WORKSHOPS

In the spirit of the new year, we at the TLC are resolving to help improve the work/life balance of faculty and to become partners in the quest for physical as well as mental fitness! While this may sound terribly ambitious (aren't most New Year's resolutions?) we are taking small steps in these directions, which according to experts and pundits alike, increases our chances of success. Our first offering is a joint PDC/TLC workshop entitled I Don't have Time to Attend This Workshop!, which focuses on finding balance in our professional and personal lives. Melissa Clodfelter and Catherine Ross will help faculty think through the opportunities for, and obstacles to, achieving an ideal day. The workshop is on January 31st at 12:00 (the details can be found on the PDC calendar), in plenty of time to get our semesters under new management! The second of our "searching for balance" offerings is the brand new Pedometers and Pedagogy walking series. Catherine Ross and Dee Oseroff-Varnell will meet every Wednesday at 3:00 in the ZSR Library lobby to lead a walking discussion of teaching topics so both the mind and body get some fresh air and exercise. We are very excited about our resolution and welcome your suggestions on continuing to address these challenges of faculty life.

Of course we don't want to forget our old and dear friends in this "new year, new workshops" excitement, so we will also be offering a very full selection of our more traditional workshops and groups as well! (wfu.edu/tlc/) for detailed descriptions, dates, locations and registration)

• Book discussion groups: We will run two different book discussion groups that will alternate Friday lunchtimes (including lunch!) so you could actually do both if you like! Each group will meet four times. The two books are: "Teaching What You Don't Know" by Therese Huston and "The Heart of Higher Education: A Call to Renewal" by Parker Palmer and Arthur Zajonc.

• Small Bites discussions: If you can't commit to a whole book, you can join us for a lunch and discussion of an article. There will be 6 of these discussions throughout the semester, the readings are posted on the website and you can register and download the reading for however many you would like to attend.

These discussions will occur on Wednesday at 12:00 and repeat on Thursday in the same week, with the same reading, so that those with differing teaching schedules have a better chance of being able to participate.

• New Faculty Learning Community: Another chance for new faculty who are in their first or second year of teaching at Wake Forest to connect, talk, share, strategize and reflect on the teaching experience. Go to our website to see what some of our fall participants thought about their new faculty learning community experience!

And now I will turn the newsletter over to my colleague Sue Rupp for a look at the fabulous workshops that she has lined up for this spring, as well as a review of the Course Development Grant opportunities that are coming up in March!

Our workshops this semester will be focusing on various aspects of best practices in the classroom. Catherine will start us off on February 1 with a discussion of best practices in the evaluation of teaching, a topic of considerable significance as well as frequent anxiety. Later in the month, Ryan Shirey, the acting director of the Writing Center, will lead a session on the work of the Writing Center and the ways in which communication and collaboration between faculty and the tutors at the Writing Center can be demystified and made more effective. In March, several faculty members (Adrian Bardon, Gary Miller, Stephanie Pallet, and Corey Remle) will discuss their experiences in the classroom and beyond with a variety of technologies, from Wikis to Facebook. Cindy Gendrich and Michael Hughes will address the challenges and benefits of interdisciplinarity and team teaching in a workshop in early April, followed by a final workshop that month with Lynn Book and David Phillips on engaging creativity in courses. I'm delighted that so many of our faculty are willing to share their experiences and accrued wisdom with their colleagues, and hope that you'll find the time to attend some of our workshops in the coming semester. Please see the TLC website for further details. Also, please contact me at rupp@wfu.edu with ideas for workshops in the coming year – issues that you'd like to see addressed, or advice regarding teaching that you'd be willing to share with others.

FUNDING

We would like to take this opportunity to start you thinking about applying for a Course Development Grant (up to $1,500.00) in March. If you've been thinking about ways you might want to update or revamp a course you've been teaching, or you have an idea for a new course you'd like develop, please consider submitting a proposal so that we can provide you with funding for travel, materials or books—yes, that's right, we are asking you to let us give you money! If you have any questions about the process or you want to discuss an idea and get some input, don't hesitate to contact Catherine and/or Sue. We are happy to help you draft your proposal or provide you with information and resources to help write it up. Applications are due Monday, March 14.

