

What is an "A"?

Training Adjunct Faculty Using Grading Rubrics

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Agenda

- Setting the context
 - Our background
- Motivation for a rubric
 - Consistent and detailed feedback
 - Assessment
 - Combating grade inflation
- The Franklin Undergraduate rubric



Setting the Context

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Our Background

- Franklin University
 - Founded in 1902
 - Columbus, Ohio
 - YMCA School of Commerce
 - Accredited by North Central Association (NCA)
 - Outcomes-based education
 - Centralized curriculum model

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Our Background

- Demographics
 - Students
 - More than 10,000 students annually
 - More than 400 international students
 - Adult learners (average age is 34 undergraduate and 36 graduate)
 - Faculty
 - 40 full time faculty
 - More than 500 adjunct faculty

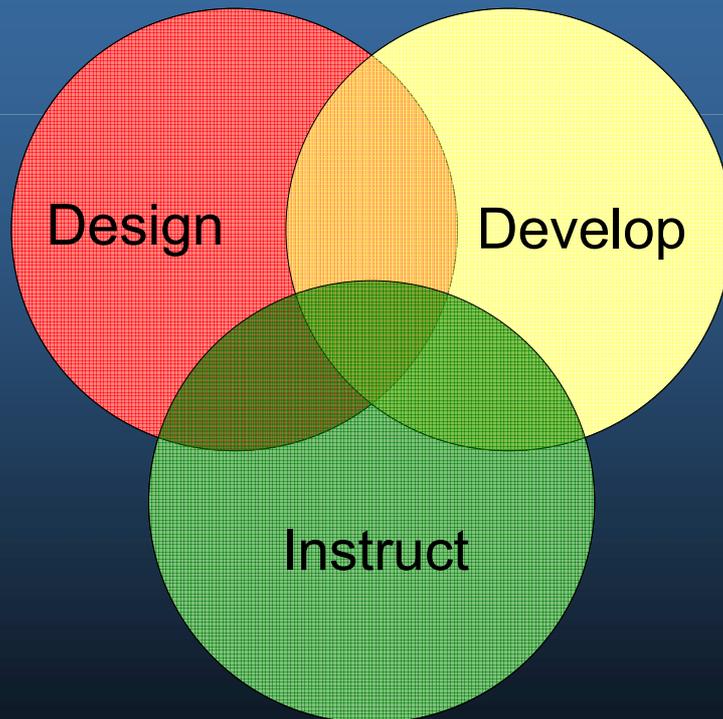
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Locations

- Three Columbus Ohio Campuses
 - Downtown and two suburbs
- The Franklin Virtu@I Campus
 - Community College Alliance (CCA)
 - 200+ Community Colleges in 30 States
 - 1,100+ students
 - eArmyU
 - Online Delivery

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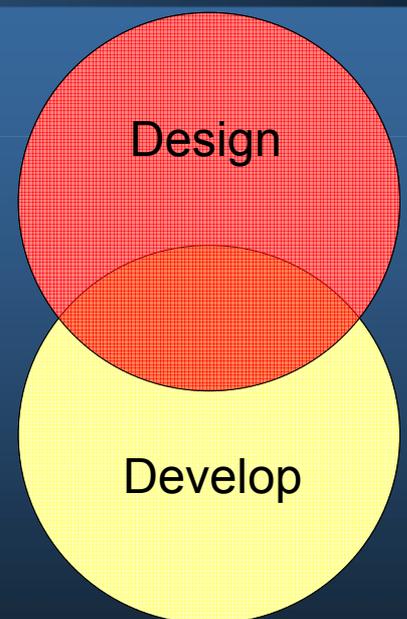
Faculty Roles



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Full Time Faculty Roles

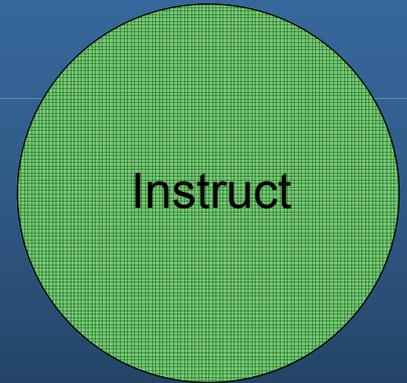
- Course Designers
 - Lead Development Team
 - Learning Strategies
 - Learning Styles
- Course Developers
 - Domain knowledge
 - Classroom experience
 - Adjunct recruitment/development



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Adjunct Faculty Roles

- Course Instructors
 - Industrial experience
 - Practical application



How can a consistent definition of quality student work be ensured with 500 adjuncts but only 40 full time faculty?

