



**YORKVILLE**  
UNIVERSITY



Bluenotes **GLOBAL** 2020  
VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

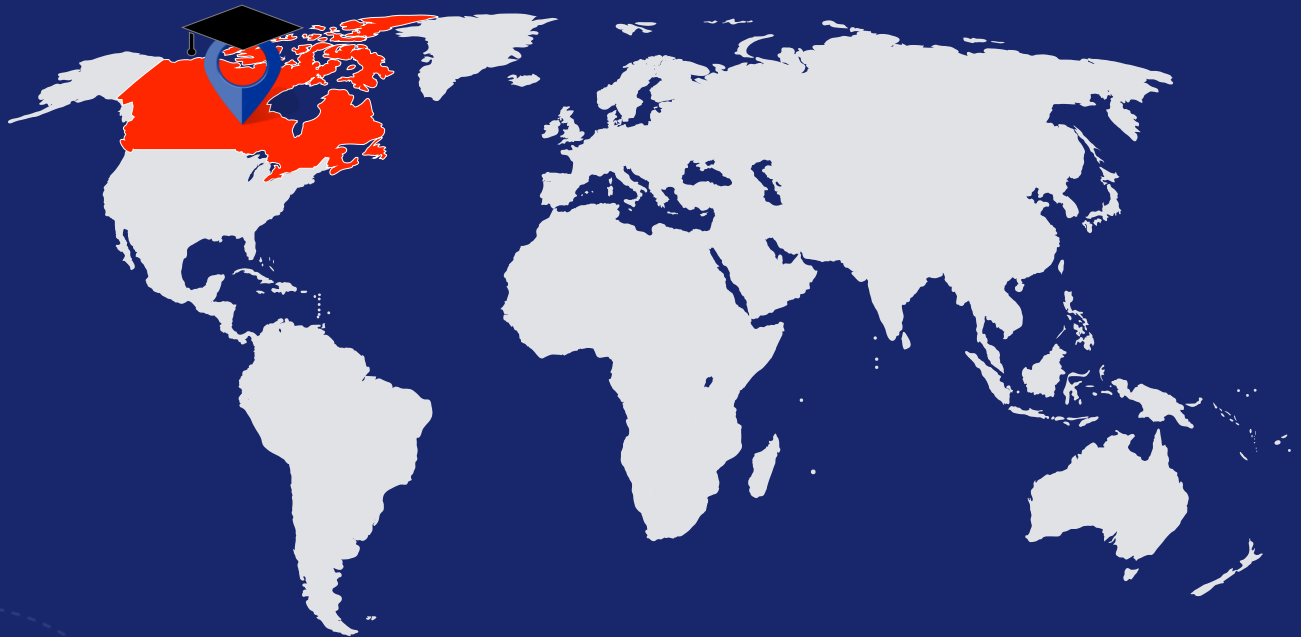
# UNDERSTANDING THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CANADA AS A CULTURAL TRANSITION PROCESS



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# CANADA IS A SIGNIFICANT DESTINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



## Purpose

This research proposes to examine how international students understand institutional academic rules



## Statement

Basic academic rules or agreements (e.g., due dates, grade review), as the name suggests, are considered basic in Western academia but are not common to all academic traditions

