



Teaching and
Learning Center

» Newsletter

Teaching Matters

[The Linda J. Emanuel Teaching and Learning Center](#)
Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania

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The Teaching and Learning Center Newsletter

Lock Haven University's Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) is dedicated to providing faculty with resources and support needed to ensure that the highest quality of teaching and learning takes place throughout the University.

The TLC helps faculty stay abreast of pedagogical developments in research and practice; maintains and provides a wide array of resources on teaching and learning; and supports faculty in enhancing their teaching.

One way this is accomplished is through the dissemination of the TLC Newsletter. The TLC Newsletter is a monthly publication providing information on best practices in higher education, grant funding, and the use of technology in the classroom. If you would like to contribute to the TLC Newsletter, please contact the Chair of the Publications Team, Tara Mitchell at tmitchel@lhup.edu.

Message from the Publications Team

As this issue of *Teaching Matters* is released, we are just past the mid-point of the semester. Students have established some of their habits (good or bad) for the semester and both students and faculty are beginning to think ahead to the Spring semester (and possibly even the summer).

We hope that the information in the first issue of our 2009 – 2010 newsletter provided you with some useful tips as you begin to work on Spring advising. As we continue working with the theme of Building a Foundation for the Future, we will focus this issue on using research to improve student learning outcomes. Steven Granich has written an article on research using Waypoint to improve student learning outcomes.

This month's *Teaching Matters* includes information on teaching and learning research, working with the Office of Disability Services, and TLC events. We hope you find the information beneficial to your own teaching!

Using Waypoint Outcomes at Lock Haven – Practice Implications for Teaching

Steven Granich

As a software tool, it [Waypoint Outcomes] has helped me to enhance my teaching and provide accurate and timely feedback to my students.

Waypoint Outcomes is a critical tool for improving learning outcomes. As a software tool, it has helped me to enhance my teaching and provide accurate and timely feedback to my students. Grades are not enough to give students accurate feedback on their performance in a learning area. This teaching tip is a discussion of a research project in my classes, fall semester 2008 and spring semester 2009. (Waypoint is not being used at Lock Haven University fall semester 2009, although it may be used again in the future.)

In fall semester 2008, I utilized a writing rubric from the Waypoint Outcomes online library with my junior and senior students in the social work department at Lock Haven University. This APA style rubric for nursing students assessed the areas of introduction, topic and organization, support for topic, accuracy of facts, paragraph construction, sentence structure, grammar and spelling, valid in text citations, conclusion, sources, references cited in text on reference list, margins and format, and reference list meeting APA criteria. I scored the rubrics on the computer, emailed the results of the rubric evaluation to the students, and aggregated the data from the class. The table below is a description of two of the elements and their rating on a Waypoint rubric obtained from the Waypoint Outcomes library on line.

Accuracy of Facts	Sources
1. All supportive facts are reported accurately.	1. All sources used for quotes and facts are credible and cited correctly.
2. Almost all supportive facts are reported accurately.	2. All sources used for quotes and facts are credible, and most are cited correctly.
3. Most supportive facts are reported accurately, but you are not persuasive.	3. Most sources used for quotes and facts are credible and cited correctly.
4. No facts are reported or most are inaccurately reported.	4. Many sources used for quotes/facts are less than credible (suspect) and/or are not cited correctly.
5. Some of the sources are questionable.	
6. You do not use professional/scholarly references to support your position.	

That fall semester I evaluated the papers of 30 students using the rubric. I evaluated four written projects using the APA rubric. The students became accustomed to the feedback from the various elements of the rubric and responded well to improving their writing using APA style and format. An informal survey of the class revealed that the students found the rubrics to be helpful. In spring semester 2009, I felt that it was critical to further investigate the usefulness of Waypoint Outcomes with this same undergraduate class. I obtained approval for this study from the Institutional Review Board at Lock Haven, formulated a consent form, and all the students decided to participate in this Waypoint Outcomes study.

APA Writing Rubric Spring Semester 2009

Utilizing an APA style rubric from Waypoint Outcomes library online, students and professor evaluated a 10 page research paper. There were 22 papers evaluated out of 30 because 8 students turned their papers in late. One score was not good data because it was filled out incorrectly. The students evaluated each other's papers on a scale of 0 poor, 1 approaching proficiency, 2 proficient, 3 above proficient, and 4 advanced. The professor used the same scale.

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The result of the student evaluations was a mean of 3.02 out of 21 students (one score was dropped). My evaluations yielded a mean score of 2.78 out of 22 students (score was kept because I rated all students accurately). Based on my evaluation, both mean scores were over inflated. Neither the professor nor student realistically assessed the writing of the students.

