

DEFLATING GRADY
Part I – Maintaining Standards

The following is an e-mail exchange between Prof. Grady Rizeng and his chair, Lois Marks, that Prof. Rizeng has forwarded to Dean Nolira.

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Sunday, January 09, 2005 11:31 PM
To: A. C. Nolira
Subject: FW: RE: RE: RE: RE: Maintaining our standards

Dean Nolira,
Can you believe what I have to put up with? I'm begging you to do something about the way I'm treated by this tyrant!

Grady Rizeng
University Distinguished Professor

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Sunday, January 09, 2005 8:25 PM
To: Grady Rizeng
Subject: RE: RE: RE: RE: Maintaining our standards

I'm not saying that. What concerns me is that your grades reflect a different standard and that has all sorts of implications. Let's meet tomorrow morning at 8 to discuss grade inflation. That's not too early for you I hope.

Lois Marks
Department Chair

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Sunday, January 09, 2005 3:22 PM
To: Lois Marks
Subject: RE: RE: RE: Maintaining our standards

But as you said yourself, we get really good students. Do you really think half of them should get C's or lower?

Grady Rizeng
University Distinguished Professor

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Saturday, January 08, 2005 8:19 PM
To: Grady Rizeng
Subject: RE: RE: Maintaining our standards

That's fine, but perhaps you need to redefine the criteria for excellence. Do you think this is Lake Wobegon where all the students are above average? From your grades, I can't tell who the best students are.

Lois Marks
Department Chair

-----Original Message-----
Sent: Friday, January 07, 2005 4:53 PM
To: Lois Marks
Subject: RE: Maintaining our standards

Absolutely. With all due respect, I don't accept the premise that low grades necessarily mean high standards. They could mean unreasonable standards or poor teaching. I have taught my courses for many years and have well-defined criteria for an A. If everyone achieves those criteria, then everyone gets an A. Of course the converse is true as well.

Grady Rizeng
University Distinguished Professor

-----Original Message-----
Sent: Friday, January 07, 2005 3:13 PM
To: Grady Rizeng
Subject: Maintaining our standards

As you should be aware, this department is well known for its rigor. We attract excellent students and they work hard. For many years the average grades given in this department have been among the lowest on campus, which reflects our demanding standards.

My reason for writing you is that grades in this department have risen in recent years and the grades you give are among the highest in the department—63% A's and B's. Do you really think your students deserved those grades?

Lois Marks
Department Chair

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1. Individually: In 25 words or less, write down in a complete sentence your definition of *grade inflation*.
 2. As a group, share your definitions and come to consensus on a definition that your group should write down.

DEFLATING GRADY

Part II – Midnight Thoughts

Somehow Grady Rizeng couldn't get to sleep. He had just ripped off the e-mail to the dean to vent his frustration. He kept thinking about his 8 am meeting with Dr. Marks. He felt blind-sided by the insinuation that the grades he gave his students were too high. He had never looked at his grades over time or in comparison with grades given by his faculty colleagues. Never had he thought he was being easy on the students and their course evaluations suggested they had worked hard in his courses. *“What evidence does she have that the increase in grades in the department is due to my courses or a decrease in my standards? Couldn't it simply be that our students are getting better? There are all sorts of reason that grades might be rising.”* At 1 am he got out of bed and logged on to the Internet to see what he could find out that would help him later in the morning.

Meanwhile, Lois Marks was having second thoughts. *“Did I come down too hard? I assumed Grady's high teaching ratings reflected easy grading standards. Did I jump to an incorrect conclusion? I need to check into this a bit more.”* And she logged on to the Internet as well.

1. What information should Prof. Rizeng bring to the meeting with his chair?
2. What evidence would Chairperson Marks need to demonstrate grade inflation?

DEFLATING GRADY
Part IV – Who Cares?

As an individual, match the statements below with the following stakeholders. Then compare with other in your group and come to consensus.

- ___ Chairman Marks
- ___ Dean Nolira
- ___ Student Newspaper Reporter
- ___ Faculty Union Representative
- ___ Parent of a Student
- ___ Alumnus who hires Graduates

A: “This is a complex problem. We need to create a culture where learning not grades is the focus.”

