TRANSPARENT ASSIGNMENT DESIGN ENHANCES STUDENTS’ SUCCESS

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Senior Fellow, AAC&U
Research team:

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  Matthew Bernacki, Ph.D. (consultant)
  Jeffrey Butler, Ph.D. (research, analysis)
  David Copeland, Ph.D. (consultant)
  Kati Harriss Weavil M.Ed. Candidate (analysis)
  Sherry Marks (budget)
  MaryKay Orgill, Ph.D. (consultant)
  Mary-Ann Winkelmes
  Michelle Zochowski M. Ed. Candidate (analysis)
Overview

PURPOSE:
- Understand how transparency can offer equitable opportunities for all college students to succeed; and consider applications

TASKS:
- Review: summary of research and findings (keynote)
- Consider: applications in various higher ed contexts (breakouts)

CRITERIA:
You’ll leave with:
- Understanding of our research
- Strategies for implementing transparency to address your challenges in your contexts
Equity of Access

Equity of Experience

Underrep, First Gen, Low Income: half as likely to complete in 4 years

High-achievement in HS can frustrate college success

Gatekeepers stunt research

Well-prepared novices don’t think like experts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your challenges</th>
<th>Your strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of Preparation</strong></td>
<td><strong>In-class peer and individual work on assignments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t have critical thinking / writing / research skills needed to do the assignment</td>
<td>• Evaluate examples of good work in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t know what good scholarship looks like</td>
<td>• Review instructions in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t understand the instructions</td>
<td>• Break assignment into smaller pieces with feedback after each due date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No experience doing this kind of project</td>
<td>• Explain how to do each step</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Practice skills in class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of confidence</td>
<td>• Begin working on assignment in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fear of failure</td>
<td>• Discuss benefits of assignment to their learning; relevance to this class, their life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Management</strong></td>
<td><strong>Offer feedback on each piece of project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Procrastination</td>
<td>• Provide time estimates for each step of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Competing responsibilities</td>
<td>• Offer feedback on drafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Early due dates for small pieces of project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Early Engagement Hypothesis

Context:
• We lose the greatest numbers of underserved students from college in their first year.
• Two teaching practices that show learning benefits for all students, especially underserved:
  – Problem-centered for underserved engagement (Finley, McNair 2013)
  – Transparency in teaching/learning (Winkelmes 2013)

Hypothesis: Combining these in introductory courses might improve students’ learning experiences, the quality of students’ work, and students’ persistence/retention.
What is Problem-Centered Learning?

• Problem-centered learning engages students in applying their knowledge and skills to addressing complex, important problems that are relevant to them, their communities and our society.
What is Transparency?

- Transparent teaching and learning methods focus the attention of teachers and students explicitly on how and why students are learning course content in particular ways.
How can Transparency help students?

• Transparent teaching/learning methods benefit students who are unfamiliar with college success strategies by explicating learning/teaching processes.

  ▪ Greater benefits for underrepresented and first-generation students

Winkelmes, AAC&U’s Liberal Education 99, 2 (Spring 2013)
Transparency and Problem-centered Learning

AAC&U and Transparency Project collaboration (p. 10)

- 7 MSIs, 1800 students, 35 faculty
  - 425 First generation students
  - 402 non-white students
  - 479 low-income students
  - 297 multiracial students

- 2 x simple teaching intervention (2 assignments)

- Boosted students’ learning in 3 important ways (medium-large effect for underserved students):
  - Academic confidence
  - Sense of belonging
  - Skills valued most by employers

Increased GPA, retention
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Name</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Programs; Enrollment</th>
<th>Carnegie Class; Setting</th>
<th>Private Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community College of Philadelphia</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>2-year; exclusively undergrad, mixed part-time full-time</td>
<td>Associates; 1-campus, Urban-serving, MSI</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensborough Community College, Bayside, NY</td>
<td>Very Large</td>
<td>2-year; exclusively undergrad, mixed part-time full-time</td>
<td>Associates; Multicampus, Urban-serving, MSI, HSI</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Edward's Univ. Austin, TX</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4-year, professional, Master's; very high undergrad full-time</td>
<td>Primarily residential; MSI, HSI</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Houston – Downtown, TX</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4-year, professional, Master's; very high undergrad, part-time</td>
<td>Primarily non-residential; MSI, HSI</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State University, LA</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>4-year, professional, Master's; high undergrad</td>
<td>Primarily non-residential; MSI, HSI</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston-Salem State University, NC</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4-year, professional Master's; very high undergrad, full-time</td>
<td>Primarily residential; MSI, HBCU</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage University, Toppenish, WA</td>
<td>Very Small</td>
<td>4-year professional; high undergrad</td>
<td>Primarily non-residential; on Yakama Indian Reservation, MSI, Native American Serving</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact: Boosted Predictors, national study

