Engaging Departments in Consideration of Student Learning

Dan Bernstein
University of Kansas

Great Plains POD
1 June 2007

djb@ku.edu
Existing portfolios of individual faculty projects

• Focused on student work
• Document improvements over time
• Learning objects in faculty seminars and workshops
Writing as a Primary Means for Learning—Ruth Ann Atchley

Implementation

Pre-Planning
I consulted with Michele Eodice, Director of the Writing Center, and Dan Bernstein, Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence. They helped me develop goals and generate ideas, both for the overall semester and on a day-to-day basis.

Beginning of the Semester
I told the students of my plan to make this a writing-intensive course in order to help them process this abstract material. I asked for their ideas and feedback.

Feedback
The primary feedback came from me, as we tried peer editing but found it problematic. I give lots of detailed feedback on every paper, but particularly on the first two assignments.

Units and Final
Every two-week unit culminated in a one-page paper. The students had the entire class period to write this. The final paper was a take-home, two-page paper that synthesized the semester’s ideas.
The Sophists felt that truth was relative, in essence asserting that there were no global, unifying answers to epistemological questions. Rather, each individual was unique, in his or her knowledge and perception, to the extent that a comprehensive truth could not apply to one and another. Therefore, communications amongst humans about a singular truth was impossible, yet discussion of each individual's determination of truth was encouraged.

The Sophists were likely more indebted to rationalist thought as opposed to empiricist thought because with the contention that the physical world is continually different across perceivers comes the assumption that
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>4 points</th>
<th>3 points</th>
<th>2 points</th>
<th>1 point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completeness of Answer</strong></td>
<td>Clearly and fully answers all parts of the essay question.</td>
<td>Provides some discussion of all topics addressed in the essay question.</td>
<td>Effectively addresses some parts of the essay question, but does not address all topics.</td>
<td>Does not effectively address any of the components of the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accuracy of Information Provided</strong></td>
<td>All information provided is unambiguously accurate and on-topic.</td>
<td>Minor error in understanding indicated or information is so general that accuracy cannot be effectively judged.</td>
<td>One major error in content/information provided.</td>
<td>More than one major error in content/information provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion of Supporting Research</strong></td>
<td>Clear discussion of relevant empirical research &amp; theoretical interpretation of research.</td>
<td>Clear discussion of relevant empirical research provided, but no clear discussion of theory.</td>
<td>Incomplete discussion of relevant empirical research results.</td>
<td>No relevant empirical research discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Style and Writing Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>Writing is well organized, clear, concrete, and concise. No vague language used.</td>
<td>No vague language, but some problems in grammar, organization, or clarity.</td>
<td>Vague language, poorly worded sentences, or lack of clarity make reading the essay more difficult.</td>
<td>Many examples of vague language, grammar problems, or lack of clarity impedes judgment of writer’s understanding of material.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall score**

Please note: Blatant plagiarism (plagiarism involving large phrases or whole sentences) will result in an F on the writing assignment. Piecemeal plagiarism (for example, plagiarism of smaller units of text) will result in the subtraction of 3 points (one letter grade) from the overall score.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Threshold understanding (5-9 pts)</th>
<th>Good understanding (10-15 pts)</th>
<th>Advanced understanding (16-20 pts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is psychology a scientific community?</td>
<td>Recognizes the distinction between empirical claims and assertions of value; can give an example of a scientific analysis of a specific topic; thinks of psychology in broad ways of knowing</td>
<td>Can provide an example of scientific question and a non-scientific question; describes a procedure characteristic of an empirical analysis; thinks of psychology as an empirical enterprise</td>
<td>Provides an original example of a scientific and non-scientific question; describes more than one analytic tool with understanding of its interpretation; recognizes that psychology involves value assertions as well as empirical questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Provost: Why are you teaching?

- New Provost liked Gallery but wanted to switch from “retail to wholesale”
- Directed the question at selected departments
- Identify at least a few goals for program graduates
- Ask for systematic consideration of achievement
- Based on existing work
Undergraduate Programs

• Mostly liberal arts
• Need to identify a small set of goals to start
• One engineering program with well established goals and process
Geology

- Faculty driven concern about graduates
- Chosen field work maps
  - service basic paper
  - majors digital representations
- Integrative and complex
- Appropriate time in program
- Also looking for archive of writing
- Deep content knowledge in evolution
Psychology

• Had held a retreat
• Identified a few key goals
• Voted to develop a student portfolio
• Pilot version underway
  – Convenience archive
  – Draft of criteria for evaluation
  – Reporting back to plan portfolio design
Should be able to analyze data and be able to judge its validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novice</th>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Comp Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective design description; poor design; does not compare multiple sources</td>
<td>Identifies design and methods; notes limits inherent in design; summarizes, not integrates</td>
<td>Identifies limits of specific study; can summarize and integrate information, drawing appropriate inferences</td>
<td>Corrects flaws in design; understands that results are in context of other findings; synthesis is insightful, conclusions connect ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Should be able to say how psychology is useful in everyday life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novice</th>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Comp Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can describe basic psychological principles and phenomena</td>
<td>Recognizes principles and phenomena in examples of everyday life</td>
<td>Understands the basic mechanisms of phenomena appearing in everyday life</td>
<td>Uses understanding to take actions in everyday situations; can use a scientific principle to solve a problem in daily living</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
History of Art

