STETSON UNIVERSITY
BROWN CENTER
FOR FACULTY INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE

Teaching & Learning: Transparent Assignments

2017 New Faculty Orientation

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TILT Higher Ed
www.unlv.edu/teachingandlearning

MAGNIFY EXPECTATIONS

Students learn HOW and WHY they are learning course content in particular ways!

Support Diverse Learners

"Define the characteristics of the finished product. Explain how excellent work differs from adequate work."

How Transparent Is It?

- Go to page 3 in your handouts
- Read this assignment
  - What is this assignment's purpose?
    - What knowledge will you gain?
    - What skills will you learn?
  - What tasks will you complete?
  - How will you be evaluated?
  - How will you do this well?

Sar

1. Select a professional in your prospective academic discipline and/or career field that is considered an expert in an area in which you are interested.

2. Secure an interview with the professional for a date and time that is convenient for both of you.

3. Prepare 8-10 questions to ask the professional about their knowledge of a particular academic discipline/career **/field**

4. Conduct a 20-30 minute, face-to-face interview to gather knowledge that will help you make an informed decision about the major/career you are considering. You will want to audio/video record the interview with the interviewee's permission

5. Prepare a typed transcript of the questions and answers using the audio/video recording.

6. Write a 400-500 word reflection paper in which you address the following items:

   a. Who you selected and why?

   b. What you learned from them that is most interesting?

   c. What this assignment helped you learn about your major/career decision?

   d. What questions you still have?

How Transparent Is It?

- Go to page 4 in your handouts
- Read this assignment
  - What is this assignment's purpose?
    - What knowledge will you gain?
    - What skills will you learn?
  - What tasks will you complete?
  - How will you be evaluated?
  - How will you do this well?

Sample D

Science 101   Alison Sloat
Exercise 3: Scientific Evidence

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to analyze a past poster to help you research, design, and create your own effective poster with sufficient scientific evidence that supports your conclusion.

Skills/Knowledge: As a result of completing this assignment, you will be able to identify and judge the success of the important parts of a scientific poster:

- the sources of scientific information,
- the interpretation of the results, and
- the scientific merit of the conclusion.

Task: Read through your example scientific poster and answer the following questions. You will be graded based on how completely you address the following:

1. Identify the ethical question that is being asked.
2. List the evidence the authors provide in support of **and** in opposition of their question.
3. Examine the pieces of evidence listed in #2 above. Identify whether they are from popular (Pop), scientific peer-reviewed (SPR), or non-scientific peer-reviewed (NSPR) sources, and note each statement above as (Pop), (SPR), or (NSPR). Do you think there is enough scientific evidence from peer-reviewed articles? Why or why not?
4. Describe how the pieces of evidence are presented (e.g., numbers, graphs, tables, figures).
5. Explain how the pieces of evidence are analyzed in the Discussion section.
6. Identify the ethical conclusion.
7. After analyzing the content of the poster, do the pieces of evidence support their conclusion? Explain why or why not.
8. After assessing the scientific merit of their evidence, are you convinced of their ethical conclusion? Explain why or why not.
9. List the questions you still have after reading this poster. What could they have done better?

Criteria for success:
Your responses should be as complete as possible. After completing this assignment, you will have increased your understanding of how to identify the essential parts of a scientific poster and how to evaluate its use of evidence.

What does Transparent Assignment Design look like?

**Faculty/Instructors agreed (in national study, 7 MSIs)
to discuss with students in advance:**

Purpose

- Skills practiced } long-term relevance to students' lives
- Knowledge gained } connection to learning outcomes

