

Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year! I hope your semester is off to a great start!

The 2012 Committee will meet tomorrow, Tuesday, January 26, 1:00-2:30 in AO103. I have attached a meeting summary from our last meeting on November 20 because we need an update on each numbered item tomorrow.

In addition, I have attached comments from the PUL Pioneers of fall 2009 and a set of questions about the PUL evaluation process that were raised at the January meeting of the Program Review and Assessment Committee.

Clearly we have many questions and concerns to address regarding the PUL evaluation process. Please bring creative solutions!

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Question 1

What kinds of student work formed the basis for your ratings of student effectiveness in learning the PUL(s) you emphasized in your course?

- A. 1 assignment
- B. Combination of assignments (for example, test items, oral presentations, projects)  
Please explain –

B. I used two separate assignments to measure student effectiveness. For PUL5; Understanding Society and Culture, I based results on student performance on their second of two exams, which covered all material from the second half of the class (on the history of the Cold War). The exam balanced multiple choice and matching questions (40 points), identification terms (60 points: students define name, place, or event and state its significance for our understanding of the Cold War), and one lengthy essay on comparative history. Students had been provided with a list of potential ID terms and two possible essays. The exam covered nearly one century of world history and required students to be familiar with developments in all world regions.

For PUL1a, I focused on written and oral communication skills and based the results on student performance on one 5-page essay (a book review) and class participation over the course of the semester.

B. I used a combination of assignments that included the final research paper (which also included a reflection portion at the end) and their speech about a controversial issue in education.

B. I pooled three exams (specific questions relating to the top 2 PULs for my course) and the final exam. I gave the students and overall rating based on their performance on the exams.

B. [No additional comments provided.]

B. The basis for the PUL ratings for the Anatomy N261 students was the Lecture Final Exam, which was a comprehensive exam consisting of 206 questions taken from the 27 chapters covered over the course of the semester, incorporating student knowledge over topics from microscopic and gross anatomy, and the Final Semester Grade, which was calculated based upon 950 possible points for the 362 students who completed the course. Statistics for the Final Exam questions were reviewed, as was overall student performance, as PULs were rated.

Question 2

Did you use the VALUE rubrics, or another form of rubric, to help you decide how to rate each student on the PULs?

- A. Yes, I used VALUE rubrics.
- B. Yes, I used another form of rubric.
- C. Yes, I used a combination of VALUE and other rubrics.
- D. No, I did not use rubrics.

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B. Yes, I used another form of rubric.

B. Yes, I used a combination of VALUE and other rubrics. (The <http://nca.iupui.edu> site was very helpful!)

Question 3

Did you make up your own explicit definitions for the ratings Very Effective, Effective, Somewhat Effective, Not Effective to help you decide how to rate each student on the PULs?

- A. Yes
- B. No

If yes, please explain -

A. I basically assigned ratings based on student grades – Very effective for As, Effective Bs, etc – not effective for any student getting a grade of D or F (the only ones who received Fs were those who did not complete all assignments).

A. Yes, I did. I used my own definitions of each of the ratings to place students in each category based on their grades on the assignments as well as points they made in their reflections.

A. I rated them based on exam scores as follows.  
3: 100-90%  
2: 89-75%  
1: 74-60%  
0: 59-0%

A. If they received 90% or greater on an assignment I gave them a very effective-82-89 was effective-73-81-somewhat effective and less than 73 % was ineffective.

A. The definitions I used were very simple: The “Very Effective” rating was used for those earning an “A+”, “A,” or “A-” in the course and on the Final; whereas, the “Effective” rating was used for those earning a “B+”, “B,” or “B-,” the “Somewhat Effective” rating for those earning “C+”, “C,” or “C-,” and the “Not Effective” rating for those earning less than a “D+.”

#### Question 4

What did you find most difficult about assigning the student ratings?

