Developing Effective Assignments for the Hybrid Context and Beyond

Hello!

Who are we?

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Our Objectives

Participants will understand the importance of **transparency** in assignment design for student success and for equity.

Participants will learn about **Universal Design for Learning** and how to design an assignment using three simple UDL guidelines.

Participants will have the opportunity to design or revise a specific assignment using the principles explored in the workshop.

Why transparency and UDL?

- These are ALWAYS best practices, but they are even more important in an online/hybrid environment. (Darby)

- Both these principles build equity and accessibility into instruction, both of which are crucial in our current context. (TILT)

D

Your students are HERE.
You are, too.

Survival Brain
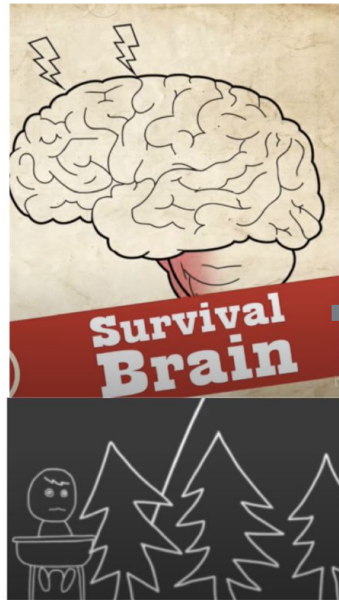
- hyper focused on threat
- seeks absolutes
- feels panicky
- afraid of making mistakes
- want to get things over with

Context

Content

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoqaUANGvpA

Learning Brain
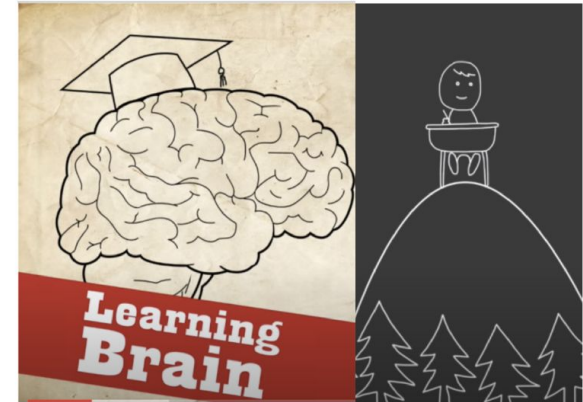
- Curious
- Open to new ideas
- Okay with making mistakes
- Comfortable with ambiguity
- Is able to see the big picture
- Playful and ready to have fun
- Calm and confident

1

Transparency

What does transparency mean in assignment design?

"What does transparency mean?"

Take 90 seconds and add your definition in the chat.

"

Transparent teaching and learning methods make explicit to students how and why they are learning course content in particular ways.

TILT Higher Ed Website

Why is transparency important?

In a national study of impact of transparency by TILT

- All students benefited from more transparency
- First gen/underserved populations showed greater benefits.

3 elements of transparent design

PURPOSE

TASK

CRITERIA

By explaining these elements, instructors can clarify teaching and learning processes for students who are unfamiliar with college success strategies.

Purpose

How does this assignment connect with learning in class? What knowledge will you gain and what skills will you practice? How is this relevant to students' lives outside of class?

Task

What to do • How to do it • Steps to follow • Steps to avoid • the WHAT and HOW

Criteria

List of criteria or rubric in advance so students can self-evaluate • Example texts, possibly annotated • What does success look like?

Let's break it down:

1. What's the purpose?

2. What are the specific tasks students must complete?

3. What is the criteria? Or 'what does success look like?'

PSYCHOLOGY 101, David Copeland

PAPER INSTRUCTIONS

Your task is to explore a psychological topic in relation to your life, in a 3-4 page paper. Papers should be (a) double-spaced, (b) 12 pt Times New Roman font, (c) include your name in the header, and (d) a title at the top of the first page. Papers will be graded on the following criteria: (a) addressing the question / topic, (b) writing quality, (c) integrating outside sources (at least one quality source; if you are not sure whether something is a good source, ask me), and (d) following instructions.

TOPIC:
One of my goals in this course is to introduce students to ideas that can potentially change the way that they view the world. This can relate to any topic in psychology (e.g., how people learn, disorders of the brain, how memory functions, intelligence, what happens when we sleep, personality, how people interact with others, etc.), because psychological research is applicable to so many aspects of human life. Pick something that you have learned in this course that has changed the way you view the world. For example, imagine if on the first day of class I had asked you something like "how does short-term memory work?" and your answer then was very different than what you learned later in the semester from lecture/textbook. Think about the idea more deeply (especially in the context of your life), and apply it to your philosophy of life.