The Teaching Initiative Grants (up to $500.00) will be available throughout the spring semester. These grants can be applied for and awarded at any time during the semester. Last semester we awarded 5 faculty initiative grants: Eric E. Jones and Margaret Bender of Anthropology, Steven Duke, Director of the Center for International Studies, Sarah Jeong, Library, and William Turkett in Computer Science.

Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching, February 4-6, Joseph S. Koury Convention Center, Greensboro. The TLC will pay the registration for any faculty who wish to attend this conference.

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WFU FACULTY CORNER

Caring For Students: Duties And Limits Of The Role

John Llewellyn, Department of Communication

For the first time in twenty years of teaching at Wake Forest I had a total no-show this fall. A student, who had attended one of my classes in the second summer session, failed to show up for not one, but two, of my fall semester classes. To the diffident, this student's behavior could be read as an extended form of course evaluation. I was perplexed by the persistent absence of this student and one other who was also in the same two courses and equally absent throughout the first six weeks of the term. I had never seen—or not seen—students behave so irresponsibly. What to do?

When I taught as a visitor in New Zealand three years ago the university had a specific doctrine for monitoring student performance: the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. This guidebook was created by the Ministry of Education. The policy recognized that international students, especially from the Far East, might face special adjustment challenges in coming to the university. That term there was a student suicide and a pall hung over the campus as people wondered what could have been done differently. American campuses have similar problems and, regrettably, similar losses.

While the cultural gulf may not be as great for our students, what is our duty when students "disappear"? At large universities the empty seat in the 500-person lecture hall translates into one less paper to mark. There is nothing commendable in that approach; it is a snapshot of mass produced, big box education. The fact that we are here, instead of there, suggests that we want to do something better.

For the first time in my career, this fall I eliminated the attendance requirements for my classes. However, I still monitor attendance and deal with any problems that emerge. I also make it clear that attendance is a form of effort and close calls in grading will be resolved in favor of those who are expending effort.

When I encountered my no-shows this fall I pursued a two-track strategy. For the student I knew, I forwarded the name and the fact situation to someone in Reynolda Hall who might be in position to handle this case. Based on my knowledge of the student, I thought there was likely an issue more significant than mere truancy. For the other student, I sent an email inviting a meeting. At that meeting I pointed out to the young man that attending college includes the notion of attending classes,

I recounted some of my own dubious decisions as an undergrad and listened to him and got to know him a little bit. He said he would do better and he did; for the balance of the term his attendance and participation were satisfactory. In the long run, I think we were both pleased.

At the front of the classroom we are the early warning system for student problems. I do not think it is our job to solve these issues but we are the group that can flag them first. The dean's office, the counseling center, the student health center, and campus chaplains are all available to help but only if they know of a student problem or if a student is urged to seek them out. A faculty member can connect students to these services but only when we have taken notice of students who seem to be having issues.

In mid-life (or beyond) it is easy to forget how many adjustments college students are called upon to make. The issues are myriad: away from home, young love, young heartbreak, the promise and peril of no supervision, a roomful of students as smart as you when you were the superstar before, the intellectual challenge of a rigorous curriculum, and the list goes on. I have decided to meet student misbehavior with a form of grace; I assume that whatever has gone sideways is a misunderstanding unless, and until, I know better through a face-to-face interaction with the student. If I am taken advantage of, it is a rare occurrence and I can absorb the chagrin. In contrast, I have a number of productive, if occasionally stern, conversations that help both students and me. We both come away better for the experience.

I have two reasons for deciding to be proactive in handling student problems: one is retrospective, the other prospective. I was an undergraduate student whose underperformance was epic; I was lost in more ways than even I knew. Into this maelstrom came several kind professors who helped me do good work in their classes and begin to understand being a grown-up. I am still in touch with two of them and thank them regularly for what they did for me beyond "modern civilization" and "the settling of the American West." I was shown grace in little ways as well: a sociology professor patiently listened to my complaints about the test and heard me attribute my poor performance to deficiencies in the textbook. He urged me to redouble my efforts and spared me a well-deserved rebuke for deriding the textbook he authored.