All Disciplines/All Students, End of Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Less Transparent N</th>
<th>More Transparent N</th>
<th>ES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Transparency</td>
<td>N=596</td>
<td>N=587</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer-valued Skills*</td>
<td>N=610</td>
<td>N=617</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Confidence</td>
<td>N=590</td>
<td>N=584</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Belonging</td>
<td>N=596</td>
<td>N=587</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY: N: number of students responding
ES: effect size (Hedges’ G). Effect sizes of 0.25 standard deviations or larger are “substantively important” (US Dept of Education WWC, 2014, p. 23).
Less Transparent: mean perceived transparency <3.3/4
More Transparent: mean perceived transparency ≥3.3/4

*Hart Associates 2015, 2013
Impact: Boosted Predictors, national study

First-Generation College Students, End of Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of Transparency</th>
<th>Less Transparent N=246</th>
<th>More Transparent N=188</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ES=0.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer-valued Skills*</th>
<th>Less Transparent N=245</th>
<th>More Transparent N=188</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ES=0.58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Confidence</th>
<th>Less Transparent N=242</th>
<th>More Transparent N=183</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ES=0.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Belonging</th>
<th>Less Transparent N=246</th>
<th>More Transparent N=188</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ES=0.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

one standard error: 0.038 - 0.071

KEY: N: number of students responding
ES: effect size (Hedges’ G). Effect sizes of 0.25 standard deviations or larger are “substantively important” (US Dept of Education WWC, 2014, p. 23).
Less Transparent: mean perceived transparency <3.3/4
More Transparent: mean perceived transparency ≥3.3/4

*Hart Associates 2015, 2013

Winkelmes, Bernacki, Butler, Golanics, Zochowski, Harriss Weavil, Peer Review 2016
Impact: Boosted Predictors, national study

Multiracial Students, End of Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Less Transparent N=134</th>
<th>More Transparent N=167</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Transparency</td>
<td>ES=0.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer-valued Skills*</td>
<td>ES=0.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Confidence</td>
<td>ES=0.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Belonging</td>
<td>ES=0.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4-Point Scale

5-Point Scale

one standard error: 0.041 - 0.091

KEY: N: number of students responding
ES: effect size (Hedges’ G). Effect sizes of 0.25 standard deviations or larger are “substantively important” (US Dept of Education WWC, 2014, p. 23).
Less Transparent: mean perceived transparency <3.3/4
More Transparent: mean perceived transparency ≥3.3/4

*Hart Associates 2015, 2013
Perceived Transparency in the Course

36. In this course, I knew the purpose of each assignment.
37. Each assignment included a section that explained how the assignment was related to the objectives of the course.
38. My instructor identified a specific learning goal for each assignment.
39. In this course, I knew the steps required to complete my assignments.
40. Each assignment included a detailed set of instructions for completing it.
41. My instructor provided detailed directions for each learning activity that was assigned.
42. In this course, I knew how my work would be evaluated.
43. My instructor provided students with annotated examples of past students’ work.
44. My instructor provided tools I could use to assess the quality of my and others' work.

Never, Sometimes, Often, Always
Learning Outcomes that at Least Four in Five Employers Rate as Very Important

Proportions of employers rating each skill/knowledge area as very important for recent college graduates to have:

- Oral communication: 85% (78% for success in workplace)
- Working effectively with others in teams: 83% (77%)
- Written communication: 82% (75%)
- Ethical judgment and decision-making: 81% (74%)
- Critical/analytical thinking: 81% (79%)
- Applying knowledge/skills to real world: 80% (79%)
- Analyzing/solving complex problems: 70% (73%)

*8, 9, 10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale, 10 = very important
Awareness of Improvement of Employer-valued skills

4. How much has this course helped you in writing effectively?

5. How much has this course helped you in communicating your ideas effectively in your spoken statements?

6. How much has this course helped you in collaborating effectively with others?

8. How much has this course helped you in improving your ability to separate and examine the pieces of an idea, experience, or theory?

