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# Academic Partners Consulting Newsletter

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*Quote*

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*Good students aim for good grades. Great students aim for understanding. Author Unknown*

## Business Update

Academic Partners Consulting (APC) exhibited and Maria Flores-Harris, President of APC, spoke at the following conferences:

**National Consortium for Health Science Education (NCHSE)**  
Charleston, SC  
October 26-28, 2022

Two Podium Presentations: Active Learning  
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (OADN)**  
New Orleans, LA  
November 17- 20, 2022

Podium Presentation: Developing Clinical Judgment

## Topic of the Month

### Ungrading

The presentation at OADN was focused on developing clinical judgment by evaluating and changing our values. It garnered a lot of attention and questions, and it is a topic I am passionate about. I will share a brief synopsis below and hope that you will reach out for more information.

Today in our educational system, our focus as teachers and as learners is performance, grades. Good grades are rewarded with praise, money, scholarships, coveted residencies, etc. Achieving good grades means you are smart, successful, even sought after...but do they really?

Have you asked yourself, "Are all grades created equally?" or "Do good grades really mean that learning has occurred?" If you have never asked yourself these questions, then what about this question, "How did this student make it to the final semester of nursing school and not know \_\_\_\_?" I bet you can identify with that question! Here is the answer – students can make good grades or passing grades and not actually learn!

Students memorize and we, as educators, cultivate an environment where memorization equals learning. Yes, I said it! WE cultivate the environment by telling students what will and will not be on the test. We provide “study guides” that are so detailed that if students read them, they pass easily. We say we are testing clinical judgment and critical thinking yet we use the same scenarios we provide as examples as the questions on the test. Most of us believe we are helping, but we are actually harming. These are the very behaviors that lead students to believe that memorization equals learning. These are the behaviors that lead to our own frustration, as educators, when students can’t remember what has already been taught. We must radically transform (to use Patricia Benner’s words) our values so that we value learning over performance! We must be willing to let students make mistakes so they can learn from those mistakes. Every assignment in nursing school does not have to be graded!

Remember this:

*Grading ends the learning.  
Feedback continues the learning.*

We want students who aim for understanding and learning, not just a good grade!

If you would like more information on the topic of Ungrading and a presentation for your faculty, please email me at [maria@academicpartnersconsulting.com](mailto:maria@academicpartnersconsulting.com) and visit our website at <https://academicpartnersconsulting.com/> and sign up for the newsletter.