Teaching – Improving Teaching Effectiveness

This may be an individual, departmental, or College-wide project.

Example

Project: Development of Rubrics for Graded Assignments

Purpose: Rubrics are a useful tool that connects teacher expectations to students’ understanding of those expectations. Creating rubrics for all graded assignments in a course provides a useful set of tools that reflect the course content and outcomes with descriptions of varying degrees of learning evidence.

Brief Description: This Project includes review of the learning outcomes for PE 198, Introduction to Athletic Training. Based on that review, a minimum of four rubrics will be designed to reflect knowledge and skill acquisition of the four student learning outcomes listed on the CARP.

Timeline: This project will be completed during Spring Semester, 2014.

Scope of Project: This project is an individual project.

Reflection

Developing the rubrics was a useful learning activity all by itself. It forced me to put in writing exactly what I expected from students, what exceeded expectations and what would fall short. I ended up modifying several assignments so that the language I used in the rubrics was the same as the language I used in the assignments. I also had another faculty member look over the rubrics and offer suggestions—that was VERY beneficial and helped me fine tune several things.

I debated, but ultimately shared the rubrics with students along with each assignment. That proved to be the right thing to do. It decreased the number of questions I usually get from students about my expectations. The lesson learned there was that students needed content, but they also needed help in figuring out how to make meaning of the assignments. Giving them the rubrics seemed to help all of them think more deeply about what they were being asked to learn.

Examples of what I learned about myself as a faculty member

I learned that I may set my standards a bit too high. Creating the rubrics helped me to focus more on what actually “met expectations.” What I hoped for while grading assignments was that more students went above and beyond the basics—that they “exceeded expectations.”

I also learned that creating the rubrics was time-consuming up front, but really helped me grade much more efficiently over the duration of the semester. All-in-all, the rubrics helped me save a lot of time and kept me from fretting over each student’s assignment while I debated with myself about how to determine grades.

What I might do differently
Plan ahead. I originally thought that an afternoon would be plenty of time for creating the rubrics. But each rubric took about an hour to 90 minutes—and that was when I was very clear in my own thinking about what I expected from students.

I would also look to colleagues for input. That was so helpful when I created the rubrics—I will just build that step in to future prep work. Creating the rubrics forced me to question myself about how clear I was in providing students directions on each assignment. I found myself often asking, “could students actually deliver on my expectations?” Creating the rubrics helped me to better align how I created and delivered assignments.