B: “This is an academic freedom issue. They can’t tell Grady what to do.”

C: “In addition to grades, the transcript should include a score from a nationally standardized exam in the discipline.”

D: “Why is Prof. Rizeng being harassed by his department when he’s a great teacher.”

E: “What are Joe’s chances of getting into medical school if they limit the number of ‘A’s’?”

F: “Without uniform and demanding standards, grades aren’t worth a thing.”

DEFLATING GRADY
Part V – What’s Our Position?

The following questions are offered to help your stakeholder group focus its attention and define its position on grade inflation.

How does grade inflation hurt your stakeholder group?
How big is the problem? Is it getting worse?

Members in your stakeholder group need to be prepared to articulate the position and provide support for it when they return to their respective home groups.

What is PBL?

Institute for Transforming Undergraduate Education



University of Delaware

May 19-20, 2008



Characteristics Needed in College Graduates

Excellent communication skills

Ability to define problems, gather and evaluate information, develop solutions

Address problems in a complex real-world setting

Team skills – ability to work with others

Quality Assurance in Undergraduate Education (1994)
Wingspread Conference, ECS, Boulder, CO.

Carnegie Foundation Recommendations

Make research based learning the standard.

Build inquiry based learning throughout the four years.

Link communication skills and course work.

Use information technology effectively.

Cultivate a sense of community.

Boyer Commission, 1998

What is PBL?

“The principal idea behind PBL is that the starting point for learning should be a problem, a query, or a puzzle that the learner wishes to solve.”

Boud, D. (1985) PBL in perspective. In “PBL in Education for the Professions,” D. J. Boud (ed); p. 13.

What Is PBL?

“...careful inspection of methods which are permanently successful in formal education...will reveal that they depend for their efficiency upon the fact that they go back to the type of situation which causes reflection out of school in ordinary life. *They give pupils something to do, not something to learn; and if the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking, or the intentional noting of connections; learning naturally results.*”

John Dewey (1916)

What is PBL?

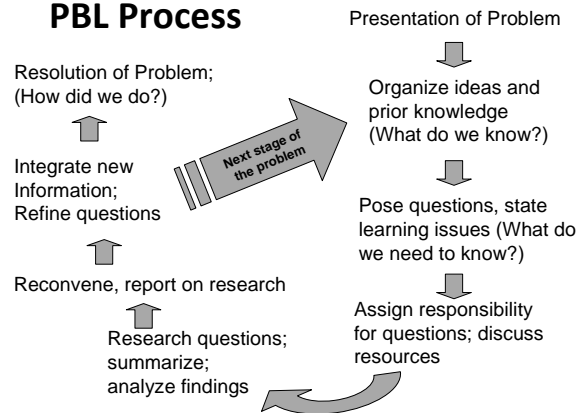
“...a process of acquiring understanding, knowledge, skills and attitudes in the context of an unfamiliar situation, and applying such learning to that situation.”

C. E. Engel, University of Newcastle

What are the Common Features?

- Learning is initiated by a problem.
 - Problems are based on complex, real world situations.
 - All information needed to solve problem is not given initially.
 - Students identify, find, and use appropriate resources.
 - Students work in permanent groups.
-

PBL Process



A Typical Day...



Common Classroom Models

- Medical school
 - Floating Facilitator
 - Peer Facilitator
 - "Hybrid"
-

Choosing a Model...

- Class size
 - Intellectual maturity of students
 - Student motivation
 - Course learning objectives
 - Instructor's preferences
 - Availability of peer facilitators
-

Medical School Model

- Dedicated faculty tutor
- Groups of 8-10
- Very student-centered environment
- Group discussion is primary class activity

A good choice for
Highly motivated, experienced learners
Small, upper level seminar classes

Floating Facilitator Model

More structured format;
more instructor input into
learning issues and
resources

Group size: 4

Instructor rotates through groups:

Asks questions, directs
discussions, checks
understanding

Other class activities:

- Groups report out
- Whole class discussions
- (Mini)lectures

A good choice for
Less experienced learners
Classes of all sizes

Peer Facilitator Model

Advanced undergraduates serve as facilitators:

Help monitor group progress and dynamics

Serve as role models for novice learners

Capstone experience for student facilitators

A good choice for
Classes of all sizes

“Hybrid” PBL

Non exclusive use of problem driven learning in
a class.

