would make an appropriate self-assessment and not simply choose the 'A' contract. For example, if a student enrolled in an 'A' contract but only fulfilled the 'C' contract requirements, the instructor would apply the grade penalty and the student's final grade would be a C-. Students were also provided with an opt-out period during midterms to move to a lower contract without penalty, which very few chose to do. In practice, we did not encounter a situation where we had to enact a grade penalty.

Results

Of the sample, most students (60%) contracted for 'A' grades, 35% opted for 'B' contracts, and the remainder opted for a 'C.' However, in two of the three courses that required experiential service-learning for the 'A' contract assignment ($n = 28$), 39% of respondents opted for the 'A' contract, and 54% opted for the 'B' contract, meaning they chose not to participate in service-learning opportunities. Of the total sample, 81% of the students completed their chosen contracts, while 19% opted to move to a lower grade contract during the semester. No students received a grade penalty for failure to complete their contract requirements.

The chi-square analyses revealed that students' feelings on grade contracts were not significantly related to college major, variation in assignment type across the three courses, level of selected contract, or successful completion of grade contract. However, chi-square analysis revealed that the statement, "The contract in my course was clearly explained to me," was significantly related to the successful completion of a chosen grade contract, $\chi^2(3, N = 41) = 9.95, p = .02$. Students who strongly or slightly agreed that their grade contract was clearly explained to them were more likely to complete their chosen contract successfully.

General Perceptions of Grade Contracts

Most students favored grade contracts, with 60% saying they prefer contract grading over traditional grading. However, when participants were asked more specific questions about grade contracts or questions that separated out other course components, such as like or dislike of an instructor or of specific assignments, perceptions of grade contracts became more favorable. For the statement, “Regardless of whether I liked/disliked my courses or their instructors, I would like to see more courses implement a grade contract system instead of a traditional grading system,” 37% strongly agreed, 37% slightly agreed, and 19% slightly disagreed. For the statement, “Considering that my courses would have the exact same assignments and requirements, I liked the idea of having grade contracts, where I could decide on the level of work/effort I wished to commit to the class or skip assignments I found unfavorable,” 56% strongly agreed and 30% slightly agreed, while 10% strongly disagreed.

Reporting only on the subset of participants ($n = 28$) who took a course that required experiential learning for the ‘A’ contract, 25% strongly agreed and 21% slightly agreed with the statement, “I would think more favorably of grade contracts if I did not have to do assignments such as service-learning and volunteer projects.” Forty-one percent slightly disagreed with this statement, and 13% strongly disagreed.

To further study students’ perceptions of the grade contracts, participants were asked to provide one-word text responses describing their like and/or dislike of grade contracts. Participants were asked, “What is one word that describes an aspect of grade contracts you *LIKE*?” Twenty-three respondents provided answers to this question. The word *choice* appeared six times, followed by *freedom*. Examples of other words that appeared include *flexibility*, *self-led*, *self-motivation*, *less work*, *effort*, *options*, *responsibility*, *simple*, *clear*, and *transparency*. Participants were also asked, “What is one word that describes an aspect of grade contracts you *DISLIKE*?” Of the nine people who wrote a text response, *confusing* appeared four times, and *stuck* appeared twice. Other words that appeared were *frustrating*, *uncertainty*, and *long*.

Self-Efficacy and Control

Students were asked questions about self-efficacy, control, and leadership aspects afforded by using grade contracts. For the statement, “Compared to traditional grading systems, grade contracts give me a greater sense of control regarding the grade I am earning,” 54% of the sample strongly agreed, 22% slightly agreed, and 15% strongly disagreed. Most participants who strongly or slightly disagreed with this statement opted for ‘B’ contracts.

Although the underlying philosophy of contract grading is to encourage and facilitate higher levels of student leadership, we were also interested to learn if this structure might discourage students from attempting difficult course assignments. For instance, grade contracts allow students to avoid assignments they deem difficult or undesirable, such as civic engagement work. For the statement, “Grade contracts discourage me from going outside my comfort zone because I am no longer forced to do certain assignments,” 37% strongly disagreed, 22% slightly disagreed, 21% agreed, and 22% strongly agreed. For all three courses we examined, it was primarily students opting for ‘B’ contracts who agreed or strongly agreed.

Ultimately, most participants liked choosing which assignments they do as part of grade contract structures. For the statement, “I like being able to choose which assignments I have to do in a class,” 59% strongly agreed, 32% slightly agreed, and 7% slightly disagreed. One participant strongly disagreed with this statement.