9. How much has this course helped you in learning how to connect information from a variety of sources?

10. How much has this course helped you in learning how to apply concepts to practical problems or in new situations?

11. How much has this course helped you in considering the ethical implications of your actions?
   Not at all, A little, A moderate amount, A lot, A great deal

22. As a result of taking this course are you a better or worse judge of the strengths and weaknesses of ideas, or has the course made no difference?

24. As a result of taking this course are you a better or worse judge of the reliability of information from various sources, or has the course made no difference?
   Much worse, Somewhat worse, No difference, Somewhat Better, Much Better

32. Are you likely to apply knowledge and skills you gained from this course in contexts outside of this course?
   Not likely, Slightly likely, Moderately likely, Very likely, Extremely likely
Academic Confidence & Sense of Belonging

Confidence
30. Please rate your confidence about your ability to succeed in school.
31. Please rate your confidence about your ability to succeed in this field.
   Low, Moderate, High
25. As a result of taking this course are you more or less confident about your
   ability to succeed in school, or has the course made no difference?
26. As a result of taking this course are you more or less confident about your
   ability to succeed in this field, or has the course made no difference?
      Much less confident, Somewhat less confident, No difference,
      Somewhat more confident, Much more confident

Belonging
34. How much did class meetings incorporate the students' suggestions and
    interests?
35. How much did the instructor value you as a student?
   Not at all, A little, A moderate amount, A lot, A great deal
Baseline Equivalence, Beginning of Term
All Disciplines, All Students

Confidence to Succeed

Please rate your confidence about your ability to succeed in this field.

Please rate your confidence about your ability to succeed in school.

Skills Highly Valued by Employers*

I am capable of learning effectively on my own.

I tend to consider the ethical implications of my actions.

I am able to apply the things I have learned to new problems and situations.

When I get information from multiple sources, I have an easy time making connections between them.

I am good at breaking down theories, ideas and experiences into pieces so I can consider them.

I collaborate well with others on academic work.

I can communicate effectively when I speak.

I can express my ideas effectively when I write.

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Short-term retention rates

Less transparent courses: 9.18% withdrawals (65/708)

More transparent courses: 7.50% withdrawals (44/586)

Average course size: 29 students
Range of course size: 9 - 74
Impact: Boosted Predictors, UNLV

All Students/All Disciplines

Perceived Transparency
- Less Transparent, N=1139
- More Transparent, N=980
- p=0.00, ES=0.624

Perceived Improvement: Employer-Valued Skills
- Less Transparent, N=1169
- More Transparent, N=1031
- p=0.00, ES=0.421

Confidence
- Less Transparent, N=1157
- More Transparent, N=1009
- p=0.00, ES=0.296

Belonging
- Less Transparent, N=1177
- More Transparent, N=1014
- p=0.00, ES=0.523
Impact: Boosted Predictors, UNLV

First Generation College Students

- Perceived Transparency
  - Less Transparent N=478
  - More Transparent N=436
  - p=0.00, ES=0.657

- Perceived Improvement: Employer-Valued Skills
  - Less Transparent N=493
  - More Transparent N=441
  - p=0.00, ES=0.339

- Confidence
  - Less Transparent N=502
  - More Transparent N=441
  - p=0.00, ES=0.358

- Belonging
  - Less Transparent N=500
  - More Transparent N=443
  - p=0.00, ES=0.463

N: number of students responding

Less Transparent: mean perceived transparency < 3.3 / 4
More Transparent: mean perceived transparency ≥ 3.3 / 4


Impact: UNLV Retention Rates 1st year to 2nd year, 2014-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retention Type</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All UNLV Retention</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td>N = 2754 / 3716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORE Transparent</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
<td>N = 1030 / 1143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**red:** UNLV first-time full-time freshman students in all courses AY 2014-2015, including “more transparent” courses, retained in October 2015

**blue:** UNLV students enrolled in 100-level or lower “more transparent” courses Spring 2015, who completed the Fall 2015 term

Sources: UNLV Data Warehouse / MyUNLV Analytics, 5/5/2016; UNLV Registrar; TILT Higher Ed Survey

