Best Practices for Assignments

Below are tips for using online assignments effectively. These tips were gathered from the experiences of real instructors, from Durham Tech and elsewhere.

Provide support for students

- Remember that Sakai’s Assignments tool may be new to your students.
- Provide a link to Durham Tech’s info for students on Submitting Assignments so they’ll know what to do.
- Early in the course, give students an opportunity to submit a low-stakes Assignment, so they can become familiar with the process before a major paper is due.

Combat plagiarism

- Use the Turnitin feature within Assignments to check student papers for plagiarism.
- Be sure to review the rules for submitting papers to Turnitin and share them with students.
- Be aware that it may take 30-60 minutes from the time the student submits a paper for the Turnitin report to appear.
- A high “similarity index” doesn't always mean a paper is plagiarized! Instructors must review Turnitin reports carefully to determine if plagiarism occurred.

Assignment Feedback and Grading

- Highlight/bold the text you type in the instructor comments area, so it will stand out to students.
- Consider attaching a grading rubric to provide detailed feedback. Instructor comments will display to students in the Gradebook, but any files you attach when grading will not!
  - Students must go into the Assignments tool -- and must scroll all the way to the bottom -- to see the instructor’s attachments. If you attach files as part of assignment feedback, it’s important to tell students where to find them.
- Apply a grade of zero to students who did not submit.
- Remember to Release Grades so students will be able to see their grades and any comments or feedback.

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<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Submitted</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<td>Returned</td>
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