

CREATING A SUSTAINABLE PROCESS FOR RUBRICS ASSESSMENT: TIPS AND STRATEGIES



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Welcome!

- A quick write and a quick poll
- Session framing
- Lessons learned on building a sustainable rubrics assessment process from General Education (Vignette 1) and required Writing courses (Vignette 2)
- Some other processes we've seen and done, and your stories
- If we have time: a few additional strategies for creating a sustainable process for rubric assessment



A Quick Write

1. Take two minutes and jot down what you are hoping to take away from this session.
2. Turn to a neighbor and have one person share their response. Then have the other person share their response. Each person should also say what their role is at their institution.



A Quick Poll

1. Show of hands – personal experience with rubrics
2. Popcorn – what hope to get out of the session



NANCY

SHOW OF HANDS:

1. Has anyone used a rubric to evaluate or grade individual student work (e.g., as part of a course or a co-curricular program)?
2. Has anyone developed a rubric? (Or modified one?)
3. Has anyone shared a rubric with students as part of an assignment? Or engaged students in a peer review process using a rubric?
4. Has anyone been part of a team assessing student work at the program level using a rubric? (Defined as: you would draw your artifacts from the work students produced as part of that program.)

Could probe: Where – in GE, major, co curriculum? Graduate program?

Could probe: Has it been snapshot (e.g., sophomore year)? Trends (e.g., first years and seniors)? Longitudinal?

5. Has anyone been part of a team assessing student learning at the institutional level using a rubric? (Defined as: you would draw your artifacts from the work students produced across multiple programs – GE+major, could include co-curriculum.)

Not as applicable for graduate programs unless perhaps interdisciplinary or dual degree/hybrid).

6. Has anyone led a team assessing student learning at the program or institutional level using a rubric?

POPCORN: What are you hoping to get out of this session?

VIGNETTE I: GENERAL EDUCATION



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GE: The Process

- May 2015 – SLO: Written Communication
- Source: Sophomore-level courses (1st and 3rd were already being addressed/assessed)
- Sample: 45+3 papers
- “Embedded” (definition)
- Nine scorers
- Two-tiered norming process



NOTES: Sample was all we got (didn't get papers from all sections, but did get from most)

Embedded – question of definition – “students’ best work” embedded assessment typically means examining student work that has been produced in the context of courses/curricula, vs. an external standardized test, e.g.

“Embedded” can also refer to the rubrics assessment process itself. In this case, the rubrics assessment was external to the course entirely, and instructors of those courses were not involved. In the WRIT case that is coming up, it was a blend of instructors and external reviewers. A third option would be to have faculty instructors only also doing rubrics assessment (in addition to grading). Important to clarify what you (and others) mean by “embedded.”

GE: Resources

- Time:
 - Before: approx. 10 hours
 - During: Two 6-hour days
 - After: Regular GEC meeting
- Money: Lunch
- Technology: Low
- Disciplinary diversity (evidence)
- Sources of support: GEC faculty, CELTT, WRIT, new GEC meeting structure, provost's office



Disciplinary diversity in terms of what constitutes evidence and performance level.

GEC meeting structure: Q: How are we going to woo faculty into a room for 2 days?

A: Take away some meetings!!

GE: Program Improvement Results

- SLO refinement
- Rubric refinement
- Recommendations for next round of rubrics assessment
- Writ Comm dimensions for further inquiry



Could be improvements to the program content, to the program organization, to way students come in to the program (like DSP), or changes to the assessment process (SLOs, rubric, assessment sessions, etc.) itself.

GE: Pros and Cons of this Approach

- Pros:
 - Disciplinary diversity of reviewers mirrored the disciplinary diversity of GE
 - Built cohesion and investment (as a group)
- Cons:
 - Low tech = more work
 - Prep time
 - Needed to budget more time for norming and “getting the rust out” than might be the case with instructors involved



GE: Lessons Learned

1. Insert technology even in simple ways
2. If \$ is off the table, give time (or at least don't take it)
3. Structure/rules of engagement are important to keep moving through the process
4. Give necessary time to norming – crucial to the validity of the whole process
5. Show results of efforts quickly, engage in meaning making
6. Capture the process and any changes made to improve it!



1. Hand scoring was a pain!
2. The move from bi weekly to monthly and banking time
3. Can get caught up in things early on, so important to keep moving! E.g., know what you're assessing – writing, not content knowledge, curiosity about the assignment (that's good, but maybe not at that moment), reminding group that they're not grading, culture shock of graduate faculty reading sophomore papers (!)
4. Two-tier consensus process helped keep things moving also but got everyone's voice/perspective included
5. Norming process is crucial – considerations: has the group worked together already or are they brand new to one another? Be explicit about the aim of achieving consensus.

VIGNETTE 2: WRITING



Fiona Glade, Assistant Provost,
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WRITING: The Process

- Student Learning Outcomes for courses, Program, and GE.
- Portfolio Assessment: Signature Assignments.
- Rubrics
 - Course
 - Program



Program redesign in 2014: We Sequenced the curriculum: first-year composition to upper-division GE requirement for rising juniors

Faculty created SLOs for program, and for each course: what do we want students to demonstrate at each level, and by the time they graduate?