- **Non-white**
  - Red: 74.5%
  - Blue: 86.9%
  - N=1916
  - N=539

- **Hispanic**
  - Red: 71.3%
  - Blue: 90.3%
  - N=787
  - N=318

- **Low SES**
  - Red: 94.1%
  - Blue: 94.1%
  - N=353
  - N=353

- **African American**
  - Red: 65.4%
  - Blue: 96.1%
  - N=176
  - N=99

- **First Generation**
  - Red: 75.2%
  - Blue: 92.1%
  - N=408
  - N=408

- **All**
  - Red: 74.1%
  - Blue: 90.2%
  - N=2754
  - N=1030

**red:** UNLV first-time full-time freshman students in all courses, including “more transparent” courses, who were retained in October 2015
(Source: UNLV Data Warehouse / MyUNLV Analytics, 5/5/2016)

**blue:** UNLV students enrolled in 100-level or lower “more transparent” courses in Spring 2015, who completed the Fall 2015 term
(Sources: UNLV Registrar and TILT Higher Ed Survey)

* Differences between the two groups will be greater when “more transparent” group is removed from the (red bars) group of UNLV first-time full-time freshman students in all courses.
Impact on UNLV students’ views of learning

How much did this course help you in:

4) writing effectively?
5) communicating your ideas effectively in your spoken statements?
6) collaborating effectively with others?

red: UNLV first-time full-time freshman students in all FYS courses, including “more transparent” courses Spring 2015 - Fall 2015

blue: UNLV students enrolled in 100-level or lower “more transparent” courses, Spring 2015 - Fall 2015

(Source: TILT Higher Ed Survey)
Impact on UNLV students’ views of learning

Helped Collaborating Effectively: Humanities & Social Sciences

- **First Generation**
  - Mean Response: 2.883
  - N=240
  - ES=0.713
  - p=0.000

- **African American**
  - Mean Response: 3.649
  - N=74
  - ES=0.939
  - p=0.000

- **Low SES**
  - Mean Response: 3.619
  - N=252
  - ES=0.674
  - p=0.000

- **Hispanic**
  - Mean Response: 3.800
  - N=245
  - ES=0.800
  - p=0.000

- **Non-White**
  - Mean Response: 3.711
  - N=360
  - ES=0.712
  - p=0.000

**Red:** UNLV students enrolled in 100-level or below "less transparent" courses Spring 2015-Fall 2015

**Blue:** UNLV students enrolled in 100-level or lower "more transparent" courses Spring 2015-Fall 2015

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Impact on UNLV students’ views of learning

Helped Communicating: Writing, STEM & Life Sciences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Response</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>ES</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Generation</td>
<td>3.465</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2.447</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0.724</td>
<td>0.0063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low SES</td>
<td>2.425</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>0.793</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2.536</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>0.895</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White</td>
<td>2.417</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>0.737</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Red**: UNLV students enrolled in 100-level or below "less transparent" courses Spring 2015-Fall 2015
**Blue**: UNLV students enrolled in 100-level or lower "more transparent" courses Spring 2015-Fall 2015
What does Transparent Assignment Design look like?

Faculty/Instructors agreed (in national study) to discuss with students in advance:

**Transparent Assignment Template**

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**Purpose**

- Skills practiced  
  Knowledge gained  

  } relevance to students’ lives  
  connection to LOs

- Task
  - What students will do
  - How to do it

- Criteria for success
  - What excellence looks like (annotated examples)
  - Criteria in advance so students can self-evaluate

Winkelman et al, AAC&U’s Peer Review (Winter, 2016)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research on Learning</th>
<th>Implications for Transparent Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elbow, Jaschik/Davidson, Mazur Ambrose, Bergstahler Gregorc, Kolb</td>
<td>Low stakes for greater creativity / risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Varied and/or flexible formats appeal equitably to students’ strengths; inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass, Bloom, Colomb, Felder, Perry</td>
<td>Build critical thinking skills in intentional sequence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Target feedback to phase, don’t overwhelm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doyle, Felder, Tanner, Winkelmes</td>
<td>Specify pertinent knowledge/skills, criteria and encourage self-monitoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisk/Light, Tanner</td>
<td>Provide annotated examples of successful work w/ criteria applied, before students begin work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aronson, Dweck, Fisk, Light, Schnabel, Spitzer, Steele, Treisman, Yeager/Walton, Vygosky</td>
<td>Structure and require peer instruction, feedback; positive attribution activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAC&amp;U Finley/McNair (HIP, P-B) Winkelmes et al Yeager, Walton</td>
<td>Explicate purposes, tasks, criteria in advance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give students a compass, set expectations; Explicate applicability, relevance; Engage students in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>applying shared criteria to increase belonging.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Assignments

