TRANSPARENT ASSIGNMENTS THAT PROMOTE EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR STUDENTS' SUCCESS

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Transparency in Learning and Teaching

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UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

peerReview

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EMERGING TRENDS AND KEY DEBATES IN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

Transparency and Problem-Centered Learning

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TILT Higher Ed
Transparency in Learning and Teaching

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GOVERNMENT

What College Scorecard Doesn't Show

epartment's latest comparison tool
rnings. But without reliable data,
dents only clues. A4

Mary-Ann Winkelmes, who trains professors in "transparent" teaching, says the approach helps students understand
why they have received an assignment, what they are expected to do, and how they will be evaluated.

The Unwritten Rules of College

ke for granted the logic and the rhythm of their courses, but students —
don't know what to expect — may get lost. The U. of Nevada at Las Vegas
— the process of teaching explicit to help them succeed. A26

GRADUATE SCHOOLS

Ph.D.s in Humanities: Few Feel Called, Fewer Are Chosen
The disciplines will probably continue to thin,
a result of choices by students as well as
universities. A10

TECHNOLOGY

U. of Florida Rethinks Alliance With Pearson
The deal got UF Online running, on the governor's
orders, but interest is low. A16

THE CHRONICLE REVIEW

College Is Not
Why it's a ri

Pairs
not only operations
one college found. A12

ent Way to Go Debt Free
than subsidizing public colleges, says one
te-college president, why not give the money
directly to students? A31

14 Mary-Ann Winkelmes

Workshop Overview

PURPOSE:

- Understand how transparently designed assignments can offer equitable opportunities for all college students to succeed; and consider applications

TASKS:

- Review: summary of research findings
- Apply: to sample assignments

CRITERIA:

You'll leave with

- Understanding of our research
- Strategies for applying transparency in assignments

- Partnership with

  - Grant from:

- Co-PIs: Tia Brown McNair, Ashley Finley, AAC&U
- Schools:
  - Community College of Philadelphia
  - Queensborough Community College, Bayside, NY
  - St Edward's Univ. Austin, TX
  - Univ. of Houston – Downtown, TX
  - California State University, LA
  - Winston-Salem State University, NC
  - Heritage University, Toppenish, WA
- Recent Publication: *Peer Review* (Spring 2016)

Research Team:

Transparency Project team members, UNLV
    Matthew Bernacki, Ph.D. (consultant)
    Jeffrey Butler, Ph.D. (research, analysis)
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    Jennifer Golanics, J.D., M. Ed. (analysis)
    Sherry Marks (budget)
    MaryKay Orgill (consultant)
    Kati Harriss Weavil Ph.D. candidate (analysis)
    Michelle Zochowski, M. Ed. candidate (analysis)

What is the CONTEXT of transparency today?

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

High-achievement in HS can frustrate college success

Why might equity of Access ≠ Equity of Experience

Gatekeepers; Limits research productivity & creativity

Well-prepared novices don't think like experts

2 Questions: Compiled from 41 Oregon System faculty responses

Your challenges	Your strategies
Understanding/Preparation • don't seek help / resources • don't understand expectations • underprepared (skills, knowledge) • don't understand/heed feedback • don't follow directions	• clear instructions, discussed in class, in video • provide, discuss examples of good work • review relevance to real life • offer rubric • class time for questions/clarification • chance to redo work after feedback
Motivation • feel overwhelmed • confidence: never did it before • don't know what product looks like • get stuck • don't' see relevance of academic work to real life • low self-esteem • low motivation	• smaller pieces build in a sequence with feedback • practice skills in class, start assignments in class • frequent reminders • feedback at frequent check-in points • rewards, extra credit • demonstrate uses/value in other contexts • flexible topics, formats (videos, YouTube, paper) • small group work • in-class help (writing center, library)
Time Management • allowing enough time • procrastination	• break work into smaller pieces • regular check-ins, reminders • process maps, calendar plans

What is Transparency?