May include separate lecture segments or other
active learning components.

Floating or peer facilitator models common.

An entry point into PBL.
Reaches students at many levels.

Group Dynamics and Conflict Management



Institute for Transforming Undergraduate Education



Dr. Deborah Allen's contribution to this presentation is acknowledged and appreciated.



Why Use Groups?

- Simulates the “real world” use of teams
- High motivation when actively involved
- Learn more fully and with less effort
- Learn in context
- Allows exploration of more complex problems
- Can allow students to self-select their major areas of interest.



Trust and Teams

- Trust is “a willingness to put oneself at risk within a specific context.”
 - Trusting behavior: delegation of tasks to a team member
 - Distrusting behavior: Completing all tasks on your own.
- To be “trustworthy,” indicates one has characteristics that merit another’s trust:
 - Competence—the teammate has the CAPACITY to complete the desired task.
 - Benevolence—the teammate CARES about my needs and will act in my best interests.
 - Integrity—the teammate is honest and keeps his or her COMMITMENTS.



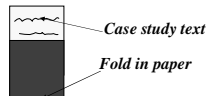
Step 1: Conflict Case Studies

- A. Read over the case study that your group has been given.**
- B. Consider the possible resolutions to the dilemma posed by the case.**
- C. List the possible resolutions on the case study handout, the blank space beneath the text.**



Step 2: Conflict Case Study

- A. Fold the handout so that your ideas for resolutions are covered up by the folded paper, but the case study text is still revealed.**



- B. Pass the folded case study on to the group on your left.**
- C. When you receive another group’s case study, keep that group’s ideas for resolutions covered up.**



Step 3: Conflict Case Study

- A. Read over the new case study that your group has been given.**
- B. What are the possible ways in which the group and/or course instructor bring about a positive resolution?**
- C. List these on the handout, in the new blank space beneath the case study.**



Steps 4 & 5: Conflict Case Study

- Pass the case study on to the group on your left.
- Uncover the possible resolutions “brainstormed” by the previous 2 groups.
- Given the information that you have, which of the resolutions do you think is the best option? Why?
- Could the conflict that arose in the case have been prevented or significantly lessened? If so, how?

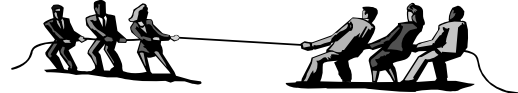
Be prepared to report out on questions C & D in 10 min.



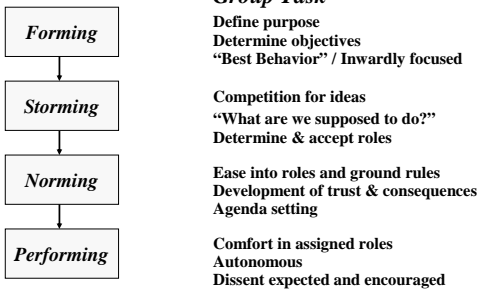
Nurturing and Eroding Team Trust

List five actions that inhibit the formation of team trust. Use competence, benevolence, and integrity as a guide.

Report out in 5 minutes



Phases of Group Development



Phases of Group Development

	<u>Group Task</u>	<u>Evidence of Failure</u>
Forming	Define purpose Determine objectives “Best Behavior”	Group lacks focus Attends to wrong things Conflict over objectives
Storming	Competition for ideas “What are we supposed to do?” Determine & accept roles	Not completing tasks Conflict within group Confusion over roles
Norming	Ease into roles and ground rules Development of trust Agenda setting	Poor standards Conflict within group & w/instructor Late assignments
Performing	Comfort in assigned roles Autonomous Dissent expected and encouraged	Poor performance continues Conflicts go unresolved Sense that grades unfair



The Team Grid and Code of Conduct Exercise

Name, Phone, and Email Address	Things I Love to Talk About	Why I Am Taking This Class	Personal or Professional Achievement for 2007	On Teams, I tend to be a...