Purpose

• Skills practiced
• Knowledge gained

Task: What to do

How to do it

Criteria

• What excellence looks like (multiple annotated examples)
• Criteria in advance to help students to self-evaluate

Sample A

relevance to students 5 years out
connection to Learning Outcomes

problem-centered
Sample Assignments

**Sample B**

**Purpose**
- Skills practiced
- Knowledge gained

\{ relevance to students 5 years out \\
connection to LOs \}

**Task:** What to do

How to do it

**Criteria**
- What excellence looks like (annotated)
- Criteria in advance to help students to self-evaluate
Sample Assignments

Purpose
- Skills practiced
- Knowledge gained

Task: What to do; How to do it

Criteria
- What excellence looks like (annotated)
- Criteria in advance to help students to self-evaluate

relevance to students 5 years out
connection to LOs
Sample Assignments

Purpose
- Skills practiced  
- Knowledge gained  

Task (problem-based, relevant)
- What to do; How to do it

Criteria
- What excellence looks like (annotated)
- Criteria in advance to help students to self-evaluate
# How can we promote transparent teaching/learning?

**Online Ed Developers:**

*Help Faculty apply Transparent Assignment Design*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Quality Matters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>2. Learning objectives, competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skills practiced</td>
<td>4. Instructional Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge gained</td>
<td>6. Course Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Accessibility and Usability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What to do</td>
<td>1. Course Overview and Intro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How to do it</td>
<td>5. Course Activities and Learner Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Learner Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criteria</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Annotated examples of good work</td>
<td>5. Assessment and Measurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Checklist (Am I on the right track?)</td>
<td>Quality Matters Rubric</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**UNLV**

**UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS**
How did we do?

PURPOSE:
– Understand how transparent, problem-centered assignments offer equitable opportunities for all college students to succeed; and consider applications

TASKS:
– Review: summary of research and findings
– Consider: applications in various higher ed contexts

CRITERIA:
You’ll leave with:
– Understanding of our research
– Intro to Breakout Sessions:
  – Strategies for implementing transparency to address challenges in your contexts
MORE STRATEGIES:
How can you benefit from transparency?

1. Teachers, students, instructional designers
   - Transparency around academic work promotes more equitable opportunities for all students to succeed

2. Unit / Department leaders/Administrators
   - Transparency framework enhances collaboration within / between units
   - Strategies for implementing the transparency framework at your Institution
Please join us!

http://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning

• Contribute to our research
• Sign up to survey your students, get a confidential report
• Discuss: Transparent 2nd Tuesdays at 2:00 pm
Breakout A)

Teachers, students, instructional designers
– Creating Transparent Assignments to promote equitable opportunities for all students to succeed

Melissa Bowles-Terry
Head, Educational Initiatives, UNLV Libraries
Gather Feedback on Your Own Assignment

Why are we doing this now?

Purpose
- Knowledge: share feedback, insights
- Skills: apply transparency; engage community of practice

Task
- Four steps, 4 - 6 min each, in pairs / 3s

Criteria
- draft you can use in your course
- helpful insights from colleagues as novices
Choose an Assignment from Your Course

• from 1st half of the term
• after students are acquainted with basic tools and terminology the course uses
• when students are starting to apply those and try them out

Describe this assignment to a partner
(2 min each)
Feedback on Your Assignments, part 1 of 3

handout: page 2

As a novice student, offer feedback on the Purpose
In pairs or 3s, discuss and define (6 min total)

Five years after taking your course,

• What essential knowledge should students retain from doing this assignment?
• What skills should students be able to perform from doing this assignment?
• Why are these important to students’ lives?
Feedback on Your Assignments, part 2 of 3

handout page 2

As a novice student, offer feedback on the **Task**

In pairs or 3s, discuss and define (6 min total)

As a novice, list the steps you’d take to do the assignment.
Feedback on Your Assignments, part 3 of 3

As a novice student, offer feedback on the **Criteria**
In pairs or 3s, discuss and define   (6 min total)

As a novice:
- Are you confident you are doing the task effectively?
- Are you confident you are doing excellent work?
- Do you have annotated good examples?