# HOW TO LOOK INSIDE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' MINDS ... ?

**Finding the real meanings behind the academic rules**

**01**

**Gathering Students Requests/Complaints**

**04**



**02**

**Analysing their arguments**

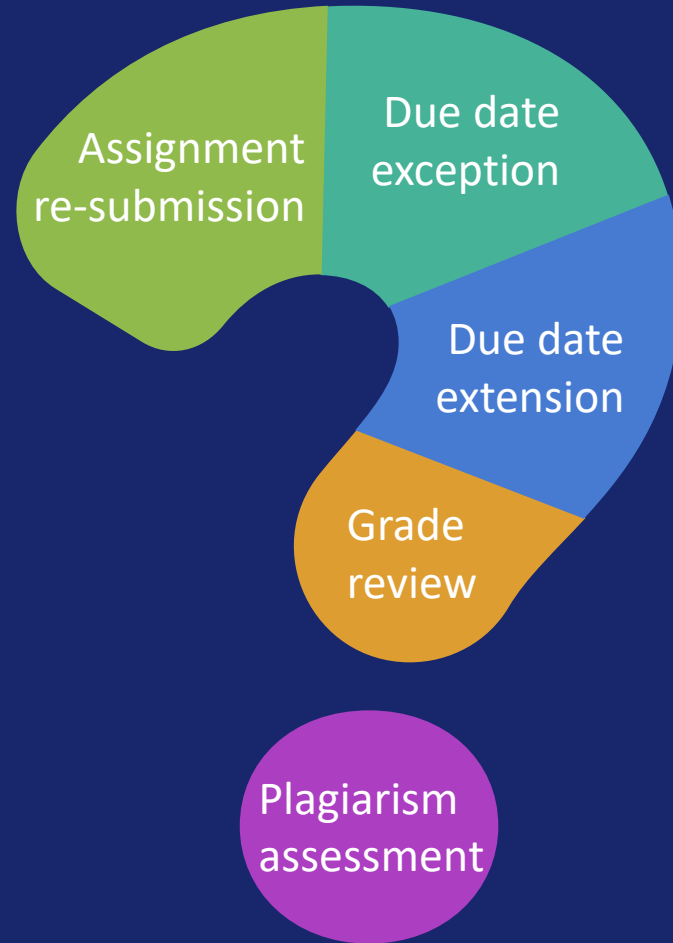
**03**

**Looking at the type of arguments students develop to support a request/complaint**

# RESEARCH QUESTION

## How

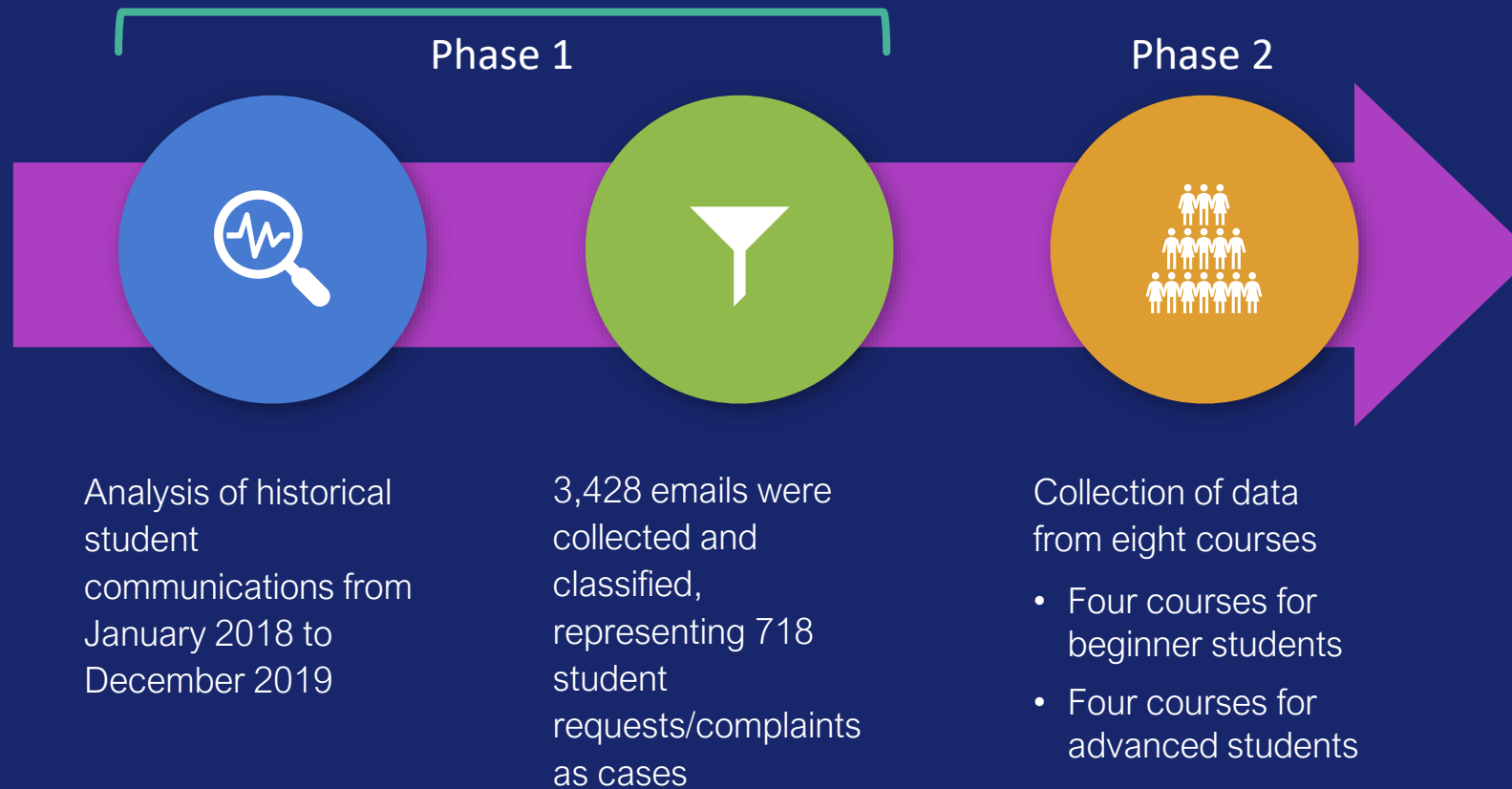
is the learning process affected when basic academic agreements like ...



don't seem to be clear to students, or at least, they are not commonly understood?

# RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA SOURCES

## Historical student communications (2018-2019)



# DATA COLLECTION ISSUES IN PHASE 2



Only 6 out of 160 students consented to participate in the research.

01

The data sources were originally designed to be diverse; however, the events that took place during the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to redesign the data collection procedures.

02

As all the classes at YU during the study period were taught using the Zoom platform, students were asked to give their informed consent during a Zoom session.

03

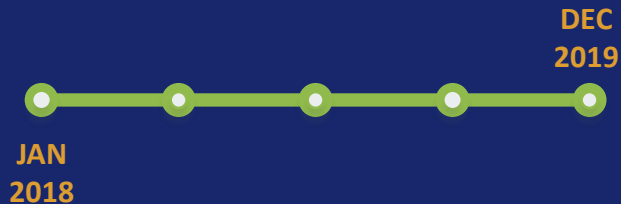
The reasons why students refused to participate in the research could be myriad; however, since the behaviour was so significant, in and of itself it represents information that should be analyzed in the future.

