



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

**TEXTS *and*  
TECHNOLOGY *Ph.D.***  
COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Fall 2016 Workshop Series  
Designing Assignments  
November 15, 2016

**General Advice**

**Two Minute Mentor: Designing Assignments – University of Kansas:**

<https://cte.drupal.ku.edu/two-minute-mentor-designing-assignments>

A good overview of designing assignments with brief guidelines and additional resources. Find essential practices for aligning goals and assignments here:

[https://cte.drupal.ku.edu/sites/cte.drupal.ku.edu/files/docs/resources/essentialguide/essential\\_practices.pdf](https://cte.drupal.ku.edu/sites/cte.drupal.ku.edu/files/docs/resources/essentialguide/essential_practices.pdf)

**Assignment Design - DePaul University:** <http://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching-guides/assignment-design/Pages/default.aspx>

Information for reading, writing, and critical thinking based assignments. There are also links for strategies, aligning with learning goals, and deterring plagiarism.

**“How do I Create Meaningful and Effective Assignments?”**

[https://www.depts.ttu.edu/tlpdc/Resources/Teaching\\_resources/TLPDC\\_teaching\\_resources/CreatingEffectiveAssignments.php](https://www.depts.ttu.edu/tlpdc/Resources/Teaching_resources/TLPDC_teaching_resources/CreatingEffectiveAssignments.php)

Process for designing assignments; how to format an assignment so your students can understand requirements; “do’s and don’ts” to consider

**“Designing Assignments that Foster Academic Integrity”:**

<http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity/faculty/assignments.htm>

How to produce assignments that resist plagiarism using specificity, embeddedness, and process.

**“Assignments: Being Clear on What Matters”:**

[https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/library\\_babel\\_fish/assignments\\_being\\_clear\\_about\\_what\\_matters](https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/library_babel_fish/assignments_being_clear_about_what_matters)

The importance of scaffolding assignments: don’t just focus on the end product, but also the actual process that students will take to arrive at the end product.

**“Grading with Rubrics: Developing a Fair and Efficient Assessment Tool:**

<http://cte.virginia.edu/resources/grading-with-rubrics-developing-a-fair-and-efficient-assessment-tool/>

Planning for the grading is helpful in determining what matters about the assignment and what you want them to do.

**Assignment Design: Sequencing Assignments – University of Waterloo (Canada)**

<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/assignment-design/sequencing-assignments>

Focuses on building knowledge and skills in progressive steps through assignments.

**On Late Work Policies:** <http://www.chronicle.com/article/It-s-Time-to-Ditch-Our/237530>

Think about why you have a deadline or a late work policy—to require responsibility/accountability? To make your workload more manageable? How might this be achieved in other ways? How might it penalize students unevenly?

**Critical Reading/Thinking**

**Critical Analysis of an Article worksheet:**

[http://faculty.sites.uci.edu/ajenks/files/2016/08/Critical\\_Analysis\\_Worksheet-1.pdf](http://faculty.sites.uci.edu/ajenks/files/2016/08/Critical_Analysis_Worksheet-1.pdf)

A great guide that takes students through identifying argument, assumptions, evaluation, and style

**Model research with "the lifeboat problem":** <http://www.pedagogyunbound.com/tips-index/2013/8/20/model-research-with-the-lifeboat-problem>

Students tend to “insert research into their papers to back up preconceived opinions, rather than use it to help them form their arguments in the first place.” Instead, “ask them to explain how they reached their decision,” including “asking them how their decisions would have changed if they'd had additional information”

**Critical Reading toward Critical Writing:**

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/images/stories/Documents/critical-reading.pdf>

A guide for students to help them read for “ways of thinking” rather than information.

**Assessment**

**The Fifty-Word Assignment:** <http://writing.wisc.edu/wac/node/64>

“Instructors should consider assigning their classes fifty-word sentences regularly because these exercises are an extremely effective way to make students focus on the material, shape up their writing, and improve their critical skills while simultaneously requiring minimal amounts of time to both compose and evaluate”

**Classroom Assessment Techniques:** <http://scholarlyteacher.com/2014/11/01/one-of-my-favorite-things-classroom-assessment-techniques/>

**Muddiest Point:** “pass out notecards near the end of class and ask students to briefly write down what is still unclear or ‘muddy.’ Collect the cards and you can very quickly sort them into common themes to see what might be important to address again during the following class meeting or in online discussion groups between classes. This technique “saves face” for students who may not want to admit in front of the entire class that they still don’t understand something”

**Application Cards:** “After discussion any theory or principle, distribute note cards and ask students to write down an example of where they may have observed the principle or theory in action. After collecting the cards, a quick review lets me see how deeply they understand the concept.”

**Twitter Assignment:** Gauge student responses to the readings before class, and use it in framing your lesson plan. Choose a course hashtag and give clear directions about what constitutes a good tweet (summarize a key point in the reading; ask a discussion question; make an observation about how the reading relates to other course materials; give a popular culture example of a concept from the reading) and how many are required.

### **Research / Writing Specific Assignment Design**

#### **Keys to Designing Effective Writing and Research Assignments:**

<http://www.jsums.edu/academicaffairs/files/2012/08/Keys-to-Designing-Effective-Writing-and-Research-Assignments.pdf?x19771>

This twenty-page guide is an excellent place to start for an overview of the assignment design process, with specific regard to writing and research assignments.

#### **Sample Research-based Assignments:** <http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/researchassignments/>

This site includes several links for example assignments from the following categories: audience, exploration and topic setting, and critical reading and evaluation.

#### **Writing Assignment:**

<http://guides.libraries.indiana.edu/c.php?g=199725&p=1313064#19045442>

This is an example of a scaffolded writing assignment.

#### **Teaching with Writing:** <http://writing.umn.edu/tww/assignments/designing.html>

This easy-to-follow list includes useful tips for designing assignments, as well as, outlines the process of creating an assignment.

#### **Designing Effective Research Assignments:** <http://lib.colostate.edu/howto/instr.html>

This resource lists the process and format for designing research assignments. Although brief, it provides a nice outline and do's and don'ts for research-based assignments.

#### **Designing Effective Library Research Assignments:**

<https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/research/teaching/research-instruction-courses/designing-research-assignments/>

Includes three brief examples of assignments for library based research. Probably best for first year students, as they seek mainly to introduce the ideas of scholarly research.

#### **Developing and Facilitating Research-Based Assignments:**

<http://ii.library.jhu.edu/2015/12/16/developing-and-facilitating-research-based-assignments/>

- “Let Content Drive Form—make sure that the content and your learning goals drive the format rather than choosing the form first and trying to build around it.”
- “Smaller Is Often Better—doing too many projects in a semester can pose problems for you and your students. Consider how you can break one project into parts. Have students focus on doing one thing well.”
- “Focus on Building Blocks: “consider having students do the background work of a research paper without writing it up. For example, they turn in an annotated bibliography, an outline, and abstract, an opening paragraph”

## Worksheet

Why do we give assignments?

Brainstorm answers to these questions for your own class (or a class you might teach): “Where do I want students to end up? What should they be able to do? What do they need to get there? How will we (the students and I) know if they’ve been successful?”

What are some kinds of assessments we can do to gauge student learning (graded or ungraded)?

For each of: “Have a clear thesis statement” “Use evidence effectively” “A well-organized essay” “Demonstrate knowledge of course materials,” write a description of what it would mean to do it to an Excellent level (an A)

What are some ways to structure group projects so that they function well?

What are your challenges in designing assignments?