Looking forward, our two children will be in college in just a few years. I hope they will not need a special intervention from a faculty member but, if they do, I want a kind person to be there for them. Thinking like a parent has helped me in those discussions with students who have some sort of problem. When I face them I remind myself that someone out there loves this student as much as I love my kids. What would that parent have me do? It is no help to let the behavior slide; neither is it useful to employ the nuclear option. Somewhere in the middle is an honest, caring conversation that spells out limits and offers the student help in meeting course standards and life challenges.

I assumed that something like this approach is standard practice; my Reynolda Hall contact told me that, in fact, early notice of student dysfunction is relatively rare. I think that our careful attention to spot students in trouble is what the parents would ask of us. These parents may even assume that we automatically address these issues. In reality, that decision rests with each one of us.

The Best of 2010 Award (Catherine's opinion!)

To start off the new semester I thought I'd share with you one of my favorite finds of 2010, a resource that I share over and over again with faculty-- the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) Rubrics. The goal of this project was to "capture liberal learning in all of its rich and varied dimensions". You can use these rubrics 'as is' or simply as a starting point to create your own. There are fifteen rubrics, [Inquiry and Analysis, Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Written Communication, Oral Communication, Reading, Quantitative Literacy, Information Literacy, Teamwork, Problem Solving, Civic Engagement, Intercultural Knowledge and Competence, Ethical Reasoning, Foundations and Skills of Lifelong Learning and Integrative Learning] which were developed by teams of faculty from institutions across the country. You can download all of the rubrics (for free!) at the AAC&U website or by searching "VALUE Rubrics". Some of the key benefits of the use of these rubrics are:

- Help faculty articulate more precisely what the learning they want their students to achieve actually looks like

- Helps students understand the expectations for their learning

- Reinforce assessment for learning, not just assessment of learning

- Place faculty judgment at the center of a nationally shared set of expectations for liberal learning

- Create a roadmap for shared learning across the curriculum and co-curriculum—from the course level to institutional reporting levels, and from general institutional or programmatic contexts to specific course values

(Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and Tools for Using Rubrics. 2010. Ed., Terry Rhodes, p. 19, AAC&U)

I have attached two sample rubrics, Quantitative Literacy and Creative Thinking. Feel free to contact me with questions, and happy teaching to you in the new semester!

CREATIVE THINKING VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition

Creative thinking is both the capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.

Framing Language

Creative thinking, as it is fostered within higher education, must be distinguished from less focused types of creativity such as, for example, the creativity exhibited by a small child's drawing, which stems not from an understanding of connections, but from an ignorance of boundaries. Creative thinking in higher education can only be expressed productively within a particular domain. The student must have a strong foundation in the strategies and skills of the domain in order to make connections and synthesize. While demonstrating solid knowledge of the domain's parameters, the creative thinker, at the highest levels of performance, pushes beyond those boundaries in new, unique, or atypical recombinations, uncovering or critically perceiving new syntheses and using or recognizing creative risk-taking to achieve a solution.

The Creative Thinking VALUE Rubric is intended to help faculty assess creative thinking in a broad range of transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary work samples or collections of work. The rubric is made up of a set of attributes that are common to creative thinking across disciplines. Examples of work samples or collections of work that could be assessed for creative thinking may include research papers, lab reports, musical compositions, a mathematical equation that solves a problem, a prototype design, a reflective piece about the final product of an assignment, or other academic works. The work samples or collections of work may be completed by an individual student or a group of students.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Exemplar: A model or pattern to be copied or imitated (quoted from www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/exemplar).

- Domain: Field of study or activity and a sphere of knowledge and influence.

CREATIVE THINKING VALUE RUBRIC *for more information, please contact value@aacu.org*