# DATA DESCRIPTION



## Source

Analysis of historical student communications from January 2018 to December 2019

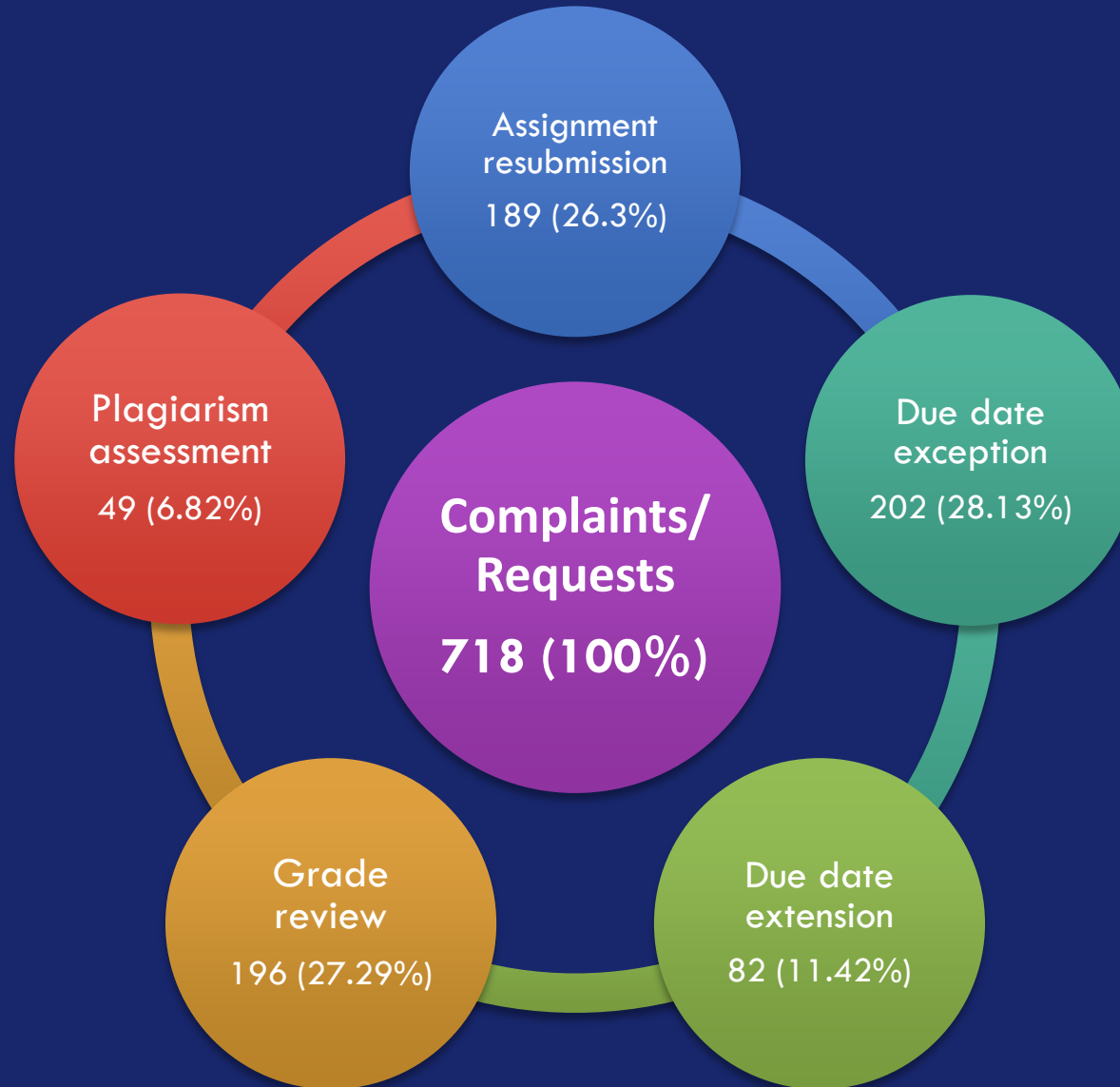


## Content

A total of 3,428 emails were collected, representing 718 student requests/complaints