Once you have an idea, describe how you used to think about the topic, discuss the topic itself (i.e., what you learned about it), and then explain how your view has changed going forward. Please be as specific as possible when writing.

Let's break it down:

1. **What's the purpose?**

2. What are the specific tasks students must complete?

3. What is the criteria? Or 'what does success look like?'

PSYCHOLOGY 101, David Copeland

CHANGING BELIEFS: IN-CLASS ACTIVITY (beginning of term)

PURPOSE: The purpose of this activity is to help you monitor how your beliefs change throughout the semester. To do this, you will do a metacognitive activity (thinking about your own thinking) by answering some questions to document your current beliefs. These questions relate to some of the important topics we will study in this class. Later in the semester, we will look again at your views on these same questions.

TASK: Your task is to answer the following questions based on what you truly think (do not look them up online or in your textbook). After you answer each question, please note, using a scale from 1 to 5, how confident you are in your answer (1 = not at all confident, 3 = somewhat confident, 5 = extremely confident).

(1) What percent of the brain do people use?
(2) When we look at an object, do we always see that object? If yes, why? If not, why not?
(3) Why do we dream? What is happening in our minds / brains?
(4) Do abilities such as extra-sensory perception (ESP), including reading people's minds or seeing the future, exist?
(5) Briefly, how does memory work?
(6) Is intelligence an easily measured construct that is stable throughout one's life?
(7) Do most people use stereotypes? Do you?
(8) Can humans and animals be trained using similar methods? Why or why not?
(9) Are most people generally good or generally bad?
(10) How can we measure a person's personality? Is it possible?

Your completed assignment should include two or three sentences in response to each question. Bring this write-up with you to the next class and you will pair up with a classmate. When paired up, you will swap papers and read through each other's answers to determine whether you can understand each other's views.

CRITERIA: You will be successful in this activity if you can: (a) Provide an answer to all of the questions with descriptions that are clear to another reader, and (b) Provide feedback to a classmate about how clearly you can understand their answers.

Let's break it down:

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"

"No passion in the world is equal to the passion to alter someone else's draft."

H. G. Wells

Now it's your turn: can you identify the purpose of this assignment? What task do students need to do? What might the criteria be?

CRJ 104

Consensus and Conflict Models of Justice

In class activity

Students will work in groups of 2-3. Half of the class will be instructed to focus on state courts, and the other half will focus on federal courts. Students will have fifteen minutes to draw the general structure of their designated court systems. Within each level, students should make notes of the primary functions and/or the jurisdiction of the court at that particular level. We will come back as a group and discuss each group's illustrations and descriptions.

Revised, more transparent version

CRJ 104
Darwin Morgan, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Consensus and Conflict Models of Justice
In-class activity

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to illustrate the structure and function of state and federal court systems.

Task: Students will work in groups of 2-3. Half of the class will be instructed to focus on state courts, and the other half will focus on federal courts. Students will have fifteen minutes to draw the general structure of their designated court systems. Within each level, students should make notes of the primary functions and/or the jurisdiction of the court at that particular level. We will come back as a group and discuss each group's illustrations and descriptions.

Criteria: Students will compare their illustration of the court structure and functions to the organizational chart that I present in class. Students must note corrections on their original diagrams. The diagram will be graded and returned to students in the next class.
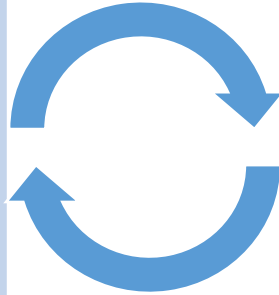
Transparency in Action: What Does Transparency Look Like Online?

Transparent Teaching and Effective Online Learning

Keys to effective online learning

- Predictability
- Stability
- Trial period and norming

Transparent teaching

- Purpose
- Task
- Criteria

Assignments

Normal	Online
• Reading Homework • Three application papers: 6-7 pages • Activities and Discussion • Midterm and Final Exam	• Weekly Online Reading Quizzes • Weekly Discussion board posts • Weekly Commenting on Discussion Board Posts • Midterm and Final (online)

Notes
- *Not all assignments can easily translate to online learning.*
- *Try to view online learning as an opportunity to revisit the learning objectives of assignments*
- *Try to minimize number of assignments to prevent confusion and cognitive overload*

Designing the Course Calendar

Predictability

- Tuesdays = Initial Post
- Fridays = Two comments
- Saturdays = Reading Quiz

Trial period/norming

- Week 1 = EC. This enables students to try out the technology and familiarize themselves with the work and deadlines.
- Further benefit: Controls for students unable (for whatever reason) to fulfill the weekly assignment. Allows for students to "make-up" missed quiz or discussion posts.