The class size of 50 made it hard to measure student progress over the course of the semester. Ideally, I would begin the course by giving a brief examination of some of the material covered to judge student knowledge of world history. Then I could assess the extent to which they acquired new insights into society and culture as a result of lectures and readings. This would be much more feasible in a smaller class where individual student development could be more closely monitored. As it is, I do not know whether students performed any better over the course of the semester as a result of new skills developed in class, or because some were simply prepared better than others. One thing I did not was that about 30% of students made significant improvements between the first and second exams, as well as on the 4 quizzes given over the course of the semester. The greatest shortcoming to the larger sized history course is that it makes it more difficult to assess the development of oral communication skills.

It was a little difficult for me because I wondered how faculty in other departments were rating their students. If they were using the same PULs as benchmarks but rating their students differently, it may be a little unfair. For example, one student in engineering and one student in education may both receive the same grade in a course, but not the same rating on PULs.

Selecting questions that matched the PULs for the course was difficult. I discovered that some of my test questions should be rewritten. I also almost forgot to complete the PUL rating for the students. With the holidays, I should have completed it when I submitted final grades.

Determining a totally ineffective for less than 75 but I did not want them to be effective if the work was not passing and 73% is the minimum passing grade in Nursing.

I did not find the assignment of student ratings difficult at all, as the criteria used were a fair evaluation of the attainment of the PULs in Anatomy by each student over the semester.

## Question 5

Based on your experience, what assistance would be most helpful for the campus to offer as we ask your faculty colleagues to begin assigning these student ratings in their own courses in Spring Semester 2010?

I strongly suggest that a meeting be convened as close as possible to the opening of the semester so faculty, if they wish, can administer some exams or measure student performance on given PULs so as to better assess development and acquisition of skills over the course of the semester.

It would be helpful if we could develop standards for each PUL (regardless of discipline) in addition to what we already have. If all faculty were required to use the same rubric, it would help with fairness and equity across the disciplines.

Have the rating be a part of the One Start submission process along with final grades. They should also be due when final grades are due.

Perhaps if we all used a standard scale it would help across disciplines but I was comfortable with it for the most part. My ineffective was usually reflective of an assignment that was never submitted.

A brief workshop, with a hands-on data set entry, following discussion of the PULs themselves. (The most important point should be the preparation and entry of the data via the OnCourse tools!)

1. Need to operationally define and standardize PUL rating.
  - a. 'Very effective' means what?
2. Define different research questions that would focus the aggregation of data different ways to answer various questions.
3. To assess students' learning, don't we need to do something different from assessing their achievements (grades)?
  - a. For instance, a student who starts out very low and improves a lot has done more learning than one who starts high and stops there. Don't we need to consider change in grades more than an average of grades?
4. Is the goal to capture student proficiency in the assigned PUL area throughout the semester - or proficiency by the end of the course?
  - a. IE - in Sara's UCOL 110, averaging performance on a lot of assignments versus Sarah's RAD course which measured proficiency at the end.
5. Am I right that this is measuring demonstrated proficiency (a snapshot) rather than the amount learned in the area of the PUL; within the course.
6. I agree with the concern that we somehow standardize the numerical value of 3 -2 -1-0 ratings.
7. Cannot aggregate across courses if 3,2,1,0 designations are different for each instructor.
8. Need to have faculty submit a description of how they assess and how they assigned 3,2,1,0.
9. What leverage do you have to get faculty to submit PUL assessment? Consider having a "cannot submit final grades" flag come up if they try to submit grade without PUL assessment.
10. Along the lines of standardizing, how do we account for a 100-level or 200-level course that may enroll juniors or seniors; conversely, a 300- 400-level course to enroll freshmen and sophomores (not ideal, but it does happen)? It is possible, for many valid reasons, to have differentiated enrollments and the expectations, then, how does the PUL assessment consider this (student experience, expectation of mastery, etc)?
11. How did this assessment contribute to student learning?
12. What if a student 'fails' the PUL assessment but passes the course? Or, more interestingly, visa versa?

13. The current pilot data could present a nice opportunity to compute correlations between final grade and PUL designation. For if a high correlation exists, one may argue the need to separate the two.