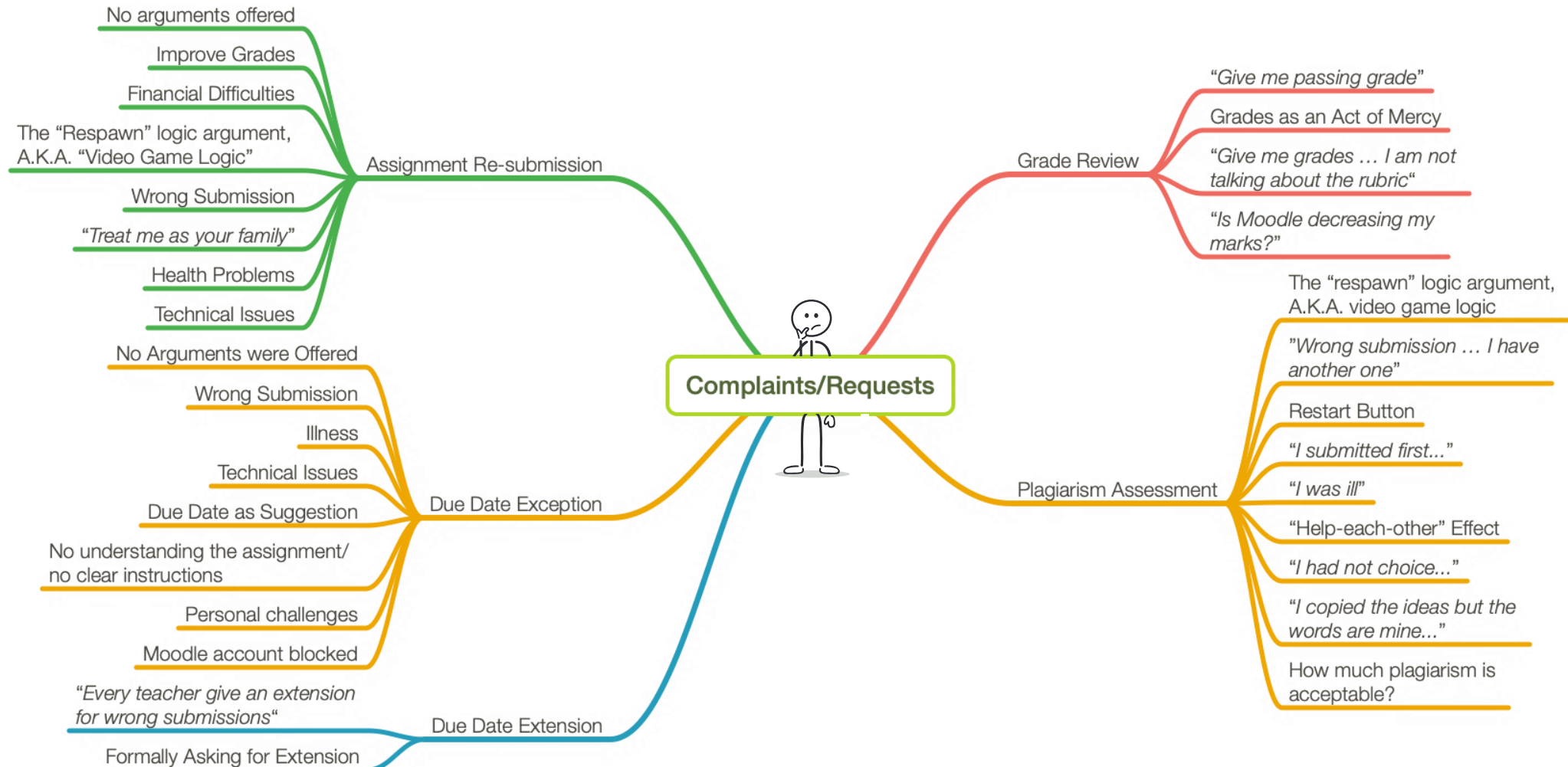


# REQUESTS/COMPLAINTS DATA





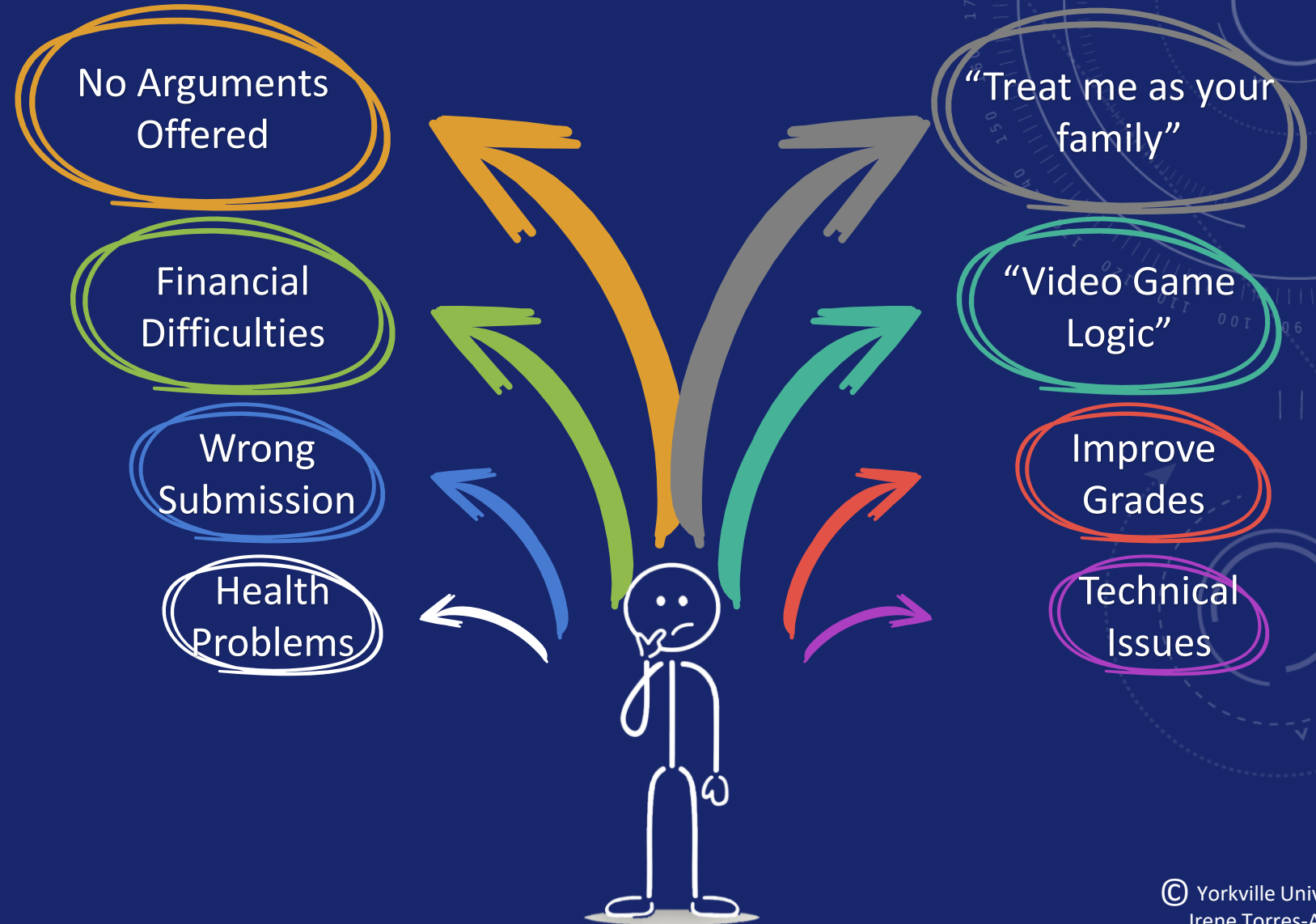
# CONSTELLATION OF ARGUMENTS



# ASSIGNMENT RE-SUBMISSION



Assignment re-submission is not regulated by Yorkville University; however, it is a very frequent practice among students and professors. The most common arguments that students used when requesting an assignment re-submission are ...



# ASSIGNMENT RESUBMISSION - EXAMPLES

"...Good evening YYY, I he just viewed my grade, I feel really embarrassed is there a thing I can do to boost my mark before the final exam ? **Please let me know if I can submit the previous assignment or is it possible to increase the weight factor of the final exam?...**"  
(Case N-15)

"Video Game Logic"

"... oh, the paper is identical !!!!! No problem, I have another one..." (Case-30)

"Treat me as your family"

