The AI Antidote: Process-Based Assignments That Show Real Learning

Wednesday, October 14, 2026

Name one piece of thinking you can't see

You do not need to rebuild a course to see real learning. Pick one assignment you already use and name the decision, interpretation, or revision that disappears in the final submission. Then find the moment it happens and ask for evidence of what students did, changed, or observed.

Collect the trail, not just the destination

The messy middle is where learning lives. Sara Lahman's biology students turn in every note, mock-up, and abandoned idea with their final project, and it is all graded. The final product shows the answer. The trail shows the thinking.

Make them explain it out loud

If a student cannot talk through the work, they did not do the thinking. A short conversation with a student can reveal more of their understanding than a polished paper. Consider holding short meetings with students after class and use graded peer review to evaluate student comprehension.

"The path is more interesting than that final destination. So show me the path."
Philippe Ghayad, Professor of Economics, Dawson College

This summary was created using generative AI to synthesize key ideas from the Zoom session "The AI Antidote: Process-Based Assignments That Show Real Learning", held on October 14, 2026

In this webinar, faculty panelists Sara Lahman, Suzanne McCormack, and Philippe Ghayad explored what changes when instructors stop grading only the final product and start building assignments that make student thinking visible. From staged children's book projects in biology to transparent AI notebooks in economics, their approaches share a common thread: the evidence of learning lives in the process, not the polish. The panelists were candid about what has been hard, including students uncomfortable working in front of instructors, a flipped classroom that now keeps students on screens, and the challenge of scaling process work across many sections. Their fixes included in-class work time, second tries on early steps, graded peer review, staggered project timelines, and a signed AI contract. The lesson across every example was the same: lower the stakes, collect the trail, and let students show you the path.