Oral Communication Rubric Spring Semester 2009

As the spring semester 2009 progressed, I felt it important to evaluate the oral communication of my students in the social work class. I applied to Waypoint a rubric developed by Dr. Riede from the Communication Department. The rubric encompassed the areas of audience identification, content, organization, physical control, presentation aids, and vocal control. Both students and professor evaluated the oral presentations of students. The Oral Communication Committee talked about the rubric at a meeting. Based on the feedback, I found that I was over inflating the scores on the rubric. Proficient meant that the students were doing a good job; above that score was somewhat rare. I worked with the class on training them to understand that scoring proficient meant that a student was meeting the standard, and above that was a rarer event.

Conclusions

What I found from doing faculty/student evaluations using Waypoint Outcomes was:

1. There needs to be training to effectively use the rubrics; this includes training for the professor and students.
2. Students and faculty can work together to effectively evaluate student work based on rubrics.
3. Rubrics are a useful tool to evaluate student work in written and oral communication.
4. Rubrics need to be piloted and tested to determine their usefulness.
5. Rubrics needed to be monitored for under rated or over rated scores.

Waypoint provides an interactive rubric which can give feedback and makes it easy to aggregate and compare data from different rubrics. Testing rubrics and getting student feedback from rubrics is important in education.

Practice implications of using Waypoint are extensive. It provides a way to formulate objective and measurable outcomes and then save and share them with others. Waypoint supports common measures and ways to score student outcomes. Outcome measures do not dictate teaching methods because they are dealing only with student outcomes not the content or methodologies of teaching.

Waypoint is very easy to use for faculty and has been adopted by many schools across the United States. Rubrics can be converted for implementation via computer based evaluation using competencies and elements of Waypoint Outcomes. The software package allows the faculty member to establish competencies composed of various elements which identify the criteria for assessment. The faculty member can provide high quality feedback to the student based on the assignment and the various elements in the assignment. The user of Waypoint has the option to choose among the elements to evaluate for a specific assignment. The student names are loaded into the system so each student can be evaluated on the specific assignment. Each element can be rated numerically by proficiency, and written observations can be made for each element. Students receive very specific feedback e mailed to them automatically by Waypoint. The data is then aggregated and saved in the Waypoint system to be evaluated by the instructor.

Waypoint has enhanced my teaching and given me an effective tool to measure my learning outcomes especially in the areas of writing and oral communication. It can do the same in other areas of learning outcomes and provide a research tool for analyzing learning outcomes.

Working with the Office of Disability Services

Dawn Lorenz

Now that class is back in session it is easy to become overwhelmed with the demands of juggling planning, teaching, and evaluating, particularly when it comes to working with students with disabilities. Many of you have received a letter from students indicating that they are to get “accommodations” for the semester and may be wondering exactly what your role is in providing services to students with disabilities.

To help students with disabilities get the best start possible it is vitally important that faculty and staff across campus work as a team. We can do this in a number of ways: encourage students with disabilities to contact the Office of Disability Services so they can get needed accommodations, work with students to make sure they are receiving those accommodations in class, and contact the office with questions or concerns that you have about providing services. After all, it is everyone’s responsibility to ensure that all of our students at LHU receive the best education possible.

Research on Teaching and Learning

Tara Mitchell

Faculty members are facing growing demands to increasing their teaching loads (through larger classes) and yet also increase their research productivity. This is a phenomenon seen across the country, not just at Lock Haven University. One method to meet both of these demands is to conduct research on pedagogical issues.

There are several opportunities to begin pedagogical research. The TLC exists to encourage pedagogical improvement, in part through continuing scholarship on such issues. The Professional Development and Peer Coaching Team, for example, works with faculty members to facilitate pedagogical growth and mentoring. The Grants and Liaison Team provides some funding for faculty seeking to attend (or present at) a teaching conference, helping offset travel costs. Lock Haven University also has its own Institutional Review Board (<http://www.lhup.edu/irb>), which allows faculty members to plan ethical research involving their students and learning outcomes.

There are also a wide variety of conferences on teaching in learning – both generally and field specific – at which to present that research, or even just learn more about best practices. Conference Alerts.com (<http://www.conferencealerts.com/index.htm>) provides a list of upcoming conferences worldwide on a wide variety of topics. Simply click on the Teaching and Learning link, under the Education category, for a list of upcoming conferences focused on teaching and learning. A list of conferences, including registration information, can also be found at the Marshall University Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning website (<http://www.marshall.edu/catl/conferencelist.asp>). Additionally, many field related professional organizations (e.g., APS, ACS) are beginning to provide conference time to presentations on teaching and learning in their particular fields.

TLC Events

The Teaching and Learning Center has developed an interactive calendar to provide information about upcoming events as they are planned. The calendar is accessible at <http://www.lhup.edu/TLC/calendar/webcal.html>. If you see an event you are interested in attending, you can register for the event and add it to your Outlook calendar by following the appropriate links. (First click on the event name from the calendar itself).