Improve Grades

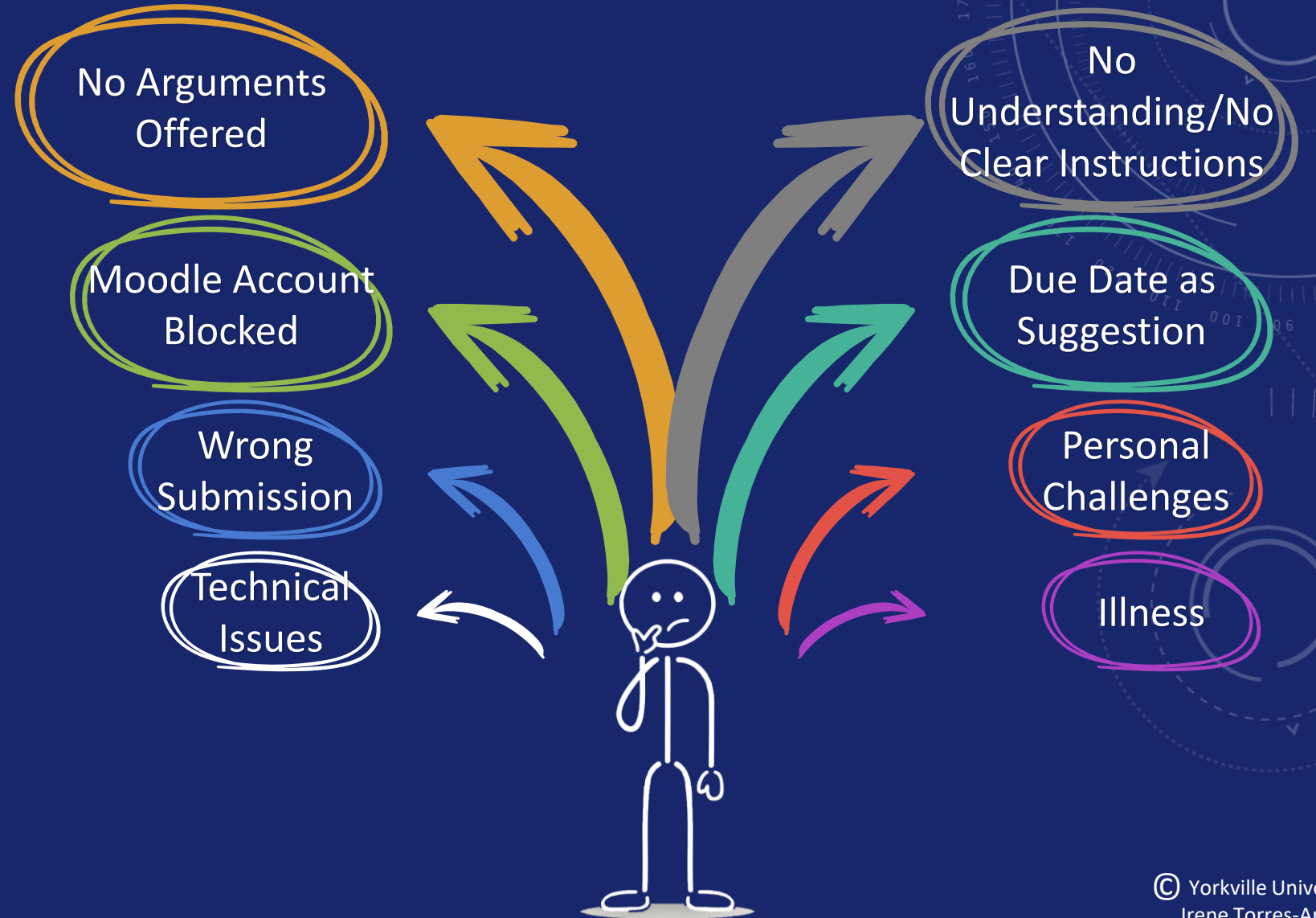
"...hello mam i am your student **my marks is only 50.46** so please give me chance to submit interview related assignment because its gone be very grades on my transcript **please mam i beg to you please think about me as your daughter** i will more careful in my future i promise this thing??..." (Case N-60)



# DUE DATE EXCEPTION



A due date exception can be granted under “... *extenuating circumstances ... Major illnesses, a death in the family, or similar extenuating circumstances are valid excuses and documentation may be required ...*” (Yorkville University, 2020)



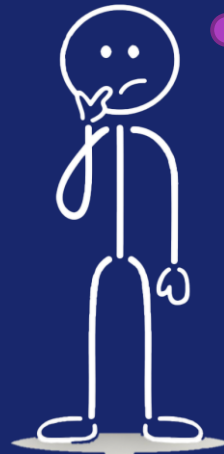
# DUE DATE EXCEPTION - EXAMPLES

*"...Extremely sorry for the late submission. **Actually my friend used my computer to make her assignment. That's why by mistake I uploaded her work.** Thank you. Best, XXX 111111.  
(Case N-107)*

**Wrong Submission**

**Due Date as Suggestion**

*"This is to inform you that i am not able to submit my second assignment because there is no add submission option in the moodle and it is showing that it is overdue. **If you can please change the time in moodle so that i can submit my assignment.**Thank you."  
(Case N-5)*



# DUE DATE EXTENSION



Yorkville University regulations regarding due date extensions state that *"...Late work beyond 3 days will not be accepted without arrangements made with the instructor..."* (Yorkville University, 2020)

"Every teacher give an extension for wrong submissions"

Formally Asking for Extension





# DUE DATE EXTENSION – EXAMPLES

“Every teacher give an extension for wrong submissions”

*“Hlo mam. I did not get the idea where i he need to submit it unit forum which previous term its fine bcz i did not copy from aone that was mine it is same thing that i did not ... every teacher give extension for wrong submissions liniently its ok mam i will submit again and i will ask u how to do. last sem thats why i did not get the grades so again i do not want to be fail. so you should give extension. ... Thanks”*