Definition
Creative thinking is both the capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	CAPSTONE	MILESTONES		BENCHMARKS
	4	3	2	1
Acquiring Competencies *This step refers to acquiring strategies and skills within a particular domain.*	Reflect: Evaluates creative process and product using domain-appropriate criteria.	Create: Creates an entirely new object, solution or idea that is appropriate to the domain.	Adapt: Successfully adapts an appropriate exemplar to his/her own specifications.	Model: Successfully reproduces an appropriate exemplar.
Taking Risks *May include personal risk (fear of embarrassment or rejection) or risk of failure in successfully completing assignment, i.e. going beyond original parameters of assignment, introducing new materials and forms, tackling controversial topics, advocating unpopular ideas or solutions.*	Actively seeks out and follows through on untested and potentially risky directions or approaches to the assignment in the final product.	Incorporates new directions or approaches to the assignment in the final product.	Considers new directions or approaches without going beyond the guidelines of the assignment.	Stays strictly within the guidelines of the assignment.
Solving Problems	Not only develops a logical, consistent plan to solve problem, but recognizes consequences of solution and can articulate reason for choosing solution.	Having selected from among alternatives, develops a logical, consistent plan to solve the problem.	Considers and rejects less acceptable approaches to solving problem.	Only a single approach is considered and is used to solve the problem.
Embracing Contradictions	Integrates alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas fully.	Incorporates alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas in a exploratory way.	Includes (recognizes the value of) alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas in a small way.	Acknowledges (mentions in passing) alternate, divergent, or contradictory perspectives or ideas.
Innovative Thinking *Novelty or uniqueness (of idea, claim, question, form, etc.)*	Extends a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge or knowledge that crosses boundaries.	Creates a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product.	Experiments with creating a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product.	Reformulates a collection of available ideas.
Connecting, Synthesizing, Transforming	Transforms ideas or solutions into entirely new forms.	Synthesizes ideas or solutions into a coherent whole.	Connects ideas or solutions in novel ways.	Recognizes existing connections among ideas or solutions.

QUANTITATIVE LITERACY VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition

Quantitative Literacy (QL) – also known as Numeracy or Quantitative Reasoning (QR) – is a "habit of mind," competency, and comfort in working with numerical data. Individuals with strong QL skills possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of authentic contexts and everyday life situations. They understand and can create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence and they can clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate).

Quantitative Literacy Across the Disciplines

Current trends in general education reform demonstrate that faculty are recognizing the steadily growing importance of Quantitative Literacy (QL) in an increasingly quantitative and data-dense world. AAC&U's recent survey showed that concerns about QL skills are shared by employers, who recognize that many of today's students will need a wide range of high level quantitative skills to complete their work responsibilities. Virtually all of today's students, regardless of career choice, will need basic QL skills such as the ability to draw information from charts, graphs, and geometric figures, and the ability to accurately complete straightforward estimations and calculations.

Preliminary efforts to find student work products which demonstrate QL skills proved a challenge in this rubric creation process. It's possible to find pages of mathematical problems, but what those problem sets don't demonstrate is whether the student was able to think about and understand the meaning of her work. It's possible to find research papers that include quantitative information, but those papers often don't provide evidence that allows the evaluator to see how much of the thinking was done by the original source (often carefully cited in the paper) and how much was done by the student herself, or whether conclusions drawn from analysis of the source material are even accurate.

Given widespread agreement about the importance of QL, it becomes incumbent on faculty to develop new kinds of assignments which give students substantive, contextualized experience in using such skills as analyzing quantitative information, representing quantitative information in appropriate forms, completing calculations to answer meaningful questions, making judgments based on quantitative data and communicating the results of that work for various purposes and audiences. As students gain experience with those skills, faculty must develop assignments that require students to create work products which reveal their thought processes and demonstrate the range of their QL skills.

This rubric provides for faculty a definition for QL and a rubric describing four levels of QL achievement which might be observed in work products within work samples or collections of work. Members of AAC&U's rubric development team for QL hope that these materials will aid in the assessment of QL – but, equally important, we hope that they will help institutions and individuals in the effort to more thoroughly embed QL across the curriculum of colleges and universities.

Framing Language

This rubric has been designed for the evaluation of work that addresses quantitative literacy (QL) in a substantive way. QL is not just computation, not just the citing of someone else's data. QL is a habit of mind, a way of thinking about the world that relies on data and on the mathematical analysis of data to make connections and draw conclusions. Teaching QL requires us to design assignments that address authentic, data-based problems. Such assignments may call for the traditional written paper, but we can imagine other alternatives: a video of a PowerPoint presentation, perhaps, or a well designed series of web pages. In any case, a successful demonstration of QL will place the mathematical work in the context of a full and robust discussion of the underlying issues addressed by the assignment.