To answer yes, what would you need?
Your in-class Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years out</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Task Cues</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Stakes % high/low</th>
<th>Assessed by peers/teacher</th>
<th>6 Transparent Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Knowledge, disciplinary methods/tools content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis / Application</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Contribution</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[-----You just did this part in pairs. ----------------------medium----------------------]

This is where an in-class activity can prepare students to excel on next assgt.

[-----Are students now ready to excel on this graded assignment?-------]
### Your in-class Activities (p. 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 years out Knowledge &amp; Skills</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Task Cues Bloom chart</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Stakes % high/low</th>
<th>Assessed by peers/teacher</th>
<th>6 Transparent Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Knowledge, disciplinary methods/tools content</td>
<td>In-class activity for practice before students do it for a grade (low stakes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Analysis / Application</td>
<td>Take-home assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>med/hi stakes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Evaluation</td>
<td>In-class activity for practice before students do it for a grade (low stakes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Creative Contribution</td>
<td>Take-home assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>med/hi stakes</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How did we do?

PURPOSE:
- Consider and apply research on college students’ learning to the design of transparent course assignments / activities that offer equitable opportunities for all students to succeed

TASKS:
- Review research findings
- Apply to revising your assignments and activities

CRITERIA:
You’ll leave with
- Overview of research
- Strategies to revise your assignments and activities
- Draft ideas for an assignment, an activity
Long term: improved student confidence, skills, success
Please join us!

http://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning

- Contribute to our research
- Sign up to survey your students, get a confidential report
- Discuss: Transparent 2nd Tuesdays at 2:00 pm
Breakout B)

Unit / Department Leaders & Administrators

Using the Transparency Framework at the Unit/Institution/Consortium Level

Dan Gianoutsos, Ph.D. Assistant Dean, Academic Success Center
Katie Humphreys, Ph.D. University Registrar
Overview

Purpose
• understand how the transparent assignment framework (purpose, task, criteria) helped UNLV units collaborate
• explore how the framework might support student services at your institution; share ideas

Tasks
• review UNLV’s case
• discuss your challenges; share insights

Criteria
You’ll leave this session with insights about:
• how the purpose/task/criteria framework helped 10+ units at UNLV collaborate to boost students’ success
  o Specific ideas on who to engage/partner with on your campus
• how it might be useful in other contexts, including yours
• your colleagues’ insights.
UNLV’s Challenges/Barriers

- 2008 closure of teaching/learning center
- Fragmented faculty dev’t: 12+ units w/12+ missions
- Lack of shared language around faculty dev’t
- State funding reduced, furloughs, morale
- 2nd most diverse college campus in US
  - 58.2% non-white
  - 31% 1st generation
  - 32% low-income
  - 25% stop out after 1st year
  - 39.2% graduation rate (6-year)
- Silos
- Changes in Leadership
How could collaboration help us?

– What *are* our goals? (12+ units)
  • Higher retention/graduation rates/involvement
  • Increased online enrollment
  • Increased library integration into curricula
  • Increased collaboration with faculty
  • Better relations: faculty – administration

– Do we have any important shared goals?
  • **Student success**

– Challenges? Different languages in units are a barrier to collaboration/understanding
EXAMPLES

• How we promote transparent learning and teaching at UNLV.

• One collaborative strategic plan for multiple units:
  o Purpose
  o Tasks
  o Criteria
How can we promote transparent teaching & learning

Help our **Faculty / Instructors** to Apply Transparent Assignment Design

| Purpose | • Skills Practiced  
| Knowledge Gained |
| Task | • What to do  
| How to do it |
| Criteria | • Annotated examples of successful work  
| Checklist (Am I on the right track?) |

Winkelmes, Transparency in Teaching and Learning Project

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Sample Statement

Transparency in Learning and Teaching—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information:

https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning

https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency
**How can we promote transparent teaching/learning?**

**Online Ed Developers:** Help *Faculty* apply Transparent Assignment Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Quality Matters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>2. Learning objectives, competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Instructional Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Course Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Accessibility and Usability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>1. Course Overview and Intro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Course Activities and Learner Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>7. Learner Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Assessment and Measurement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Purpose**: Skills practiced, Knowledge gained
- **Task**: What to do, How to do it
- **Criteria**: Annotated examples of good work, Checklist (Am I on the right track?)