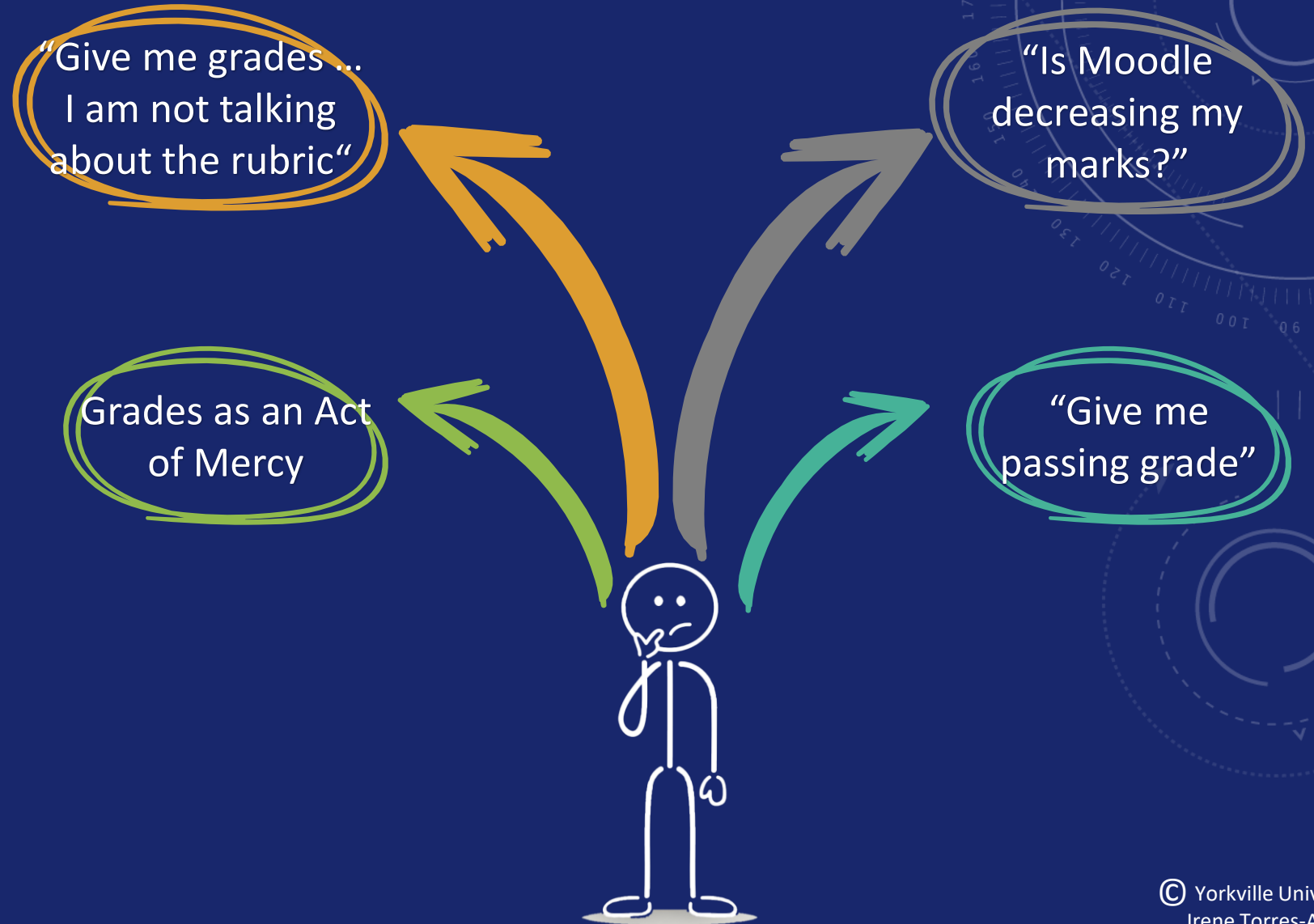
(Case N-37)



# GRADE REVIEW



Yorkville University regulations regarding grade reviews are clearly established. Grade appeals and academic assessments are based on the assignment's rubric (Yorkville University, 2020).





# GRADE REVIEW - EXAMPLES

*"Hi professor, I wanted to tell you that i am going through some personal problems lately and i hen't been able to attend a class and my grades are going down gradually. **Please help me in improving my grade.** Thanks"*  
(Case N-152)

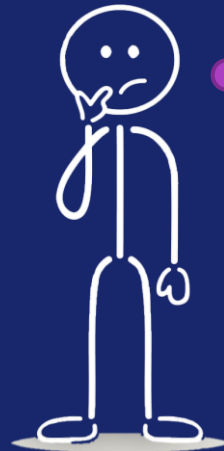
*"Give me passing grade"*

*"Hi professor, Please try to understand the problem **and just give me passing marks in this course.** I will be thankful to you."* (Case-28)

*Grades as an Act of Mercy*

*"Give me grades ... I am not talking about the rubric"*

*"Thank you very much Mam. **God will help you for your success.** I will pray. Now u become one of my four professor. Can you please recheck my assignment **Mam.** I edited assignment and add ethical principles. To need to pass Mam please check it mam. Please help me with that Ca u re check my assignment mam."* (Case N-11)



# PLAGIARISM ASSESSMENT



Under Yorkville University regulations, plagiarism is identified as one of the main academic offences.

The “respawn”  
logic argument,  
A.K.A. video game  
logic

“I copied the ideas  
but the words are  
mine...”

“I submitted  
first...”

“I had not  
choice...”

“I was ill”

“Wrong submission  
... I have another  
one”

How much  
plagiarism is  
acceptable?

“Help-each-  
other” effect

Restart  
button



# PLAGIARISM ASSESSMENT - EXAMPLES

*" Actually that assignment was submitted by mistake because...there was a huge problem in my family and my time for submitting assignment is almost over...but i he another one assignment which is written by me...please i request u give me one chance and please see my another assignment."*

(Case N-136)

*"Hi Mam, Trust me mam, this is my own idea i dont know who ever had this or not . But trust me i wrote this assignment by my own and i and the first in the class who submit it on the moodle."*

(Case N-93)

"I submitted first..."