Stability

- Avoid changes to the course calendar or assignment due dates.
- Try to have discussion posts up in advance.
- Note: Effective online learning requires more time investment prior to class (both from students AND instructors).

COMM333: Online Course Calendar		
Week 1: Getting Acquainted with Moodle--Extra Credit		
EC Discussion	Post 1	Tuesday, March 24; 11:59 pm
	Comments	Friday, March 27; 11:59 pm
EC Syllabus Quiz		Saturday, March 28; 11:59 pm
Week 2: Chapter 8		
Discussion	Post 1	Tuesday, March 31; 11:59 pm
	Comments	Friday, April 3; 11:59 pm
Quiz		Saturday, April 4; 11:59 pm
Week 3: Chapter 9		
Discussion	Post 1	Tuesday, April 7; 11:59 pm
	Comments	Friday, April 10; 11:59 pm
Quiz		Saturday, April 11; 11:59 pm
Week 4: Chapter 7		
Discussion	Post 1	Tuesday, April 14; 11:59 pm
	Comments	Friday, April 17; 11:59 pm
Quiz		Saturday, April 18; 11:59 pm
Week 5: Chapter 10		
Discussion	Post 1	Tuesday, April 21; 11:59 pm
	Comments	Friday, April 24; 11:59 pm
Quiz		Saturday, April 25; 11:59 pm
Week 6: Chapter 12		
Discussion	Post 1	Tuesday, April 28; 11:59 pm
	Comments	Friday, May 1; 11:59 pm
Quiz		Saturday, May 2; 11:59 pm
Final Exam Week		
Final exam		Friday, May 8: 11:59 pm

Designing Online Assignments: Purpose, Task, Criteria

Purpose

- How does this assignment connect with learning in class?
- What knowledge will you gain and what skills will you practice?
- How is this relevant to students' lives outside of class?

Best Practices:
-Consistent assignment types
-Application versus regurgitation
-Empathy: *What would you need to know if you were a student?*

Chapter 8 Case Study:

Decision making in organizations is a complex process. For this week's discussion, you are to analyze Monmouth College's decision making regarding the coronavirus. The purpose is for you to apply the course concepts to make sense of how they are enacted in real life.

Think about who the key decision makers were, what decisions were made and when, and attempt to explain why these decisions occurred. Remember, you are to analyze this from an organizational perspective; thus, you are attempting to understand and explain the decision-making process using our course concepts (do not just complain about how the decisions impacted you on an individual level).

Be sure to make a clear argument and draw upon the following concepts/models: classical rational model of individual decision making (287), bounded rationality (290), managing uncertainty (303), nonrational uses of information (303).

Comments

To simulate in-class discussion, you must also comment on at least two of your classmates' posts. Here you should focus on both affirming and politely challenging their application and discussion of course concepts. Your goal is to advance the discussion by making connections to other concepts and highlighting contrary or supporting evidence.

Designing Online Assignments: Purpose, Task, Criteria

Task

- What to do and how to do it.
- Steps to follow and avoid.

Best Practices:
-By explaining the skill or underlining purpose you can avoid "giving the student the answers"
-Balance specificity with length

Case study evaluation:

Your post is worth 3 points and should be 225-300 words. You will be evaluated on:

1. *The clarity and quality of your argument (begin with a clear thesis statement, perhaps include a preview statement breaking down your response, provide evidence and reasoning in support of your claim).*

2. *The specificity and nuance of your evaluation (avoid overarching, superficial statements; instead go deeper and demonstrate reflection on the gray area and difficulty of regarding the problems faced).*

3. *The clarity and accuracy of your including of course concepts (be sure to include multiple course concepts, both broader ones and more specific elements; feel free to briefly quote or define the concept—but make sure you state, "according to our textbook" or provide a page number).*

Your comments on other students' responses are worth 2 points and should be 75-125 words. You will be evaluated based on the number and length of your posts; and the quality by which you advance the discussion by including additional concepts and specific examples.

Designing Online Assignments: Purpose, Task, Criteria

Criteria

- Checklist or rubric in advance so students can self-evaluate.
- Examples showing what success looks like.

Best Practices:
-Create an EC week to allow students to try, fail, and receive feedback
-Provide extended feedback <u>initially</u> and share with entire class
-Grade assignments before the next are due
-Develop a list of common comments to save time on grading

Hello all,

Good job with your discussion posts! Overall everyone did a good job clearly answering the prompt and relating your responses to course concepts.