Code of Conduct: How should we handle poor performance on this team?



In Groups, I Tend to Be a...

- Leader
- Worker
- Planner
- Mediator
- Entertainer



Purposes of “Completing the Grid”?

- Forming:
 - What does everyone expect to get out of this class?
 - Do we have 5 leaders? Entertainers?
 - How do I contact you?
- Storming
 - What role do I want to play? (Leader vs. Entertainer)
- Norming
 - How do we handle poor performance?
- Encourages the movement through the phases and the formation of trust



Purposes of “Completing the Grid & Code of Conduct

- Spurs discussion on class priorities:
 - What is my role? How important is this class to me?
 - What skills do my team members have? (competence)
- Allows groups to learn about their group members
 - How do I contact you?
 - Differing priorities (Leader vs. Entertainer)
 - Reduces depersonalization (benevolence)
 - Sets expectations early (integrity)
 - Focuses on similarities in group members’ backgrounds, instead of the differences
- Encourages the formation of trust



My Group from Hell

Take 5 minutes to trade stories with your neighbor about your “group from hell.”

How was the conflict resolved?



Resolving Conflicts

Level 1 - Preventing escalation

- Monitor groups for early signs of conflict
- Intervene on the spot
- Group evaluations
- Encourage spontaneous verbal feedback



Resolving Conflicts

Level 2 - Empowering students

- Listen to student concerns (all viewpoints)
- Encourage students to resolve the conflict
- Coach students on possible resolution strategies



Resolving Conflicts

Level 3 - Serve as mediator

- Establish ground rules/review code of conduct
- Ask each student to present point of view while others listen
- Ask each student to define ideal outcome
- Review group ground rules
- Facilitate discussion of possible outcomes





Resolving Conflicts

Level 4 - Instructor intervention

- “I reserve the right to....” statements in the syllabus

Levels 1-3 are loosely based on:

Weider-Hatfield (1981) A unit in conflict management skills. *Communication Education* 30: 265-273.

Adler, Rosenfeld, and Towne (1983) *Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication*. New York: Rinehart & Winston.



Final Suggestions for Using Groups

- Set expectations early
- Form heterogeneous groups
- Use permanent groups
- Rotate roles of responsibility
- Rely on group-selected ground rules
- Conduct peer evaluations

Assessment of Individual Performance in Groups

Name of Person You Are Assessing:

Your Name:

Group Name:

For each of the assessment categories below, place an "X" in the box that best indicates the extent to which you think that statement describes the person you are assessing. Fill one out for each member of your group *and* one for yourself. Forms are due at the start of class on the date given in the syllabus.

		strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree
1.	Does not miss out on group activities by being absent.					
2.	Does not miss out on group activities by being late.					
3.	Finishes all jobs assigned by the group on time.					
4.	Comes to class having read the material necessary for advancing group discussion.					
5.	Listens well to others' presentations.					
6.	Contributes to the group's discussion.					
7.	Does not dominate the discussion.					
8.	Brings new and relevant information to the group's discussion.					
9.	Uses appropriate resources for researching presentations.					
10.	Presents logical ideas and arguments.					
11.	Asks questions that promote clearer and deeper understanding.					
12.	Communicates ideas and information clearly.					
13.	Helps to identify and implement ways that the group can function better.					

Please circle an overall rating:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Excellent - Exceeds expectations</p> <p>2. Good - Meets expectations</p> | <p>3. OK - Improvement in some key areas needed</p> <p>4. Major improvement needed</p> |
|--|--|

Please use the back of the form to respond to the following two statements. Link your responses to the ratings above as appropriate.

1. Describe the ways in which this individual most helps your group's learning.
2. Describe the ways in which a change in this person's behavior could improve your group's learning.