- Transparent teaching and learning methods explicitly focus 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. *Liberal Education* 99, 2 (Spring 2013)
Winkelmes et al. *Peer Review* 18, 1/2 (Winter/Spring 2016)

Transparency and Problem-centered Learning

AAC&U and Transparency Project collaboration   **(p. 9)**

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

- 2 x **small teaching intervention** (2 assignments)

- Boosted students' learning in 3 important ways (medium-large effect for underserved students):
  - Academic confidence
  - Sense of belonging

    Increased GPA, retention
  - Skills valued most by employers

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All Disciplines/All Students, End of Term
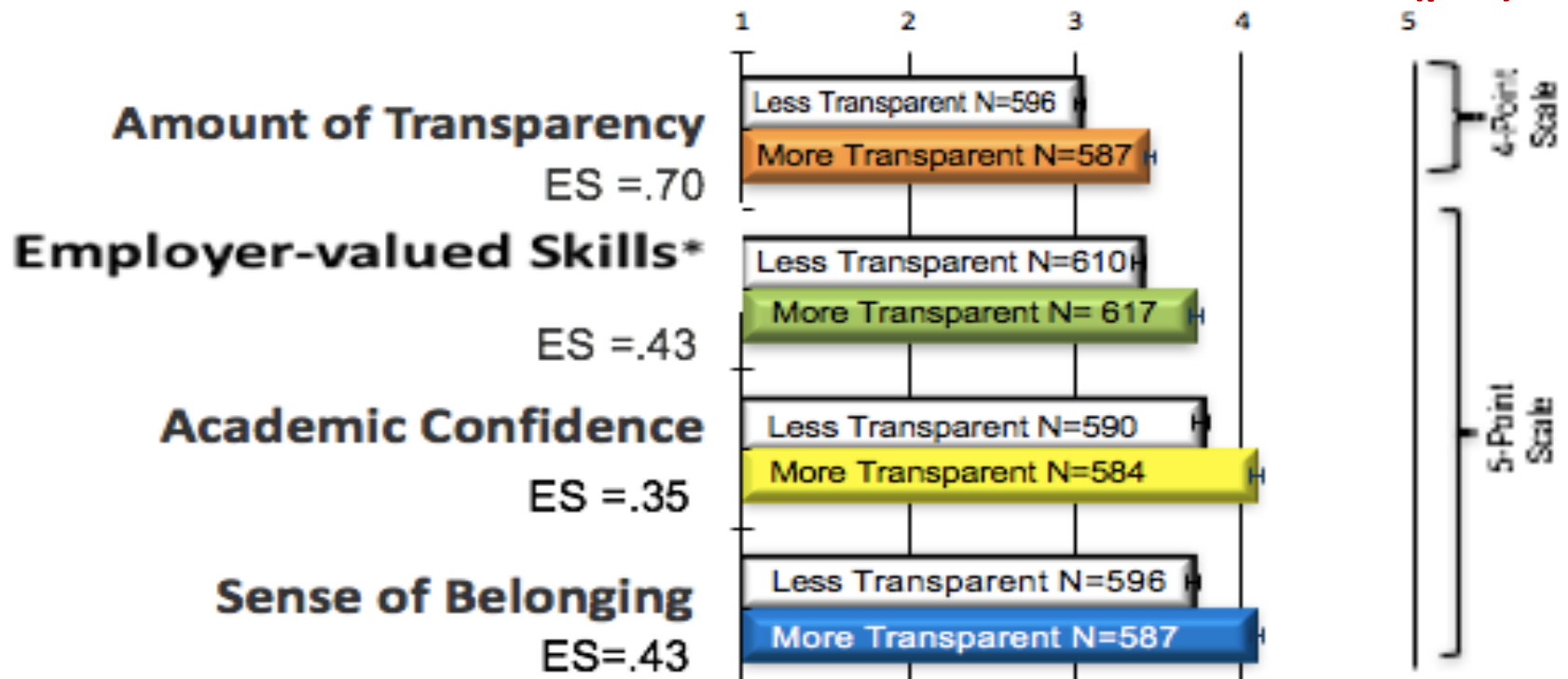
1   2   3   4   5

4-Point Scale

5-Point Scale

Amount of Transparency
ES = .70

Less Transparent N=596
More Transparent N=587

Employer-valued Skills*
ES = .43

Less Transparent N=610
More Transparent N= 617

Academic Confidence
ES = .35

Less Transparent N=590
More Transparent N=584

Sense of Belonging
ES=.43

Less Transparent N=596
More Transparent N=587

<u>KEY</u>: **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.