For both those who participated and those who did not, I thought you might want some clarification regarding how your discussion posts are evaluated. I've also provided some examples of what ok and better posts and comments would look like…

…Almost all of you earned full credit on your initial post. I'm impressed by the clarity of your writing, answering of the entire prompt, and length of your responses; although one thing to think about moving forward is more detailed application of concepts. Overall your replies were also strong, but try not to simply affirm your classmates in a superficial or fluffy manner; make sure you add nuance or further the discussion in relation to course concepts. To further clarify what I mean, let me provide an example:

The following initial post overall answers the prompt and discusses some course concepts, but the argument is underdeveloped as it primarily lists examples and concepts. Furthermore, the details in which it defines and applies those concepts are too vague. This post would earn a 2.25/3…

…To earn full credit, the above response needs to provide a clearer thesis and more details and definitions regarding the course concepts. Adding the bolded sentences in the example below would achieve this, helping it earn a 3/3:

Example email

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*"**With the move to online learning the College has relied on ICT such as Zoom, Outlook, and Moodle to help students and faculty communicate across geographical boundaries.** The first technology that the school has to familiarize themselves with is Zoom. This technology falls under the category of communication technologies **because according to the textbook (p. 110-11) technologies like Zoom are used for organizations to bring together people who are geographically apart. Zoom allows us to do so by allowing us to meet visually.** Another technology that fits in this category of ICTs is the use of Outlook. **Even though the college has already used this as a source of communication across campus, it has become even more important as it efficiently provides updates on changes in policies during the Covid crisis.** The next category is that of work integration, **which are technologies used for multiple people to work on the same project from different points of access (p. 112). Our class uses work integration platforms through** the discussion posts on Moodle. **Our use of Moodle fits this category because it allows individuals to post on a certain topic while enabling other students to comment on and comparing or contrasting ideas to their own thoughts.***

*With online classes there can be a difference in the motivation of students, and the control and surveillance of the professors. My motivation has stayed relatively the same, because of the increase of assignments that are due each week. **In this case, I fall into the Theory X category of employees discussed in Chapter 3 because I remain motivated by rewards and punishments, or in this case passing or failing grades.** I know that in order to stay on top of this work I have to not wait until the last second to finish an assignment. As for the control and surveillance of the students, Robert can still monitor that things are turned in on time. Making the assignments due at specific times is a way to set a standard for the class as to when assignments are expected to be turned in, **thereby making a clear rules and reward system (p. 57)**. Robert can also survey the effort level that is put into the discussion posts, in exchange for actual class discussion, to see if we are really reading and retaining the information."*

Example response and suggested edits

Did it work?

"This classroom environment was very predictable. We had an accurate syllabus as well as assignments that had deadlines due every week. <u>For myself personally, I felt that this was very easy to follow and it allowed for my success in the classroom</u>."

"When we switched to online learning he always had the assignments <u>up in advance</u> with <u>detailed descriptions</u> of what to do. He made <u>switching to online learning very easy</u>."

"He is very good at <u>explaining</u> what he wanted/what your work was lacking. He makes this <u>explicit</u> so that students have a <u>better idea of how to make their assignment better the next time</u>. He provides students with <u>rubrics</u> and pages of <u>feedback</u> on papers. Even since we moved to <u>remote learning</u>, he still gave great feedback on my homework assignments and <u>how I could improve them</u>."

Online Teaching Benefits/Opportunities

Opportunities afforded by online teaching

- *Allows students to practice and repeat key skills with instructor feedback*
- *Pushes students to apply knowledge, rather than regurgitate*
- *Enables each student with the space to offer their thoughts, opinions, and ideas*
- *Holds students responsible for their own learning*

Design considerations

- *How can you keep the student consistently engaged each week?*
- *How can you break larger tasks into more manageable weekly assignments?*
- *How can you maintain a sense of interaction with classmates and instructor?*

TAKE 5

-Short Break-
(5 minutes)

2

Universal Design for Learning

What is it and how does it affect assignment design?

UDL - what is it? Isn't this just for students with disabilities?

"UDL is a framework to guide the design of learning environments that are accessible and challenging for all…. **UDL aims to change the design of the environment rather than to change the learner**. When environments are intentionally designed to reduce barriers, all learners can engage in rigorous, meaningful learning."

CAST (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2. Retrieved from http://udlguidelines.cast.org/more/frequently-asked-questions

Universal Design Example

Automatic Doors

AUTOMATIC CAUTION DOOR

PRESS BUTTON TO OPEN DOOR

AUTOMATIC CAUTION DOOR

WAVE HAND ACCROSS SENSOR

UDL: does that mean I have to redesign my whole course?