Finally, QL skills can be applied to a wide array of problems of varying difficulty, confounding the use of this rubric. For example, the same student might demonstrate high levels of QL achievement when working on a simplistic problem and low levels of QL achievement when working on a very complex problem. Thus, to accurately assess a students QL achievement it may be necessary to measure QL achievement within the context of problem complexity, much as is done in diving competitions where two scores are given, one for the difficulty of the dive, and the other for the skill in accomplishing the dive. In this context, that would mean giving one score for the complexity of the problem and another score for the QL achievement in solving the problem.

QUANTITATIVE LITERACY VALUE RUBRIC   *for more information, please contact value@aacu.org*

Definition

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Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	CAPSTONE	MILESTONES		
	4	**3**	**2**	**1**
Interpretation *Ability to explain information presented in mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words)*	Provides accurate explanations of information presented in mathematical forms. Makes appropriate inferences based on that information. For example, accurately explains the trend data shown in a graph and makes reasonable predictions regarding what the data suggest about future events.	Provides accurate explanations of information presented in mathematical forms. For instance, accurately explains the trend data shown in a graph.	Provides somewhat accurate explanations of information presented in mathematical forms, but occasionally makes minor errors related to computations or units. *For instance, accurately explains trend data shown in a graph, but may miscalculate the slope of the trend line.*	Attempts to explain information presented in mathematical forms, but draws incorrect conclusions about what the information means. *For example, attempts to explain the trend data shown in a graph, but will frequently misinterpret the nature of that trend, perhaps by confusing positive and negative trends.*
Representation *Ability to convert relevant information into various mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words)*	Skillfully converts relevant information into an insightful mathematical portrayal in a way that contributes to a further or deeper understanding	Competently converts relevant information into an appropriate and desired mathematical portrayal.	Completes conversion of information but resulting mathematical portrayal is only partially appropriate or accurate.	Completes conversion of information but resulting mathematical portrayal is inappropriate or inaccurate.
Calculation	Calculations attempted are essentially all successful and sufficiently comprehensive to solve the problem. Calculations are also presented elegantly (clearly, concisely, etc.)	Calculations attempted are essentially all successful and sufficiently comprehensive to solve the problem.	Calculations attempted are either unsuccessful or represent only a portion of the calculations required to comprehensively solve the problem.	Calculations are attempted but are both unsuccessful and are not comprehensive.
Application / Analysis *Ability to make judgments and draw appropriate conclusions based on the quantitative analysis of data, while recognizing the limits of this analysis*	Uses the quantitative analysis of data as the basis for deep and thoughtful judgments, drawing insightful, carefully qualified conclusions from this work.	Uses the quantitative analysis of data as the basis for competent judgments, drawing reasonable and appropriately qualified conclusions from this work.	Uses the quantitative analysis of data as the basis for workmanlike (without inspiration or nuance, ordinary) judgments, drawing plausible conclusions from this work.	Uses the quantitative analysis of data as the basis for tentative, basic judgments, although is hesitant or uncertain about drawing conclusions from this work.
Assumptions *Ability to make and evaluate important assumptions in estimation, modeling, and data analysis*	Explicitly describes assumptions and provides compelling rationale for why each assumption is appropriate. Shows awareness that confidence in final conclusions is limited by the accuracy of the assumptions.	Explicitly describes assumptions and provides compelling rationale for why assumptions are appropriate.	Explicitly describes assumptions.	Attempts to describe assumptions.
Communication *Expressing quantitative evidence in support of the argument or purpose of the work (in terms of what evidence is used and how it is formatted, presented, and contextualized)*	Uses quantitative information in connection with the argument or purpose of the work, presents it in an effective format, and explicates it with consistently high quality.	Uses quantitative information in connection with the argument or purpose of the work, though data may be presented in a less than completely effective format or some parts of the explication may be uneven.	Uses quantitative information, but does not effectively connect it to the argument or purpose of the work.	Presents an argument for which quantitative evidence is pertinent, but does not provide adequate explicit numerical support. (May use quasi-quantitative words such as "many," "few," "increasing," "small," and the like in place of actual quantities.)