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Baseline Equivalence, Beginning of Term
All Disciplines, All Students

Confidence to Succeed

Please rate your confidence about your ability to succeed in this field. — ES=-.07
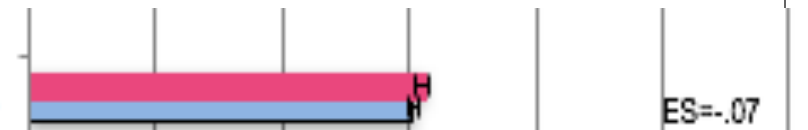
Please rate your confidence about your ability to succeed in school. — ES=.003
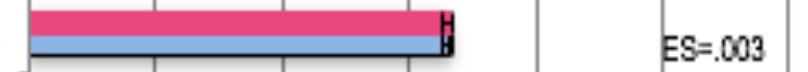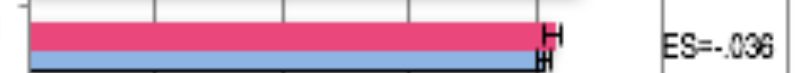
Skills Highly Valued by Employers*

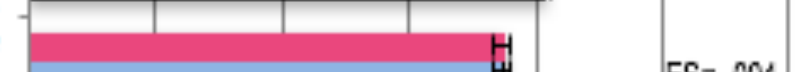I am capable of learning effectively on my own. — ES=-.009
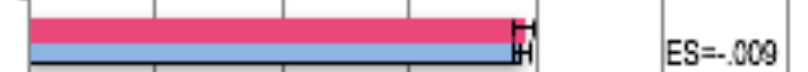
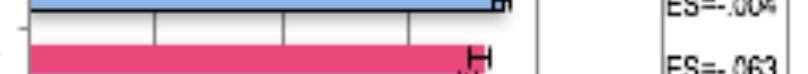I tend to consider the ethical implications of my actions. — ES=.031
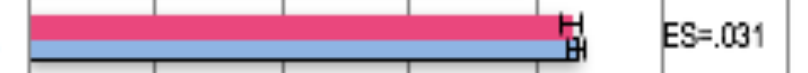
I am able to apply the things I have learned to new problems and situations. — ES=-.036

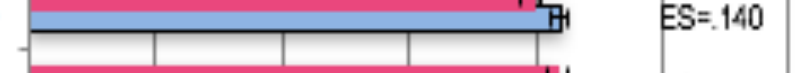When I get information from multiple sources, I have an easy time making connections between them — ES=-.004

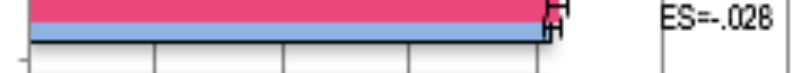I am good at breaking down theories, ideas and experiences into pieces so I can consider them. — ES=-.063

I collaborate well with others on academic work. — ES=.140
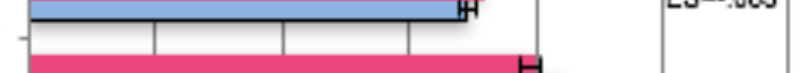
I can communicate effectively when I speak. — ES=-.028
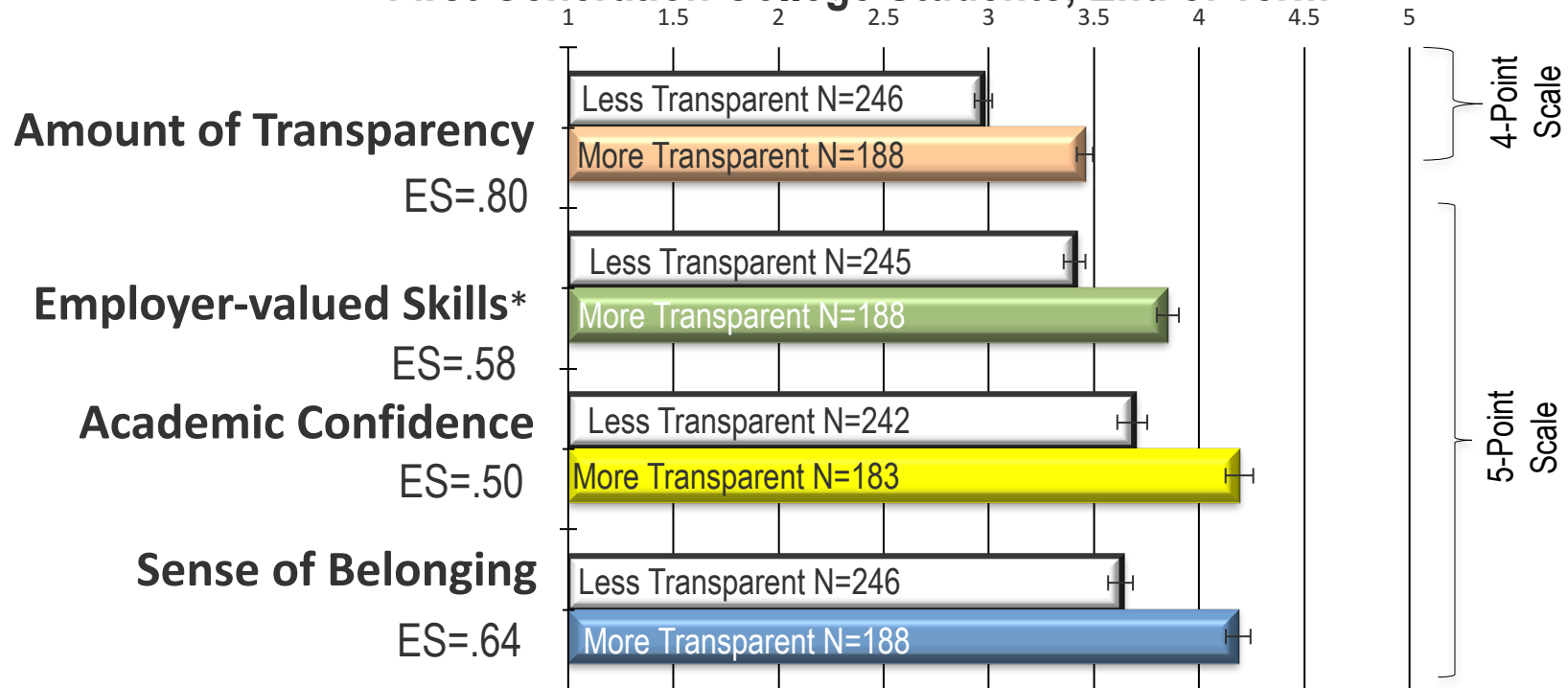
I can express my ideas effectively when I write. — ES=.008