Problem-centered
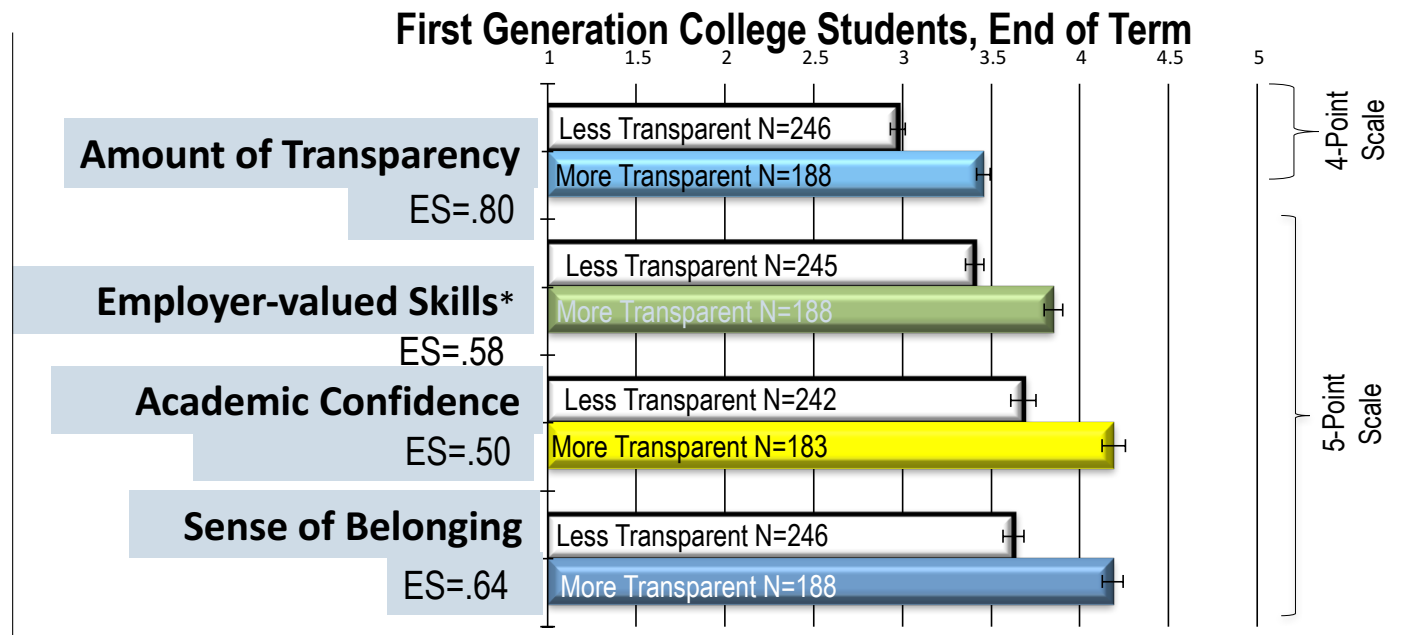
- **Task**
    - What students will do
    - How to do it (steps to follow, avoid)
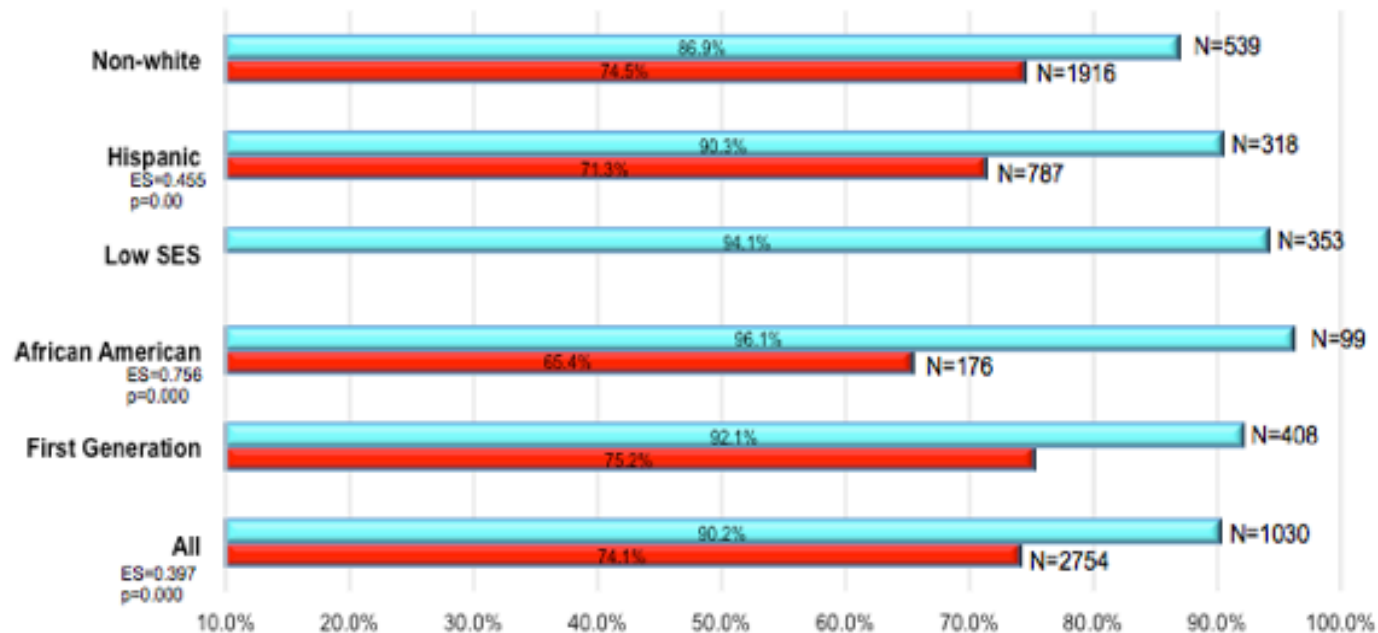
- **Criteria** for success
    - Checklist or rubric in advance so students can self-evaluate
    - What excellence looks like (annotated examples where students/faculty apply those criteria)

Winkelmes et al, *Peer Review* (Winter/Spring, 2016)

First Generation College Students, End of Term

Amount of Transparency
ES=.80

- Less Transparent N=246
- More Transparent N=188

Employer-valued Skills*
ES=.58

- Less Transparent N=245
- More Transparent N=188

Academic Confidence
ES=.50

- Less Transparent N=242
- More Transparent N=183

Sense of Belonging
ES=.64

- Less Transparent N=246
- More Transparent N=188

4-Point Scale

5-Point Scale

KEY: **N**: number of students responding |⊤|: one standard error

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 ≥ 3.3/4

* Hart Associates employer surveys, 2015, 2013.

Impact: UNLV Retention, 2014-2015

Non-white
86.9% N=539
74.5% N=1916

Hispanic
ES=0.455
p=0.00
90.3% N=318
71.3% N=787

Low SES
94.1% N=353

African American
ES=0.756
p=0.000
96.1% N=99
65.4% N=176

First Generation
92.1% N=408
75.2%

All
ES=0.397
p=0.000
90.2% N=1030
74.1% N=2754

10.0%   20.0%   30.0%   40.0%   50.0%   60.0%   70.0%   80.0%   90.0%   100.0%

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.