WAG Shares the DOPE: Tools for Effective Writing of Course Assignments International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference

Sue Caulfield
Western Michigan University, sue.caulfield@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/acad_leadership

Part of the Education Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation
Caulfield, Sue, "WAG Shares the DOPE: Tools for Effective Writing of Course Assignments International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference" (2018). Academic Leadership Academy. 94.
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/acad_leadership/94
WAG Shares the DOPE: Tools for Effective Writing of Course Assignments
International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference
Auburn University, June 4-6, 2018
Susan Caulfield, SIHP, Paula Andrasi, SIHP, & Lisa Singleterry, BSON

Introduction
Each of us received an Instructional Development Travel Grant to support our attendance at the 2018 International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference at Auburn University. We facilitated a three-hour workshop the afternoon of June 6, 2018. This workshop was an extension of work we have been doing in the College of Health and Human Services for the last 2½ years.

Over the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years, we led 12 workshops in the College of Health and Human Services, designed to help faculty develop better writing assignments and learn other tools related to creating better writing experiences for our students. We introduced the PODE model, as well as time spent on formative and summative assessment, evaluation of assignments, feedback as a gift, and use of rubrics. We presented on PODE, rubrics, and feedback at the 2018 IWAC workshop.

Listed below are the objectives for our workshop:

- Introduction to DOPE/PODE
- Interactive and engaged participants
- Outcomes include:
  - Identify the different components of DOPE/PODE
  - Recognize the role of rubrics in writing assignments
  - Explain the role of feedback in writing assignments
  - Describe the advantage of using a structured approach to developing writing assignments.

Interactive and Engaged Participants
We use active learning strategies in all our conference presentations, recognizing the importance of everyone being engaged and making the material interesting and useful.

One strategy we use is think/pair/share, where participants first process what they have experienced on their own, then discuss with one or two others, before sharing with the larger group.

Evaluation
At the end of the workshop, we asked participants to reflect on the following questions:

- What was your biggest take-away from this workshop?
- Were there any surprises? If so, what were they?
- What activity from the workshop would you keep, and why?
- Any other feedback for the workshop facilitators?

Feedback As A Gift
We see feedback as a gift that we give to our students. In that vein, it is important that we reflect on what it means to receive a gift. For example, most of us like a gift that is unique to us, not necessarily something generic that is given to everyone. We also like a gift that makes us feel good. While one approach is to focus on the negative or on penalties, research suggests that only negative feedback has the opposite of the intended impact, as students stop reading feedback if it is primarily negative in content.

Feedback As A Gift

- Designed to help faculty develop better writing assignments.
- Recognize the role of rubrics in writing assignments.
- Explain the role of feedback in writing assignments.
- Describe the advantage of using a structured approach to developing writing assignments.

Role of Rubrics
We introduce rubrics primarily as a way to give students additional guidance on what we expect from them in terms of outcomes. Rubrics also allow us to emphasize the relative importance of different parts of an assignment (e.g., % of points to a section) and to hold ourselves accountable for any reductions in points.

The Role of Rubrics

- Consistent structure; cycle of assess and revise assignments; role of effective rubrics

Evaluation Results

- Biggest take-away from workshop:
  - Consistent structure; cycle of assess and revise assignments; role of effective rubrics
- Any surprises from workshop:
  - What I thought was clear could still be revised; taking a student perspective on assignment specifics; feedback as a gift
- What activity from the workshop would you keep:
  - Tips/disussion/rubrics made me think; how to communicate expectations; iterations of assignments

Future Impact from Attending IWAC 2018
We have submitted our work for publication in the edited collection, Making Connections, in honor of the 25th anniversary of IWAC.

We made connections with writing faculty and made possible connections for collaborative work.

We gathered materials to use in our 2018-19 Faculty Learning Community.

References


Future Impact from Attending IWAC 2018

- Provide feedback on writing assignment.
- Allow for reflective process within a contemplative model.
- Assess output related to learning objectives.
- Applications for free writing in an English department, as well as more structured writing assignments in music education.

The Role of Rubrics

- Consistent structure; cycle of assess and revise assignments; role of effective rubrics

Future Impact from Attending IWAC 2018

- Provide feedback on writing assignment.
- Allow for reflective process within a contemplative model.
- Assess output related to learning objectives.
- Applications for free writing in an English department, as well as more structured writing assignments in music education.

Future Impact from Attending IWAC 2018

- Provide feedback on writing assignment.
- Allow for reflective process within a contemplative model.
- Assess output related to learning objectives.
- Applications for free writing in an English department, as well as more structured writing assignments in music education.

Future Impact from Attending IWAC 2018

- Provide feedback on writing assignment.
- Allow for reflective process within a contemplative model.
- Assess output related to learning objectives.
- Applications for free writing in an English department, as well as more structured writing assignments in music education.