■ More Transparent Courses (N=485) ▌Less Transparent Courses (N=630)   ├─┤: one standard error

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First Generation College Students, End of Term

Amount of Transparency
ES=.80

Employer-valued Skills*
ES=.58

Academic Confidence
ES=.50

Sense of Belonging
ES=.64

Less Transparent N=246
More Transparent N=188
Less Transparent N=245
More Transparent N=188
Less Transparent N=242
More Transparent N=183
Less Transparent N=246
More Transparent N=188

4-Point Scale
5-Point Scale

KEY: **N**: number of students responding ⊢⊣: one standard error
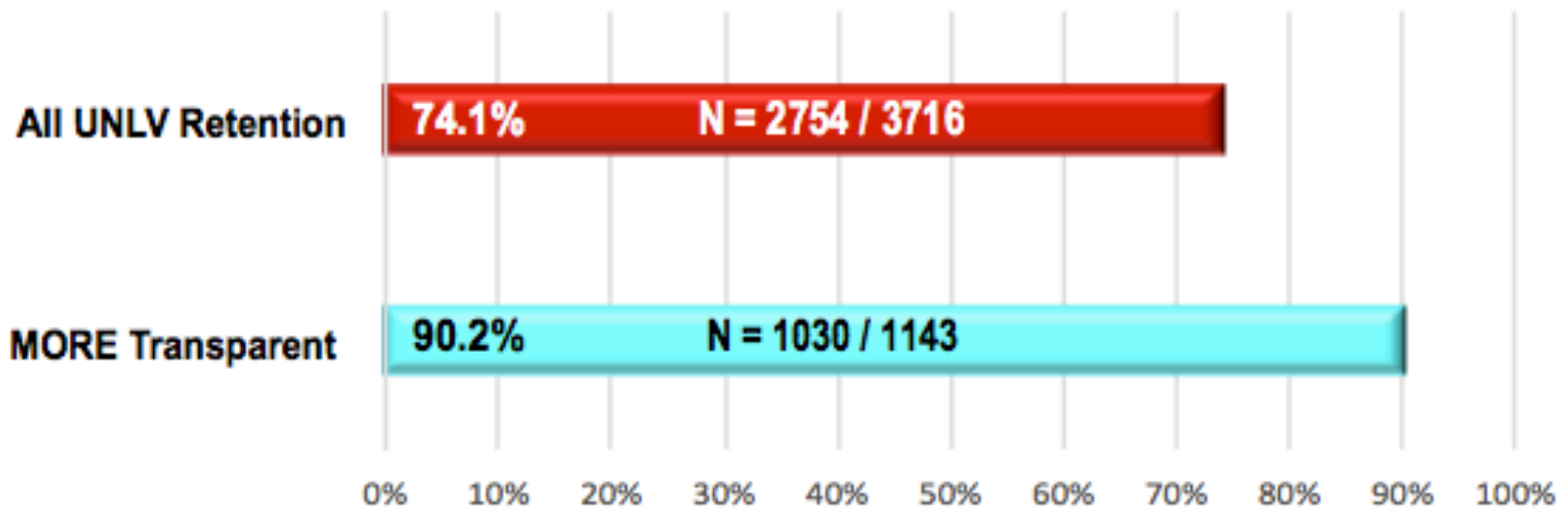
ES: effect size (Hedges' G) Effect sizes of 0.25 standard deviations or larger are "substantively important" (US Dept of Education *WWC,* 2014, p. 23).

