



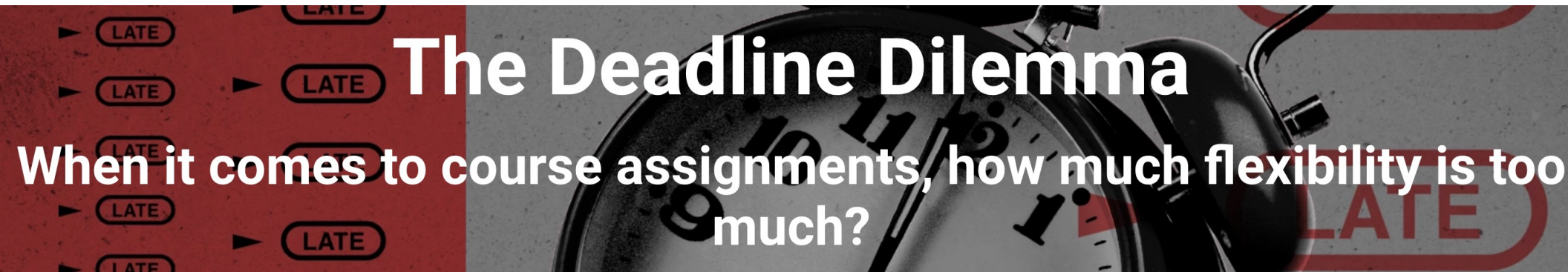
WALKING THE TIGHTROPE: BALANCING FLEXIBILITY WITH STRUCTURE IN COURSE DESIGN



Center for the Advancement
of Teaching

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FLEXIBILITY: A HOT TOPIC RECENTLY



The Deadline Dilemma

When it comes to course assignments, how much flexibility is too much?

CLASSROOM COMPASSION

By [Carolyn Kuimelis](#) | NOVEMBER 14, 2022

STORY : **STUDENT SUCCESS**

The Future is Flexible

By: Hazel Kelly

5/11/2022

Teacher Flexibility and the New Normal

[Sheila Mulder](#)

June 29, 2022 / [Comments](#) / [Essays](#)

“But flexibility lives in conflict with students’ competing need for structure”
- Becky Supiano, *Teaching*, 12/1/22

SESSION GOALS



1. Explore **components of flexibility and structure** in course design
2. Evaluate the “**flexibility with accountability**” model and its application to course design
3. Apply the “flexibility with accountability” model **to your courses**