[Quality Matters Rubric](#)
How can we promote transparent teaching/learning? Librarians:
Help Faculty and Students apply Transparency toward academic work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Dee Fink’s model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Learning Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skills Practiced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge Gained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Teaching/Learning Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What to do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How to do it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Feedback and Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Annotated examples of successful work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Checklist (Am I on the right track?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dee Fink, Significant Learning
How can we promote transparent learning?

Academic Advising: Help **Students** Apply Transparency to Academic Work (Checklist)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>CAS/NACADA Standards 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>• Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skills Practiced</td>
<td>• Education Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge Gained</td>
<td>• Responsibility to meet requirments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task</strong></td>
<td>• articulate intent, curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What to do</td>
<td>• use good intellectual habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How to do it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS)
National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>• engage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Annotated examples of successful work</td>
<td>• use complex info to assess goal achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Checklist (Am I on the right track?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CAS Learning and Development Outcomes
NACADA Core Values of Advising

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# How can we promote transparent teaching/learning?

**Academic Advising: Help Advisors Apply …**

**Academic Advising Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Graduation/Completion</th>
<th>Major Declaration</th>
<th>Goal Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Course Planning, UULOs, General Education Requirements</td>
<td>Focus 2, Understanding Strengths and Weakness, Locating Information/Resources</td>
<td>Graduation Visualization, Identify desired class grades &amp; GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for Success</td>
<td>30 requirement fulfilling credits per year</td>
<td>Declared a major before reaching 48 credits, Develop Self-Reliance</td>
<td>Goal Progression &amp; Awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How can we promote transparent teaching/learning at UNLV?

Academic Success Center: Help **Student Athletes** Apply ... **Student Athlete Weekly Meeting Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>• Time Management/Task Completion for Progression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Task    | • Review of syllabi and course schedule.  
          • Review upcoming assignments, readings, quizzes, tests, etc.  
          • Review of upcoming athletic and academic obligations. |
| Criteria for Success | • Success in the classroom (grades, etc.) and understanding/learning the material.  
                          • Success balancing athletic obligations (making it to practice on time, etc.) and athletic performance.  
                          • Assess and evaluate effectiveness of planning and execution to make the needed adjustments. |
How can we promote transparent learning / teaching?

Campus Life & Recreation: Help Students Apply …

Student Experience Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>ACPA, NASPA, AAC&amp;U VALUE Rubrics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>• outcomes of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skills Practiced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge Gained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>• what will students do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What to do</td>
<td>• how will they do it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How to do it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>• assessment of students’ learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Annotated examples of successful work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Checklist (Am I on the right track?)</td>
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</table>

American College Personnel Ass’n and National Ass’n of Student Personnel Administrators, *Learning Reconsidered: A campus-wide focus on the student experience*. (2004);

AAC&U VALUE Rubrics;

NASPA Professional Practice Standards
How can we promote transparent learning/teaching?

UNLV Registrar’s Office: Help Department Heads Apply Transparency to Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Strategic Plan, Organizational Self-Assessment, Employee Goals, Employee Evals, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Purpose**  | • The “why” behind the task (why it should matter to the employee, and why it matters for the organization)  
• “These are my expectations of you. Here is how they relate to your own success and the success of the organization in meeting our goals (student support).” |
| **Task**     | • Assignments or goals specify an action(s); how that action supports the department mission; metrics or outcomes to aim for; and a deadline. |
| **Criteria** | • Sample goals, rewrites, quarterly check-ins, direct approach, data, same-pageness, knowing the audience, being part of the final product (student success!). |

- **Purpose**
  - Skills practiced
  - Knowledge gained

- **Task**
  - What to do
  - How to do it (intended outcome)

- **Criteria**
  - Annotated examples of good work
  - Checklist (Am I on the right track?)
  - How will my work be evaluated/how is the dept. evaluated?
Specific Strategies for Initiating/Implementing

- University Mission or Strategic Plans
- Job Descriptions
- Faculty & Staff Orientations
- Academic Policy Memos & Syllabi Guidelines
- Dean & Associate Dean’s Councils
- Academic Success / CAEO / Grants
- Registrar / IRB / Legal
- Mentorship Initiatives
- FYE
- Intro courses (large, small)
- Gateway
- High DWF
- Majors/Pathways, Gen Ed
- Employee Goals/Evaluations
- Employee Job Descriptions
Sample Job Description

UNLV CAMPUS RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Building Manager Position Description

Purpose
This position is responsible for the daily operations of the SWRC while on shift. Individuals holding this position must be able to solve on-the-job issues by utilizing critical thinking and decision-making skills. This person will enforce all building policies and be able to communicate to a diverse group of patrons why the policies are in place. The Building Manager is responsible for the supervision of all student employees and will act in an effective leader and mentor to the employees.