Less Transparent: mean perceived transparency < 3.3/4

More Transparent: mean ≥ 3.3/4

* Hart Associates employer surveys, 2015, 2013.

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2014 Mary-Ann Winkelmes

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

All UNLV Retention — 74.1% — N = 2754 / 3716

MORE Transparent — 90.2% — N = 1030 / 1143

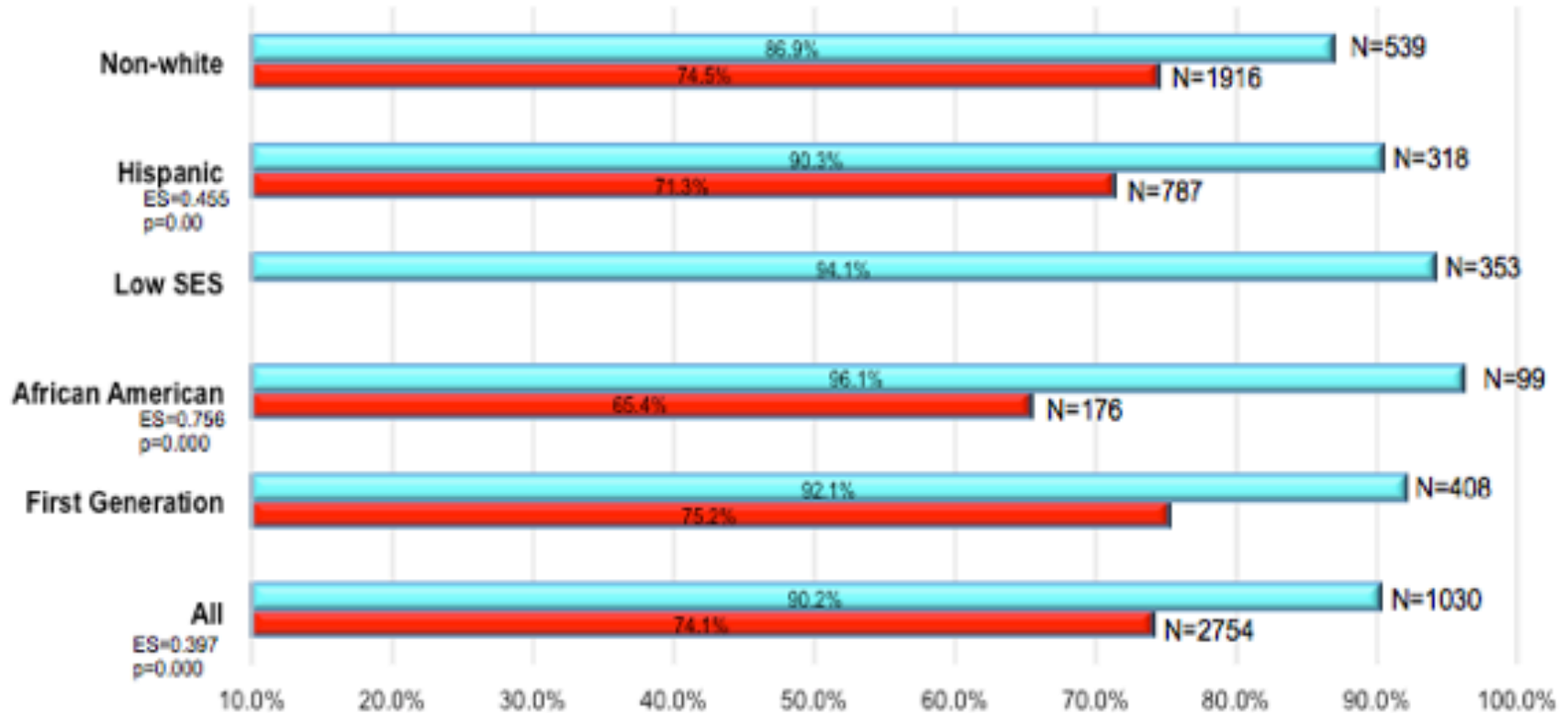Scale: 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