"Wrong submission ... I have another one"

*"Hlo man I just check my marks and I see that you give me plagiarism in assignment ... I was in shock because I submit you wrong one.it was not that one which I he to submit you. Because of misunderstanding I submit it. I lost my sense on that tym because of shoulder pain. And (my friend) is not responsible.je used my laptop. But there was shuffling in assignment. But I make another ... Even (my friend) don't know. And also me I. Because I didn't do it intentionally. Now it is request to you please don't give us punishment. Because (my friend) didn't know athing. If you allow me then I can send you right one. And please don't cut (my friend's) marks and please give me permission to submit it again. We both will be fail mam without intentionally mistake... I am recovering day by day but not totally well. that's why my friend help me to do this assignment. I hope it will be ok. thank you so much once again to understand my problem."*

(Case N-411)

"Help-each-other" effect



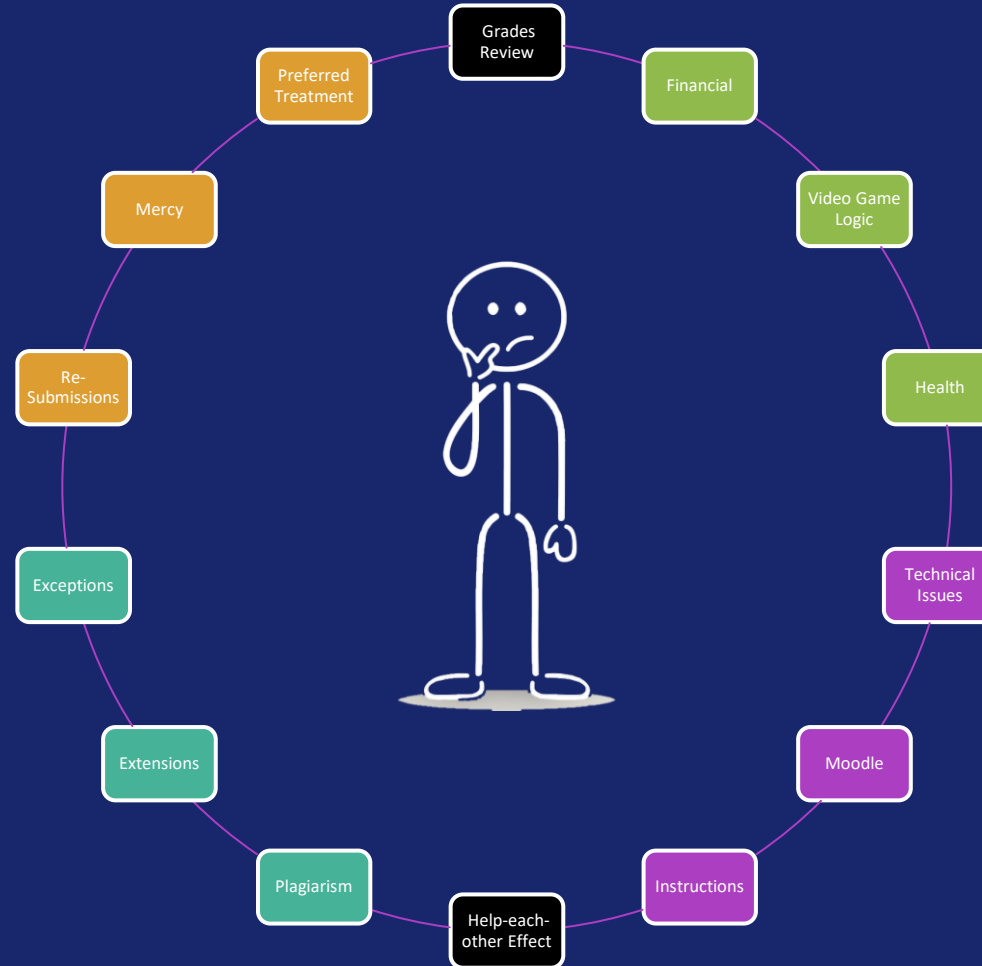
# ANALYSIS (SUMMARY)

Type of Complaint/Request	Findings
Assignment Re-submission	Students understand assignment re-submission as their right to fix a mistake (e.g., the respawn logic).
Due Date Exception	Due dates are understood as suggested dates. “Due date” is not a date; it’s an open period of time with unclear limits.
Due Date Extension	Due date extensions are not frequently requested. Instead of using the institutional procedure, students opt for informal and non-regulated exceptions.
Grade Review	<p>Students understand their grades not as a measurement of their academic performance but rather as a professor’s “act of mercy”.</p> <p>Students do not understand the assignment rubric as a benchmark against which their assignment will be graded. Students usually ask for a grade increase and not for an assignment review.</p>
Plagiarism Assessment	Plagiarism as a socio-cultural dilemma where institutional rules and students’ cultural values (the helping-each-other effect) are in constant conflict.

# CONCLUSIONS

## A CONSTELLATION OF ARGUMENTS

Students use a constellation of arguments to make requests/complaints. The idea that a request/complaint should be guided by the University's formal regulations seems not to be relevant to students. On the contrary, a set of informal agreements seem to define the academic dynamic.