Best practices in writing studies indicates portfolio is best method of assessing growth; Faculty collaborated to develop Signature Assignments for each course: they also created rubrics to assess the portfolios in each course. That way, students have a consistent experience across multiple sections of the course.

Each semester, the instructor creates assignments based on the Signature Assignment parameters, responds to those assignments through multiple drafts, and then gives each student's portfolio a score at the end of the semester. This is a major component of the course grade.

Then, all faculty bring their portfolios (or, for online classes their googledocs files) to portfolio scoring day; we all get together to assess all the students' portfolios (around 1800 in any given semester!).

At portfolio scoring day, we spend some time reviewing the course rubric, sharing Signature assignments, and calibrating our scores using sample portfolios from each

level.

Faculty score portfolios NOT from their own classes using the course rubric—so each portfolio has two scores, the instructor gave the first score, and an anonymous trained reader gave the second score. SEE HANDOUT FOR PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION COVER SHEET.

Instructor and other scorer write scores on bottom of sheet. Scores are holistic: Outstanding, Pass, Fail. When the scores are the same, that's the score; when they are different, a third trained reader scores it. We're there all day, usually: it's a lot of work, but a lot of fun!

The really great thing is that we accomplish program assessment at the same time – we use a developmental program rubric for this.

SEE HANDOUT for developmental RUBRIC.

Developmental means that the rubric can assess a student's writing skill at any level in the sequence of writing courses. We expect that students in first-year composition will score a 1 or 2 in most categories; and we expect that students in junior composition will score a 3 or 4.

Program means that we use this rubric to evaluate how well we are doing as a program.

As faculty score each portfolio for the course grade, they also assess on this developmental rubric and record a score on a separate page just for program use.

WRITING: Resources

- Time.
- Money.
- Technology.
- Sources of support.



We know portfolio assessment is effective, but it does take time to set up and do well: so it's great that we have been able to integrate course and program assessment in this way. It took a semester and a summer to set up the SLOs and signature assignments and rubrics. Once those were in place, planning and pulling off the big day—portfolio scoring day – the administrative time to plan it, and the faculty time there, is mostly what it takes to sustain. A whole day to score, another workday for the director to collate program assessment results and create report. We do this every semester, to monitor effectiveness of program reform.

We have also managed to do this very cheaply. So far, our portfolios are paper for f2f classes. For online sections we've used googledocs, as we don't have a campus platform that would work well. An eportfolio platform would be ideal—but those can be expensive – does anyone here have a campus ePortfolio platform?

The main resource we've relied on to make this system work has been incredible goodwill and commitment of our adjunct faculty who teach in the program. They are not paid to attend scoring day, but every semester we've had 100% attendance. We also invite GE Council members. The Dean has provided just enough funding to cover lunch, and my husband bakes brownies!

WRITING: Program Improvement Results

- Fall 2014: Writing as a Process.
- Fall 2015: Proofreading Strategies.
- Working drafts: respond to results.



Fall 14 fyc and junior writing both had lower scores in writing process category of developmental rubric: used this evidence to ramp up faculty development for portfolio preparation, for example, to talk about value of reflection as part of writing and learning process – many faculty new to portfolio assessment -- and about ways to develop strong, useful reflection assignments. Fall 15 showed higher scores in that area.

We also revised our Directed Self-Placement materials: first-year composition students coming in saw an explicit focus on self-reflection as part of the writing process, and practiced self-evaluation of their own habits and skills in that area.

The following year, proofreading strategies were the area needing most improvement, so we focused fac dev efforts on that category.

We also responded to faculty feedback by adding “Outstanding” as a possible score for second reader to give on PF; better incentive for students to do well beyond pass/fail

The bottom line on this is to remember that like writing, assessment is a process – all the documents we create are working drafts, ready for revision as the context suggests.

WRITING: Pros and Cons of this Approach

- ++ Faculty Development to the max.
- - - Clear guidelines needed.



A downside is that we are asking faculty to come in to spend a whole day on program assessment. The upside though is that faculty come in to spend a whole day on program assessment!

By far the enormous advantage of portfolio assessment as a group is the perfect faculty development moment it provides: while faculty are scoring portfolios of students from other sections they get to see their colleagues' assignments; in the students' reflection documents they get to hear about the kinds of activities their colleagues are teaching, about readings and homework assignments. We certainly encouraged this in the program as we asked faculty to work closely together to develop the new curriculum, and they have continued this approach.

Faculty really appreciate having the support and confidence of one another as they grade their students' work; and at the scoring, they appreciate having the recommendation of the first scorer—who is the student's instructor and knows the student best.

They've also told me that they appreciate not having the usual massive paperload at the end of the semester: portfolio review is not as laborious as grading that giant stack of research papers, as they have responded with formative comments on all the drafts throughout the semester, so pf scoring is simply that, a review of the final documents using the rubric.

One potential issue is figuring out how to make student's grade work with the portfolio score: we started out by saying that the PF had to earn a PASS in order for the student to earn a passing grade in the class; faculty wanted clearer guidelines, so we developed them the second year—now the portfolio score is at least 75% of the course grade. Each program has to find a way to make that work for their own context.

Your Turn!

- The process.
- Resources.
- Recommendations.

