Transparent Teaching: Designing Assignments to Enhance Classroom Equity

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Overview

PURPOSE:

- Understand how transparently designed assignments can offer equitable opportunities for all college students to succeed
- Consider applications to your own courses

TASKS:
Review: summary of research findings
Apply: to your own course

CRITERIA:

- You'll leave with:
    - Strategies for applying transparency to assignments
    - The start of draft transparent assignment for your own class

Why transparency?

"Transparent teaching and learning methods focus on the how and why students are learning course content in particular ways" (Winkelmes 2014).

Impact of transparency

Transparency helps students

"Transparent teaching/learning methods benefit students who are unfamiliar with college success by explicating learning/teaching processes" (Winklemes 2014).

Impact of transparency

Transparency results in improved outcomes

A "small" intervention improved student learning by positively impacting academic confidence and sense of belonging and by improving student performance on skills valued by employees (Winkelmes 2014).

A greater benefit was seen for underrepresented and first-generation students (Winkelmes 2014).

Application of transparency

Transparency in your own classroom

How are you already applying the principles of transparent teaching to your own classroom (e.g., via curriculum design or use of specific teaching strategies)?

Transparent Assignment Template

Title

Due Date

Purpose:

Skills:

Knowledge:

Task:

Criteria for Success:

Team Task

- Work in groups of three for 20-30 minutes with one volunteered assignment.

- If possible, group members should be from different disciplines.

- Give feedback on assignment according to the categories & descriptions in the transparent assignment checklist.

- Provide feedback from the student/novice POV.

Team Task

1. Volunteer describes the assignment.

2. Group gives feedback on the Purpose of the assignment. Consider: what knowledge and skills will students have after completing this assignment? (In one year? In five years?)

3. Give feedback on the Task. As a student, what steps would you want to see described in order to complete the assignment?

4. Provide feedback on Criteria for the assignment. How would students know they had effectively completed the assignment?

Discussion

Share out experience working with the transparent template & the volunteered assignment.

- What were your challenges?

- What questions do you have?

- How will you apply this process to your own assignments?

Individual Work Time

1. Begin revising one of your own assignments according to the transparent template. Ideally, you will be able to use this assignment in the near future.

2. If time, share your work with a colleague or at your table.

Wrapping Up

Purpose: What was the purpose of this workshop?

Skills: What skills will you apply to your own teaching?

Knowledge: What knowledge do you now have about creating more equitable assignments?

Task: How will you approach the creation of student assignments in the future? What steps will you follow to create transparent assignments?

Criteria for Success: How will you evaluate the impact of using this transparent teaching strategy?