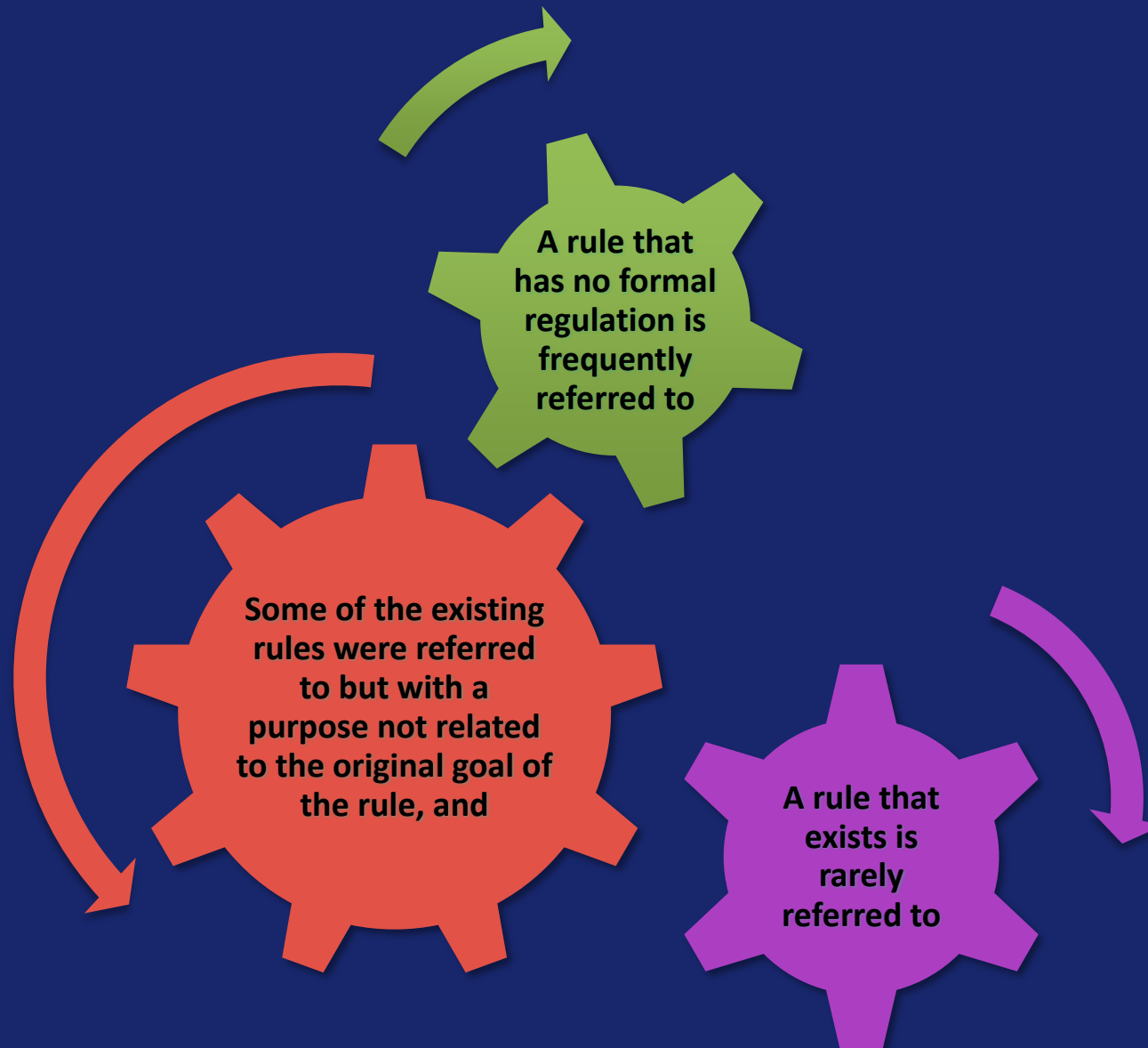


The significant number of arguments that were identified is evidence that an understanding of basic academic agreements is not shared by international students.

# CONCLUSIONS

## DYNAMICS OF ACADEMIC AGREEMENTS

The nature of the dynamics of academic agreements can be summarized as follows



This dynamic can be seen as a transition process not only for international students but also for the institution. The University has experienced significant changes in its student population and annual intake in the last two years.

# CONCLUSIONS

From a Highly Complex to a Less Complex Academic Context



Students' transition process should be seen as a path from a highly complex to a less complex academic environment. In other words, students should transition from a complex constellation of arguments to a more limited set of arguments governed by institutional rules.



to a Less  
Complex  
Academic  
Context



From a Highly  
Complex  
Constellation of  
Arguments





# QUESTIONS TO BE DISCUSSED ...

Type of Complaint/Request	Questions
Assignment re-submission	Should assignment re-submission be formally regulated? Are assignment re-submissions affecting students' academic performance in a positive or in a negative way?
Due Date Exception	What is the impact of flexible due dates on students' academic performance?
Due Date Extension	Why do students prefer not to ask for extensions? What do students understand by "due date extension"?
Grade Review	How can the rubrics be introduced into students' learning process? What do grades mean to international students in Canada?
Plagiarism Assessment	Could the "helping-each-other" (HEO) effect explain plagiarism among international students at YU? Could the re-design of assignments help mitigate the HEO effect?



# FUTURE RESEARCH

The present research has prompted a number of questions that need to be answered...

## Understanding

Does students' understanding of academic agreements change as they advance in their program? How does it change?

## Arguments

How does students' "constellation of arguments" affect their academic performance?

## Assignments

What are students' cultural understandings of different types of assignments, e.g., reflective papers and online discussions?



## Plagiarism

What kind of assignments are more likely to be plagiarized?

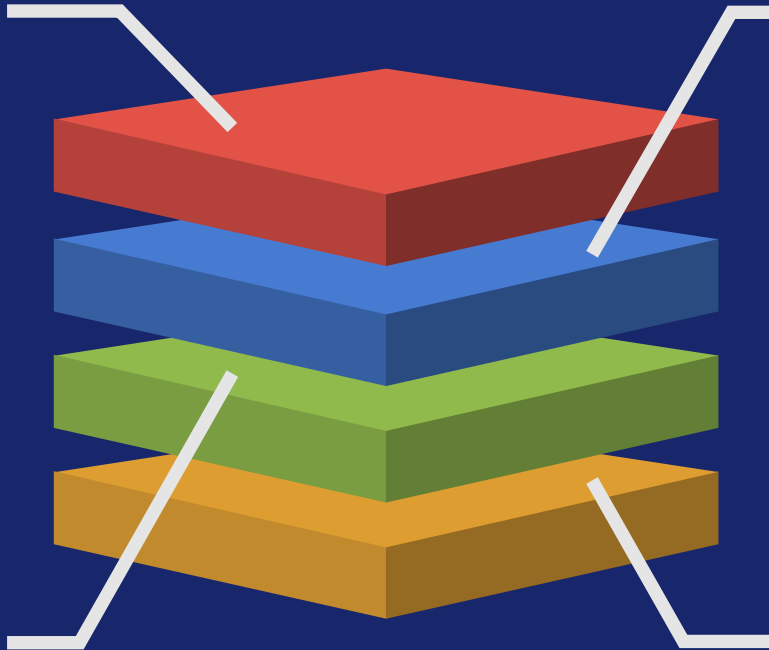
## Culture

What cultural factors underlie the "helping each other" effect?

# FINAL SUGGESTION

## Education

The application of rules should be understood as a learning opportunity.



## Consciousness

A progressive learning strategy should create, among international students, a consciousness of academic rules in a non-punitive environment.

## Regulations

Regulations should be well communicated and consistently applied.

## Communication

Academic regulations should always include informative and formative stages.



## For example

A plagiarism event should be followed by a mandatory workshop where students are asked to create their own assignment.



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