**Contracts: Common Student / Instructor Issues**

3. *These are some (paraphrased) quotes from students and instructors who have criticized contract grading systems in research and in the personal experiences of instructors who have used them.*

***Discuss with your partner:***

* *What would you do if a student voiced these concerns in your class, and why are they voicing them?*
* *What concerns do you share with these instructors? What advice would you give them?*
* *What could you do* **before** *introducing the contract or* **as** *you’re introducing it to mitigate these issues?*

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| **Student:** The contract is too much work for me! I don’t want to constantly think about “where I am” in the class. | **Student:** Contract grading is unfair to me. I’ve worked hard to become an ‘A’ student, and contracts don’t value the objective quality of my writing.  | **Student:** I’m confused. I’ve never seen a grading system like this before. I don’t understand what I *really* need to do to make my B, and what it really means to my professor for me to “sustain effort” over multiple drafts.  | **Student:** This class is so disorganized! We all started out with one version of the contract, and then we “renegotiated” it at the midterm. We’ve changed assignments and renegotiated other aspects of the class, too. This instructor doesn’t know what she’s doing.  |
| **Instructor:** With a contract, I feel like I’m just setting students up for failure in future English classes. Other instructors aren’t going to value motivation over product. Contracts set unrealistic expectations.  | **Instructor:** I’m new to teaching, and I’m afraid students are going to revolt. If they do, I don’t know how I’ll deal with it -- especially since this is such a new system to me.  | **Instructor:** The contract might motivate students who don’t normally make Bs, but it might also *demotivate* students who normally do. And it doesn’t seem fair to give two students a “complete” on an assignment if one has done significantly more work.  | **Instructor:** If students aren’t  |

**Student Self-Assessment Model**

*Credit to Lisa Blakenship from Baruch College for this idea!*

*Rather than grading low-stakes assignments myself, I gave comments on the work (and students commented on each other’s work), but then asked students to assess their own work at midterm and at the end of the course using comments / feedback as “evidence” to support their claims.*

*I took my own readings of their work into account also and reserved the right to override their grade. But for the most part, I used the grade they gave themselves.*

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| ***Week*** | ***Assignments Completed*** | ***What did you “borrow” this week from your classmates? What did you “lend”? Support your claims with evidence from comments.***  | ***Grade****(see page 2 for criteria* |
| *Week 1* |  |  |  |
| *Week 2* |  |  |  |
| *Week 3* |  |  |  |
| *Week 4* |  |  |  |
| *Week 5* |  |  |  |
| *Week 6* |  |  |  |