Motivation for a Rubric

The Grading Rubric

- The purpose of grading is multi-fold:
 - To provide feedback on how well a student is doing relative to meeting course requirements
 - To chronicle the student's professional development for appropriate recognition.

Traditional Grading Strengths

- Capable of providing diagnostic feedback directly to students and instructor
- Controlled by faculty, hence faculty retain the academic freedom to define course content
- Specific to classroom goals and objectives

Traditional Grading Strengths

- An integral part of the learning process (grading is embedded within instruction)
- An important part of the motivational structure of the classroom.
- Provides a means for demonstrating individual competence in a public forum.

Why a New Rubric?

- The grading rubric impacts faculty grading and the culture of student assessment for the entire community of higher education.
- Our approach to assessing student academic performance will dramatically impact faculty and student expectations about grading and performance.

Modern Assessment Needs

- Traditional grading should address the following:
 - Capable of providing diagnostic feedback directly to students and instructor
 - High-quality examination of higher-order thinking
 - Specific, explicit criteria for performance

Modern Assessment Needs

- Traditional grading should address the following:
 - Assessment instruments and practices that make use of the best current theory and research in the field
 - Diagnostic power so the instructor can improve instruction and course design
 - Feedback for students so they can monitor their progress.

Grade Inflation

- 1998 study demonstrates that between 1969 and 1993
 - Grades of "A" grew from 7% to 26%
 - Grades of "C" fell from 25% to 9% respectively

Arthur Levine & Jeanette Cureton (1998)

Grade Inflation

- 2003 study
 - Grade Point Averages (GPAs) increased on average by 0.6 from 1967 to 2001.
 - Over the past 35 years, GPAs increased by approximately 0.15 per decade.

Rojstaczer (2003)

Why is grading difficult?

- For many instructors, grades are difficult to assign because:
 - Educational achievements are difficult to measure
 - Grading systems are often objects of educational controversies.
 - Grading may require difficult or unpleasant decisions about students.

Franklin's Undergraduate Rubric

Franklin Grading Rubric

- Goals
 - Combat the differing educational opinions and philosophies among adjunct faculty.
 - Direct faculty to be more helpful by guiding learning via accurate and thorough feedback.
 - Help students meet educational expectations.

Undergraduate Rubric

- Criteria (“evidence of”)
 - Innovation and synthesis of thought
 - Application of concepts and theories
 - Insightful, logical reasoning
 - Documentation, including requisite citations
 - Usage of the conventions of standard written and spoken English

Undergraduate Rubric

- Letter Grade of "A"
 - Superior academic work ("*superior* evidence of" the criteria)
- Letter Grade of "B"
 - Good academic work ("*solid* evidence of" the criteria)
- Letter Grade of "C"
 - Adequate academic work ("*sufficient* evidence of" the criteria)

Undergraduate Rubric

- Letter Grade of "D"
 - Marginal academic work ("*minimal* evidence of" the criteria)
- Letter Grade of "E"
 - Outcomes not met.

Undergraduate Rubric

- Guidance within the criteria
 - **Clarity:** Focus on a specific topic and context, give examples, avoid vague generalities or undefined terms, and help others to understand without any confusion.
 - **Precision:** Specific details support all comments.

(adapted from the Foundation for Critical Thinking)

Undergraduate Rubric

- Guidance within the criteria
 - **Accuracy:** Give correct information that others can verify; students should acknowledge the limits of their knowledge of the topic.
 - **Relevance:** Comments connect to the issues currently under discussion and help others to understand those connections.

(adapted from the Foundation for Critical Thinking)

Undergraduate Rubric

- Guidance within the criteria
 - **Depth:** Address the problem in all its complexity; consider the context of the problem, its root causes, and the other issues it brings up.
 - **Breadth:** Address the problem from many points of view; consider how others might understand the problem.

(adapted from the Foundation for Critical Thinking)

Undergraduate Rubric

- Guidance within the criteria
 - **Logic:** Consider how statements and assumptions work together and communicate them so that others can follow their reasoning.
 - **Significance:** Focus on the most important elements of a topic or elements that others have overlooked; avoid repeating common knowledge.

(adapted from the Foundation for Critical Thinking)

Undergraduate Rubric

- Guidance within the criteria
 - **Ethics:** Students should consider how their statements and actions affect others and judge their own contributions in terms of how they benefit the learning community.

(adapted from the Foundation for Critical Thinking)

Miscellaneous

- Instructional and Professional Development events aimed at adjunct faculty
- Clear communication of expectations to both adjunct faculty and students in our courses

Questions?

Comments?

Experiences?