Clarity and Understanding of Grade Contracts

Data were collected on questions measuring the clarity of the overall concept of grade contracts, how well they operate as a system for communicating course requirements, and how well the actual contracts were explained to them. For the statement, “Compared to traditional grading systems, grade contracts give me clearer standards of what work and effort is required of me in my courses,” 59% of the sample strongly agreed, 29% slightly agreed, while 10% slightly disagreed. The majority (88%) agreed that grade contracts provide clearer standards for required work. For the statement, “The concept of grade contracts is confusing to me,” 44% strongly disagreed, 22% slightly disagreed, and 20% slightly agreed. For the statement, “The grade contract in my course was clearly explained to me,” 63% strongly agreed, 22% agreed, and 15% slightly disagreed. No participants strongly disagreed.

Discussion

The results of this exploratory study outline general perceptions students had about grade contracts, whether grade contracts fostered a greater sense of leadership for students, and how clear the concept of grade contracts appeared to students. The results show that, generally, students had favorable perceptions of grade contracts. Students liked having a higher stake in choosing and constructing their course workloads. However, some felt that a socially acceptable option to skip difficult assignments in higher grade contracts made them less likely to push themselves. However, this phenomenon was more prominent in courses where students were required to do service-learning or experiential learning to fulfill an ‘A’ contract. Interestingly, the students who chose the ‘B’ contract had the most tepid responses to grade contracts. In contrast, ‘C’ and ‘A’ seeking students appeared happier with the flexibility and control offered.

The results of this study add to the existing research on student perceptions of grade contracts. Previous research found that college students favored having clear expectations and control over course grades, that grade contracts facilitated the process of giving feedback on multiple iterations of assignments and promoted more student engagement (Danielewicz & Elbow, 2009; Fraser, 1990; Lindemann & Harbke, 2011).

Grade contracts require students to self-assess the work they wish to undertake and allow them to negotiate authority that imitates the process of procuring post-graduation employment (e.g., negotiating terms of employment, signing a contract). Higher tiers of grade contracts can allow for more flexibility when conceptualizing final projects, as there are countless ways a student can demonstrate critical thinking through application or creation. Higher tiers of grade contracts also call on students to enact self-efficacy and demonstrate higher levels of thinking (Bandura, 1994; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Armstrong, 2010). With grade contracts, instructors have likely been able to provide feedback at multiple points in the semester and know they are grading final projects that students have chosen to do. Compared to previous semesters using traditional grading, instructors felt that course projects were less onerous to grade and appeared to be of higher quality thanks to the flexibility given to students in higher contract tiers.

Toward a Normal Distribution

The topic of grade inflation has entered conversations in many higher education institutions, often in colleges where Family Science and social science programs are situated, dating back decades (Kolevzon, 1981). Although grade inflation was not of concern to the authors when undertaking this study, and data is not yet conclusive, it appears thus far that the implementation of grade contracts has

led to final grades that more closely resemble a normal distribution. This was more prominent in the two courses that required experiential learning to earn an ‘A’ grade.

Previous research has also found that using grade contracts leads to higher student achievement and fewer failing students compared to traditional grading systems (Lindemann & Harbke, 2011). Few students in our courses pursued a baseline ‘C’ contract. Furthermore, across the three courses that utilized grade contracts, only three students earned grades of ‘D’ or lower, compared to over 10 in previous semesters where traditional grading was used. Although this is not definitive proof that grade contracts improve overall student performance, it shows a short-term trend toward higher overall student success consistent with previous research. This is likely due to the shift toward assignments that required submissions of multiple iterations and prompted both students and instructors to be more proactive in having conversations regarding the quality of work being completed. We surmise that students were more likely to pay attention to their specific contract requirements compared to previous semesters because the greater emphasis was placed on benchmarks and progress reports rather than a final product. Students and faculty were more likely to communicate when work was unsatisfactory since instructors had more opportunities to provide feedback through frequent yet smaller assignments, and students were held accountable for their work much earlier in the semester.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is its small sample size. Although the response rate for this study was good, the small sample size skewed toward higher achievement (i.e., few students completing ‘C’ contracts), which diminished the usefulness of chi-square tests. This study also utilized convenience sampling. The descriptive statistics reported can only be used to describe the sample and should not be considered representative of all undergraduate students. An experimental design that compares grade contracts to traditional grading methods would have been ideal, though time, scheduling, and funding did not allow for this.