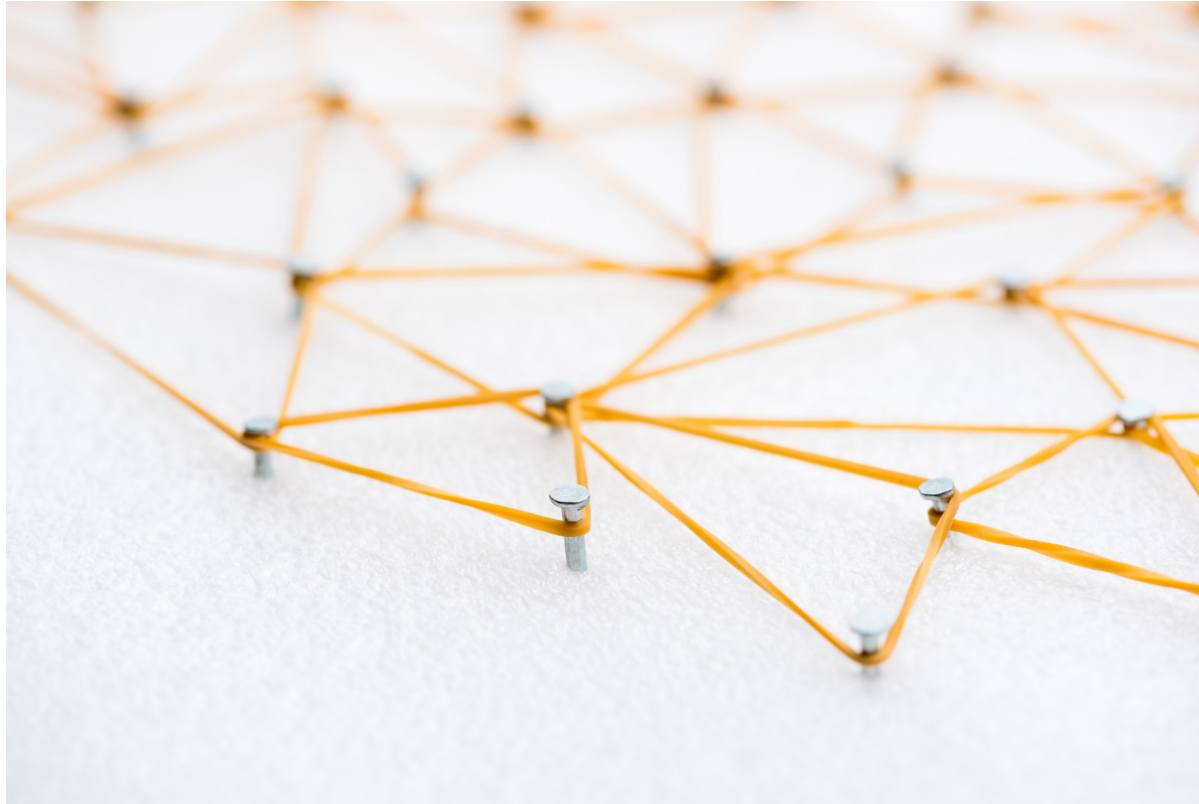


QUICK WRITE

1. What is your favorite course to teach?
2. What **3 words** would you use to describe your teaching philosophy/approach to pedagogy?

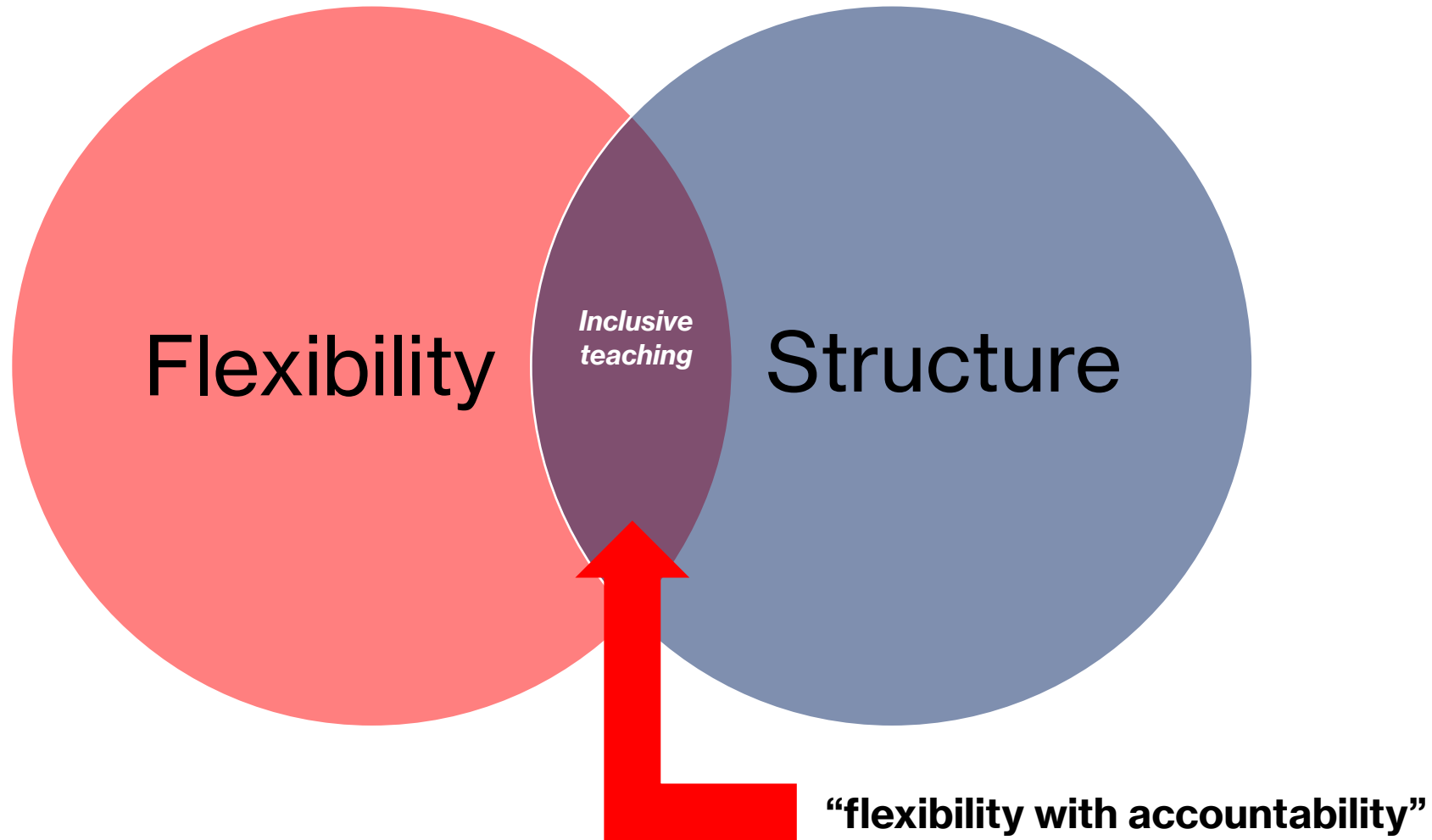
ICEBREAKER – WHERE DO YOU STAND: which statement aligns closer with your teaching practice?