Minimum Qualifications
Must have a minimum of student employment experience within Campus Recreation at the SWRC in any area (facilities, intramurals, sport clubs, fitness, aquatics)
Current CPR and First Aid Certifications Required
Must be available to work a minimum of 10-12 hours per week.
Minimum GPA requirements: Semester GPA 2.0, Cumulative GPA 2.25

Preferred Qualifications
One year of student employment experience within Campus Recreation at the SWRC in any area (facilities, intramurals, sport clubs, fitness, aquatics)
Experience with BoxTruc or a point of sale software program
Experience in multiple positions at Campus Recreation

Task
Duties and Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
Act as the role of a supervisor on duty for the facility
Maintain a clean and tidy work space
Arrive at least fifteen minutes prior to scheduled shift
Assist any and all Student Recreation and Wellness Center staff when needed
Responsible for the opening and closing of the SWRC facility
Cash handling and refund to the Cash Drawer Attendant
Dress and appearance are consistent with SWRC standards including wearing a name tag at all times
Knowledge of all programs, services, and facilities of the SWRC including Rebel Wellness Zone, Fitness, Intramurals, Sport Clubs and Aquatics
Provide tours of the facility upon request of potential members, students, etc.
Knowledge of computer software, including Fun Time, Weekly Work, Time Clock Plan, Google Docs, Gmail
Knowledge of all equipment and equipment setup and breakdowns throughout building for Special Events, Tournaments and Open Recreation programs (volleyball, badminton, floor hockey, table tennis)
First responder to all SWRC emergencies, including preparation of paper work after emergencies
Act in a professional manner by upholding SWRC policy when involved in conflict management with patrons, students and staff
Proper radio protocol and respond in a timely manner, include radio communications to SWRC, Wellness and Custodial Staff
Supervise all on-duty staff members in all SWRC managed spaces (including HM fields)

Staff Expectations
Must act as a role model for fellow staff members
Maintain a standard of performance on daily tasks
Attend regularly scheduled departmental meetings for all areas necessary
Maintain communication with other Campus Recreational Services Team members regarding positive recognition, performance reviews, admissions, and schedule conflicts
Communicate clear and concise information as needed to patrons, students, emergency medical service personnel and police services
Practice peer education to develop student staff growth and success
Assist with hiring and training of all staff Building Managers
Adhere to all SWRC guidelines and non-negotiables

Criteria for Success
Building Managers will be evaluated on their performance at each semester. The staff evaluation process consists of a self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and supervisor evaluation. The staff evaluation measures the following objectives:
Ability to display a positive attitude for all patrons and CSS staff
Ability to prioritize tasks, manage time and balance professional and personal commitments
Ability to follow policies and procedures, action proposed and rule of time for work and consistently demonstrate service excellence.
Ability to assume a leadership role and make informed decisions independently
Ability to act in a professional manner and serve as a role model and mentor for CSS staff
Ability to positively present UNLV’s CSS and CSS to patrons and take initiative to be involved throughout campus
Building Managers will attend an monthly, Fall/Spring semester, and annual trainings for on-going staff development.

Page 1 of 2
Can Transparency help you, too? DISCUSSION

• Introduction: your name, institution, role

• Discuss and Report Back:
  Purpose:
  • Identify a (shared) challenge to overcome?
  • How will you/your institution benefit?

  Task:
  – What might you do
  – How to do it

  Criteria
  • Characteristics of the finished product
  • How will you know it’s been a success?
How to achieve best impact of transparency in learning and teaching

Networks across Institutions:
National Data
Community Colleges,
Research Intensive,
Liberal Arts
Regional,
Teaching/Learning Centers,
STEM Ed Ctrs…
OLC

Exchange Business Cards Today!
Please join us!
http://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning

- Contribute to our research
- Sign up to survey your students, get a confidential report
- Discuss: Transparent 2nd Tuesdays at 2:00 pm