3 UDL "hacks" for assignment design

1 Modality

Can you add a **modality** to your assignment? e.g., do students need to *write* a response, or could they *record* video or audio instead?
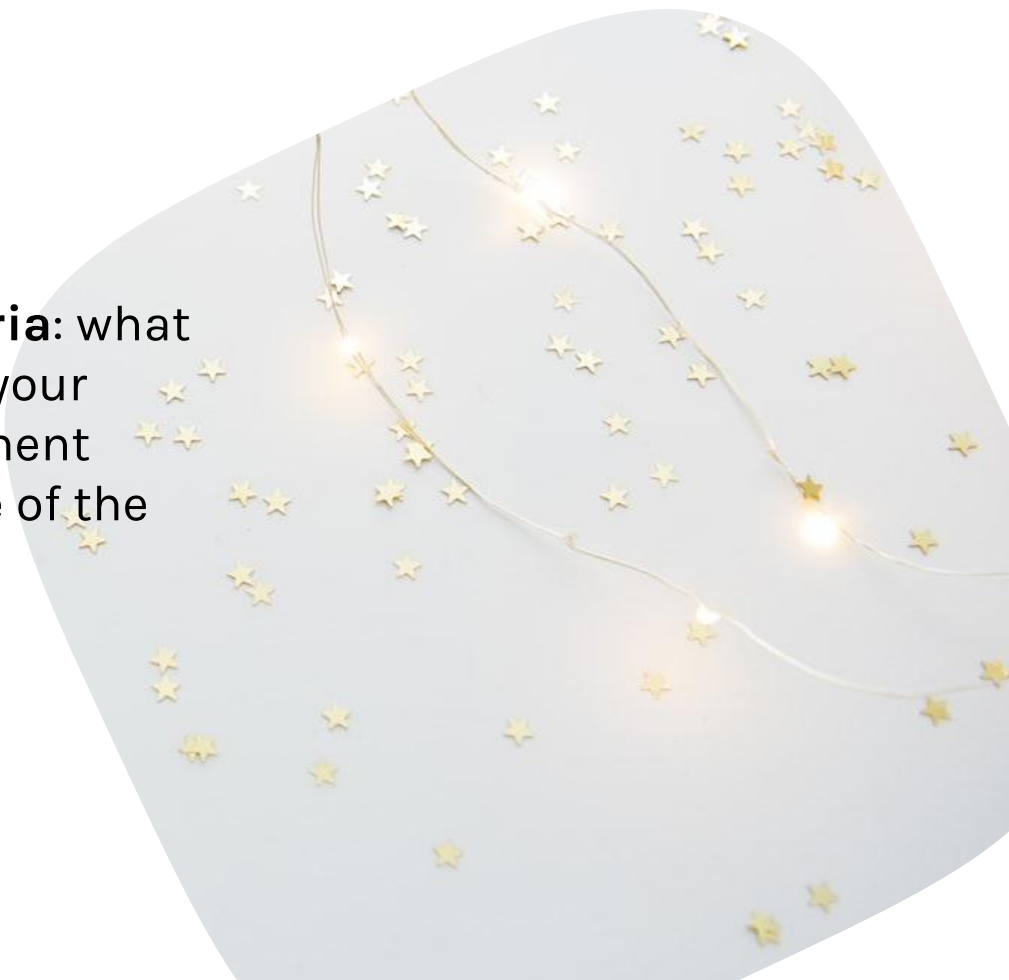
2 Scaffolding

Can you break the task of your assignment up into smaller cognitive steps?

3 Assessment

Check your **assessment criteria**: what are you actually assessing in your assignment? Do your assessment criteria align with the purpose of the assignment?

UDL: Think It Out

Think & Share:

Take 90 seconds and think of one activity or assignment you've used in the past that students have struggled with. What simple tweak could you make to that assignment using these UDL ideas?

Chat: what's your one simple tweak?

Action Item

The Plan for This Week

Your Assignment

Select an assignment for the fall semester. It could be a new assignment that you wish to draft or an existing assignment that you wish to revise.

We've created a checklist for you incorporating transparent design and Universal Design for Learning

https://tinyurl.com/ACMFriday4

Thursday's Breakout Groups

Note that our break-out sessions will be on **Thursday** rather than Friday due to the holiday.

How would you like to meet? Quick Poll

Thank you!

From Macalester:

Britt Abel
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From Monmouth:

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Angela Ziskowski

Lisa Wiebenga Stroschine
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lstrosch@coe.edu

Feel free to get in touch if you have questions!