- Completely new concept
- Initial resistance to any cooperation
- Identified an sample of courses at the junior/senior level maybe MA
- Extended faculty meetings to identify four goals
- Inductive work toward cognitive apprenticeship version of criteria
- Great progress in short time
Writing is the common element

- Describe works of art (material culture)
- Analyze works of art
- Describe and analyze an argument about works of art
- Create and support an argument about works of art
- Hierarchy of intellectual skills in search of a rubric
Mechanical Engineering

- Archive is accessible
- Already used for accreditation (ABET)
- Using it for a new purpose
- Concerned about writing
- Read original student work for a different purpose
- Developing the criteria using apprenticeship format
Graduate Programs

- Masters level professional degrees
- Ph.D. programs in Arts & Sciences
- Distinct from NRC number crunching
M.A. in Public Administration

• Clear goals set by scholars in field
• Identified components
• Asked students to write the criteria for cognitive apprenticeship
• Gathering an archive through linked student portfolios
• Students will use it first
• Faculty members will use it as well
14 competencies in 4 categories

• Values and ethics
  – Diversity, professionalism, leadership

• Strategic thinking
  – Policy making, innovation, strategizing

• Engagement
  – Communication, conflict resolution, external awareness, service

• Management excellence
  – Decisions, finances, group dynamic, information
## Guidelines for external awareness

**Subcategory -- citizen engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Practitioner</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Master</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learned effective participation techniques through experience, teachings, and readings</td>
<td>Formulates programs that actively engage citizen participation</td>
<td>Demonstrates effective involvement with citizens, used to formulate or change policy</td>
<td>Promotes active citizen involvement while maintaining organizational integrity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidelines for engagement
Subcategory -- Communication process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Practitioner</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Master</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning to give and accept feedback without becoming defensive</td>
<td>Gives productive feedback but fails to have systems for honest upward feedback</td>
<td>Open and productive exchanges exist between superiors and direct subordinates</td>
<td>Creates an atmosphere of open exchange of ideas and information internal and external to the organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Guidelines for management

**Subcategory -- teamwork**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apprentice</th>
<th>Practitioner</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Master</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working toward understanding the difference between teams and groups</td>
<td>Has difficulties managing individual activities and desires within the demands of teamwork</td>
<td>Submits to the shared goal of the team and holds other members accountable for success</td>
<td>Builds teams that produce results for an organization by drawing on the strengths of individuals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MA in Speech Language and Hearing - Professional

- Faculty initiative already underway
- Related to professional affiliation
- Replaced informal checks
- Systematic archive of work
  - Courses
  - Inhouse clinical faculty
  - Practicum clinical supervisors
Guidelines for implementation
Subcategory -- restructures with priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novice</th>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does not set or use priorities to adjust diagnosis for individuals; needs direct instruction</td>
<td>Has priorities in mind but does not use them to restructure diagnostic sessions with individuals</td>
<td>Has priorities, restructures as needed; can not articulate factors needed and requires consultation with faculty</td>
<td>Relates priorities to diagnostic structure; can articulate factors and works independently of faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not implement procedures; needs direct instruction and modeling of what and when</td>
<td>Implements inappropriate or inconsistent treatments; needs direct and specific faculty support</td>
<td>Some treatment is appropriate but needs direct support, especially for adjustments based on client performance</td>
<td>Consistently implements correct treatment; makes changes based on client without faculty supervision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Guidelines for diagnosis
### Subcategory -- interpretation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novice</th>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unclear or inaccurate use of multiple measures</td>
<td>Clear but partially accurate; from misreading of data</td>
<td>Accurate but with narrow justification, not comprehensive</td>
<td>Accurate and well justified diagnosis; comprehensive account of condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid: 33% Final: 0%</td>
<td>Mid: 0% Final: 0%</td>
<td>Mid: 17% Final: 33%</td>
<td>Mid: 50% Final: 67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
History Ph.D. Program

• Replaced a written qualifying exam with portfolio
  – All research seminar papers
  – Any published historical work
  – Professional essay on selection of fields
  – Dissertation prospectus
  – Vita and other listable documentation
• Now a decent cohort of these
• Generating a set of criteria to use
Struggles for History

• What’s the problem
• Why should we have common goals
• I trust my colleagues’ judgment
• Too much time for no apparent reason
Voluntary step toward program review

- Goals self selected
- Priorities respond to call
- Measures self selected
- Some academic leaders don’t trust units or faculty members
- This approach may ease tension in the system
Similar to backward design

- Wiggins & McTighe among others
- Identify the important program goals
- Search for existing opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding of goals
- Use program criteria to estimate the students’ achievement
- Leads to conversations about practice in critical courses
Sustainable: Use Existing Work

• Already creating assignments
• Students generate projects, exams, papers, integrative work
• Always keep an archive
• Treat like research evidence, w/ respect
• Make the work public, with criteria
• Track the changes in distributions
• Invite commentary and evaluation
Archive is the key

• Broad and representative sample
• Varies at what point units start
  – Mature begin with terminal
  – Exploratory all over tracking change
• Digital representations are optimal
  – Encourage digital submission
  – Provide labor for scanning
Scholarship Assessed (1997)

• **All** forms of scholarship include:
  
  – Clear goals
  – Adequate preparation
  – Appropriate methods
  – Significant results
  – Reflective critique
  – Effective presentation

Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff
The work of the scholar remains incomplete until it is understood and used by others.
Questions? Ideas? Comments?

http://www.cte.ku.