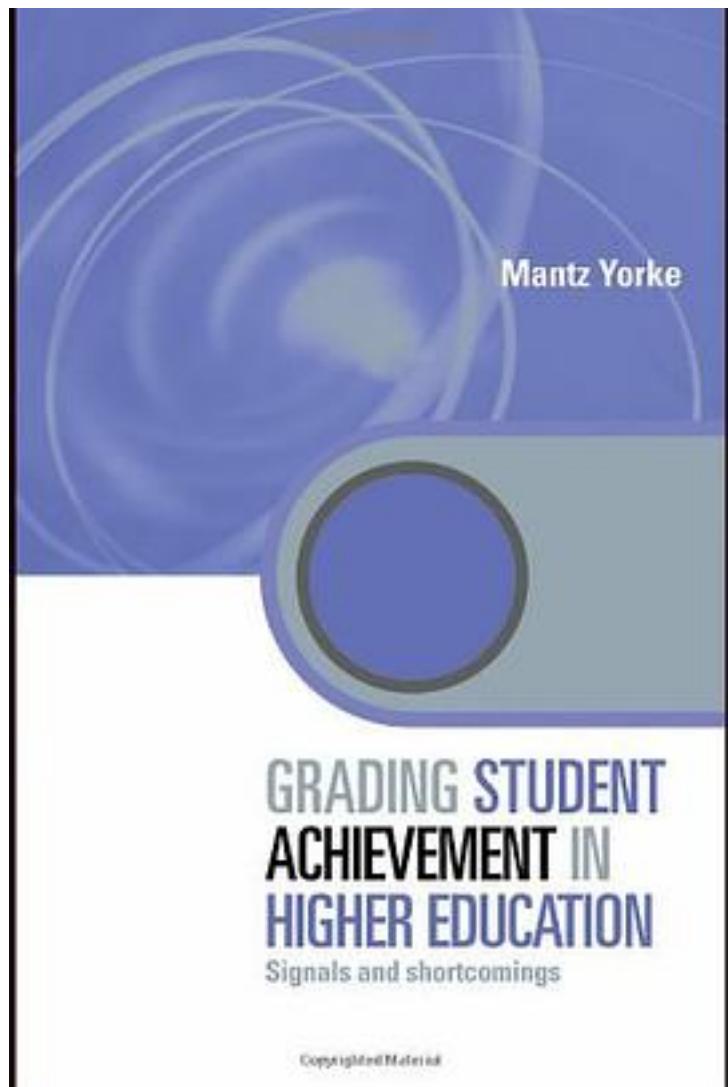


Grading Student Achievement in Higher Education



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A lot hangs on the summative grades that students are given. A good degree opens doors which otherwise might remain closed. Yet, as higher education is now a mass rather than an elite system, what is expected of its graduates is different from the expectations of previous generations. Students are expected not only to be able to demonstrate high standards of academic achievement, but also a variety of capabilities that have at different times been given labels such as 'generic skills' and 'transferable skills'. These abilities are difficult to grade for a variety of reasons, and some graduates may be losing out because their particular strengths are given insufficient acknowledgement in current summative assessment practices. Using the UK honours degree classifications as a case study, this book appraises the way in which summative assessment in higher education is approached, and shows that the foundations of current practices (in the UK and elsewhere) are of questionable robustness. It argues that there is a need to widen the assessment frame if the breadth of valued student achievements is to be recognised adequately.

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