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Moving from Theory to Practice in Blended Instruction

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Assignment Design Circles

Moving from Theory to Practice in Blended Learning

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Understandings:

• Faculty work in highly situated circumstances and are uniquely suited to provide instructional insights and approaches that are grounded in practice.

• Professional development formats that leverage facilitated peer-to-peer exchange to promote effective pedagogy are valued within the faculty teaching community.
Critically Reflective

Dialog

Discourages group-think
Leverages experience from multiple sources
Provides room for mistakes

Enabled by feedback and reciprocity
Oriented toward experimentation
Focused on process and outcomes
Approach:

• Provide a facilitated process for peer learning and critique that enables faculty to develop/refine and complete a high quality learning assignment in a time effective manner

• Highlight and make these examples of faculty instruction available to our campus community.
Assignment Design Circles
Assignment Design Circles
(Fall 2014)

In Person Meetings

1. Sharing
2. [Reviewing & Responding]
3. Reflecting & Connecting
Wiki

First Meeting: Materials

1. Assignment Workflow Diagram
2. Sequencing Writing Assignments - Gotschalk and Hjerde
3. Articulation of Learning Goals as Preparation for Designing Assignments - Bean
4. Teaching Thinking Through Teaching Revision - Bean
5. RAFT and TIP - Bean

Refining Learning Outcomes

1. A Taxonomy for Learning Outcomes
2. A Rubric for Learning Outcomes
3. An Interactive Model of Learning Outcomes - Iowa State University
4. Example Questions for Different Levels of Learning Outcome

Assessment

1. Feedback and Assessment Procedures - Fink
2. Establishing Criteria and Standards for Grading - Wiliam and Anderson

Student Peer Review

1. Improving Student Peer Feedback - Nilson
2. Using Peer Review to Improve Student Writing in Business Courses - Rieber

Assignment Workflow

Before Meeting

Problem Statement
Review Assignment Workflow
Reading Selections
Reviewing & Responding

Structured Feedback

Before Meeting

Assignment Updates

Review Peer Assignments

Example: Revised Assignment (top) and Revised Rubric (bottom)
Assignment Design Circles - Revised Assignments

ADC Questionnaire
Fall 2014

Your Name: Nicole Marafioti

Please complete and submit this questionnaire with your revised assignment materials.

1. What is the department, level, and title of the course for which you prepared this assignment?
   HIST 2430: Medieval Kingship

2. Briefly describe the purpose of this course (in three or so sentences), so that a layperson could understand it.
   History’s new series of 2400 level courses are designed to teach the skills and methods necessary for college-level historical study, thereby preparing students for upper division history courses. Accordingly, Medieval Kingship is structured as an intensive writing course that requires three long papers; each paper focuses on the career of a medieval king and requires students to engage a particular historical approach (primary source analysis, historiographical synthesis, and long-form research).

3. What is the written assignment?
   The assignment requires students to write a research paper (4000-5000 words) which incorporates close readings of primary sources, original analyses which build on at least ten pieces of secondary scholarship, and offers an original historical argument.

4. What are your goals for this assignment in terms of student learning?
   As articulated in my ADC application, the objective of this assignment is to enable students to:
   • Refine and improve the skills that they practiced in the semester’s first two assignments, such as accessing, evaluating, and critiquing secondary sources; conducting historical close readings of medieval texts; and constructing original, evidence-driven arguments.
   • Use secondary research as a jumping-off point for their own ideas and analyses, by evaluating, critiquing, and building on other scholars’ work.
   • Structure a long-form historical argument based on sustained interaction with primary and secondary texts, consistent with the conventions of the discipline.

Questionnaire for Summary Statements

Reflecting & Connecting
Debriefing
Additional Observations
Evaluation Survey
Before Meeting
Final Revisions
Summary Statements
Disseminating Results

Assignment Design Circles - Revised Assignments

These course materials are available to Trinity faculty for review and adaptation. Contributors may update these materials at their convenience. Updates should be emailed as Word documents to Sean Connin.

Fall 2014

Writing Assignments
Amy Stone
Research Paper based on Interview Data
Assignment Description and Materials

Andrew Kraebel
Close-Reading Paper
Assignment Description and Materials

Jamie Thompson
Research Paper
Assignment Description and Materials

Josh Schwartz
Weekly Response Papers
Assignment Description and Materials

Katie Blevins
Analysis Paper
Assignment Description and Materials

Keesha Middlemass
Research Paper
Assignment Description and Materials

Nicole Marafioti
Research Paper
Assignment Description and Materials

Troy Murphy
Literature Review Paper
Assignment Description and Materials

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Faculty Response

Participant Reflections

“The multi-step process allowed us to get to know each other more as educators. This allowed for an honest but respectful exchange of mutually beneficial ideas. This also allowed us to more organically process feedback and respond over the course of several weeks in the semester vs. a compressed timeline.”

Outcomes

“I clarified student outcomes, modified my expectations for the assignment and changed the readings for the first six weeks of the course.”

“I completely rewrote the assignment to add clarity and to reduce the amount of detail-oriented (i.e., tedious) instruction on writing style.”

“I actually ended up re-thinking the whole course and the role that the specific assignment I had chosen to revise played in meeting objectives I have for my students.”
Perceived Value of Various ADS Elements

Fall 2014: n=8
Rubric for Assignment Design

Linked informally to research-based “best” practices and backward design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Exemplary Practices</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcomes (Student Accomplishment)</td>
<td>Includes one or more learning outcomes that state what the student should be able to do or demonstrate. Outcomes include action verbs and avoid terms such as “understand” and “know”.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Highlights the abilities and skills required for students to perform well on the performance criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation (Tracking Progress)</td>
<td>States method(s) of student evaluation. Provides explicit performance criteria or standards for each outcome (e.g., rubric).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Point students to assignment examples that represent different levels of performance achievement. Assignment grade (as percent of course grade) is proportionate to demands of task(s).</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Updated Workflow
(Spring 2015)

1 Sharing
Assignment Context
Goals - Individual/group
Scheduling

Before Meeting
Problem Statement
Google Docs

2 Reviewing & Responding
Rubric Review
Structured Feedback

Before Meeting
Rubric Exercise
Revisions
Peer Assignments

3 Reflecting & Connecting
Debriefing
Additional Observations
Further Steps

Before Meeting
Final Revisions
Summary Statements
Pre- and Post-Revision Assignment Rubric Scores
Observations

Emergent

- Importance of norming upfront
- Open + structured meetings = deepened interactions
- Intra-semester design fostered unique pedagogical associations
- Assignment focus provided a scaffold for course level changes in multiple cases
- Evaluation: important but problematic in its resolution