Implications

Although the topic of alternative grading methods, such as grade contracts, has been gaining attention (Gannon, 2017), limited research exists on its use among instructors and students in Family Science courses. Existing studies focus primarily on labor-based grading practices in humanities courses and do not have a unified definition of contract grading. Our exploratory study has several implications for practice and future research. This study provides one model for an alternative grading system that encourages higher levels of engagement and self-direction from student learners. The response to grading contracts was generally positive. The data show that it can increase aspects of self-efficacy, such as high goal-setting and high commitment to completing goals (Bandura, 1994). However, there was variation in student responses regarding the clarity of grade contracts, particularly in how the details of grade contracts were communicated. This demonstrates the need for more refined rubrics and teaching aids in future iterations of courses that use grade contracts. The practicality and successful implementation of grade contracts may vary by discipline. It may be easier to assuage student anxiety and skepticism of grade contracts in academic disciplines that position students to challenge the power dynamic of instructor-as-expert and encourage a democratic approach to co-constructing knowledge (Litterio, 2016; Spidell & Thelin, 2006). Future research may better understand this by surveying students in different academic disciplines. As grade contracts are a new concept to many students, it is also possible that continued exposure to courses that use grade contracts will also reduce confusion regarding their use.

Future research with larger samples can more adequately measure differences among key relationships, such as the correlation between students' perceptions and course performance, and incorporate more sophisticated measures of self-efficacy. However, until there is large-scale experimentation with grade contracts, obtaining large samples may continue to prove difficult. In such scenarios, follow-up research may benefit from utilizing focus groups with student learners and studies of qualitative design. Future research would also benefit from an experimental design, allowing grade contracts to be tested and compared to a static control group of traditional students in an A-B-C-D-F grading system.

Data were collected before the outbreak of COVID-19, although findings may be useful for the adaptation of courses to online asynchronous and online real-time courses. Inoue's (2019) work offered contract grading as a means for more equitable, labor-based assessments rooted in compassionate teaching practices. As many instructors continue to shift away from a predominantly lecture-based teaching style and expectations of undergraduate students to be co-creators of knowledge continue to rise, contract grading provides a flexible template for instructors to experiment with coursework that enhances students' self-efficacy and critical thinking skills.

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Appendix A

Grade Contracts Survey Instrument

What is your year in school?

- First year
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Fifth year or higher

What is your Major?

- Family Science
- Something else

Are you part of any University sanctioned extracurricular activities? (Check all that apply)

- Athletics
- Band
- Greek Life
- Res Life
- Student Government
- Something else

How many courses in our major have you taken that utilized a grade contract system?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

Which courses did you take that utilized a grade contract (check all that apply)

- Early Childhood Education
- Violence in the Family
- Family Science Capstone
- Another course

For what grade did you contract?

- C-contract
- B-Contract
- A-Contract

Did you fulfill your grade contract?

No

Yes

Compared to traditional grading systems, grade contracts give me a greater sense of control regarding the grade I am earning:

Strongly Disagree

Slightly Disagree

Slightly Agree

Strongly Agree

Compared to traditional grading systems, grade contracts give me clearer standards of what work and effort is required of me in my courses:

Strongly Disagree

Slightly Disagree

Slightly Agree

Strongly Agree

The concept of grade contracts is confusing to me

Strongly Disagree

Slightly Disagree

Slightly Agree

Strongly Agree

I would think more favorably of grade contracts if I did not have to do assignments like service-learning or volunteer projects.

Strongly Disagree

Slightly Disagree

Slightly Agree

Strongly Agree

I would think more favorably of grade contracts if I did not have to do assignments like research talks, guest lectures, or symposium presentations.

Strongly Disagree

Slightly Disagree

Slightly Agree

Strongly Agree

Considering the assignments in the courses I took, I liked the idea of having grade contracts, where I could decide on the level of work/effort I wished to commit to the class or skip assignments with which I was uncomfortable.

- Strongly Disagree
- Slightly Disagree
- Slightly Agree
- Strongly Agree

Considering that my courses would have the exact same assignments and requirements, I liked the idea of having grade contracts, where I could decide on the level of work/effort I wished to commit to the class or skip assignments with which I was uncomfortable.

- Strongly Disagree
- Slightly Disagree
- Slightly Agree
- Strongly Agree

Regardless of whether I liked/disliked my courses or their instructors, I would like to see more in-major courses implement a grade contract system instead of a traditional grading system.

- Strongly Disagree
- Slightly Disagree
- Slightly Agree
- Strongly Agree

I like being able to choose which assignments I have to do in a class.

- Strongly Disagree
- Slightly Disagree
- Slightly Agree
- Strongly Agree

Grade contracts discourage me from going outside my comfort zone/forcing me to do assignments.

- Strongly Disagree
- Slightly Disagree
- Slightly Agree
- Strongly Agree

I prefer traditional grading systems where I am expected to do ALL the assignments in the class, even when they are assignments such as service-learning projects or research presentations.

- Strongly Disagree
- Slightly Disagree
- Slightly Agree

Strongly Agree

What is one word that comes to mind when you think about grade contracts?

What is one word that describes an aspect of grade contracts you LIKE? (If nothing, leave blank).

What is one word that describes an aspect of grade contracts you DISLIKE? (If nothing, leave blank).