***Structure is
important
for inclusive
teaching***



***Flexibility is
important
for inclusive
teaching***

FLEXIBILITY & STRUCTURE AS PARTNERS TO INCLUSIVE TEACHING



Please scan the QR code with your phone and comment on the Padlet:

WHAT COURSE COMPONENTS ARE **FLEXIBLE** IN YOUR COURSE?

WHAT COURSE COMPONENTS ARE **STRUCTURED** IN YOUR COURSE?



<https://padlet.com/jlunden/sjsoe1tgyy07dka1>

5 ways to balance flexibility with structure in course design

- 1. Keep deadlines, but build in flexibility.**
- 2. Make course materials accessible w/ guidance on how to best engage w/ materials.**
- 3. Explain & reflect on the advantages of coming to class.**
- 4. Encourage attendance, but allow for absences.**
- 5. Give time to build community.**

Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning

<https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/strategic-resources-digital-publications/managing-classroom/flexible-structures-course-design>

Example: “Flexibility with Accountability” in Intro Biology @ Temple

1. Keep deadlines, but build in flexibility.

- Explicit guidelines for extensions
- Student choice in assignments (in limited cases)

2. Make course materials accessible w/ guidance on how to best engage w/ materials.

- Recorded lectures; guided notes
- Digital lab materials w/ writable access; instructions on collabs

3. Explain & reflect on the advantages of coming to class.

- “Revenge quizzes” held in class
- Letter-writing campaign to future students

4. Encourage attendance, but allow for absences.

- Make-up labs through Google sign-up; exams can be made up (w/ limitations)

5. Give time to build community.

- Groups are assigned – asset mapping
- Acknowledgments & consensus

Small Group Activity:

Re-design an assessment using the “flexibility/accountability” model -

English 101, an introductory composition course, has a final assessment of a term paper with a hard due date and a template provided for format.

In groups of 3-4, please take 10 minutes to re-design this assessment using any “component” (or components) we previously mentioned in this workshop.

Share Out

English 101, an introductory composition course, has a final assessment of a term paper with a hard due date and a template provided for format.

Thank You!



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If you have any follow-up comments or questions:

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References:

- [Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching & Learning](#)
- [“The Deadline Dilemma”](#) by C. Kumielis
- [“Teacher Flexibility & the New Normal”](#) by S. Mulder
- [“The Future is Flexible”](#) by H. Kelly
- [“Balancing Flexibility & Rigor to Advance Equity in Course Design”](#) by H. Dwyer & C. Cardamone