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
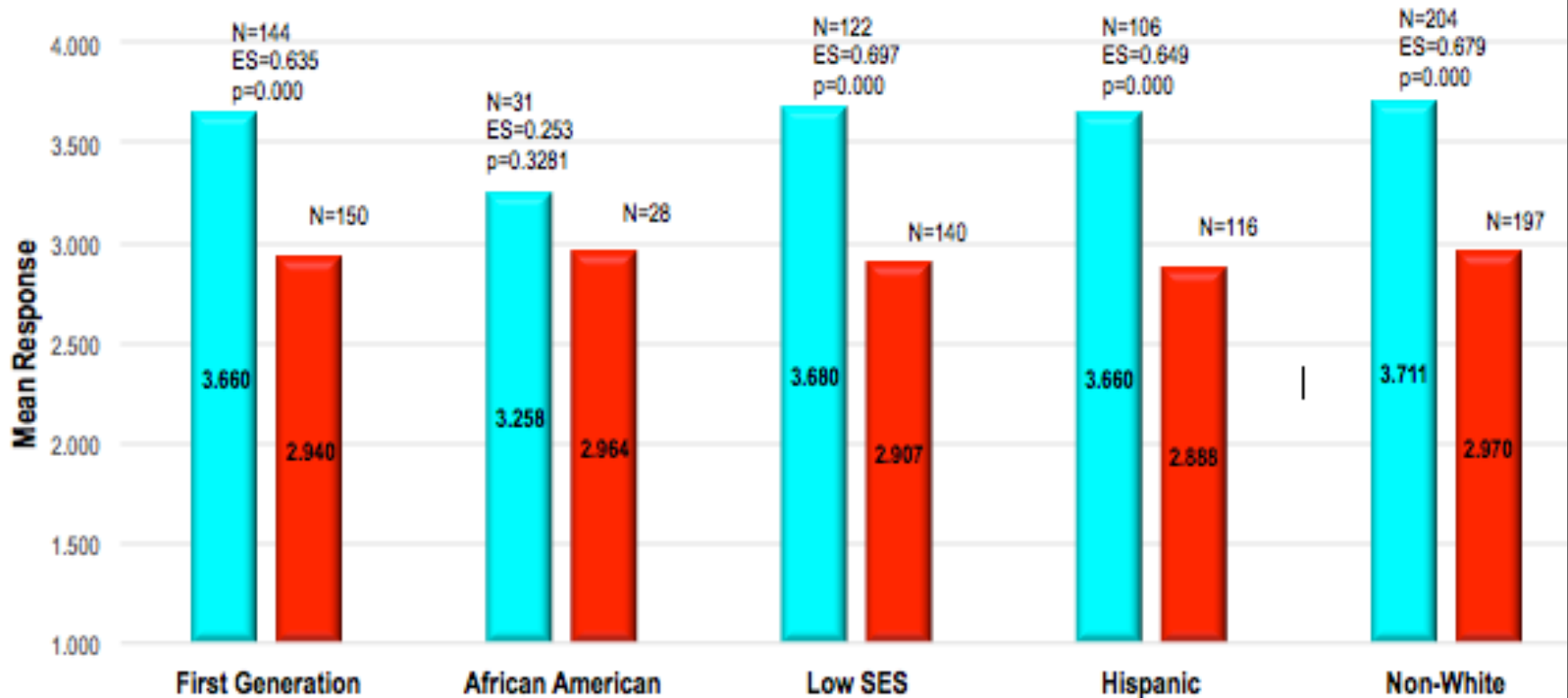
Impact on UNLV students' views of learning

Impact on UNLV students' views of learning

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Helped Collaborating Effectively: Humanities & Social Sciences

Mean Response

	First Generation	African American	Low SES	Hispanic	Non-White
Blue	3.710 (N=303, ES=0.713, p=0.000)	3.649 (N=74, ES=0.939, p=0.000)	3.619 (N=252, ES=0.674, p=0.000)	3.800 (N=245, ES=0.800, p=0.000)	3.711 (N=360, ES=0.712, p=0.000)
Red	2.883 (N=240)	2.556 (N=70)	2.834 (N=193)	2.888 (N=161)	2.875 (N=265)

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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2014 Mary-Ann Winkelmes
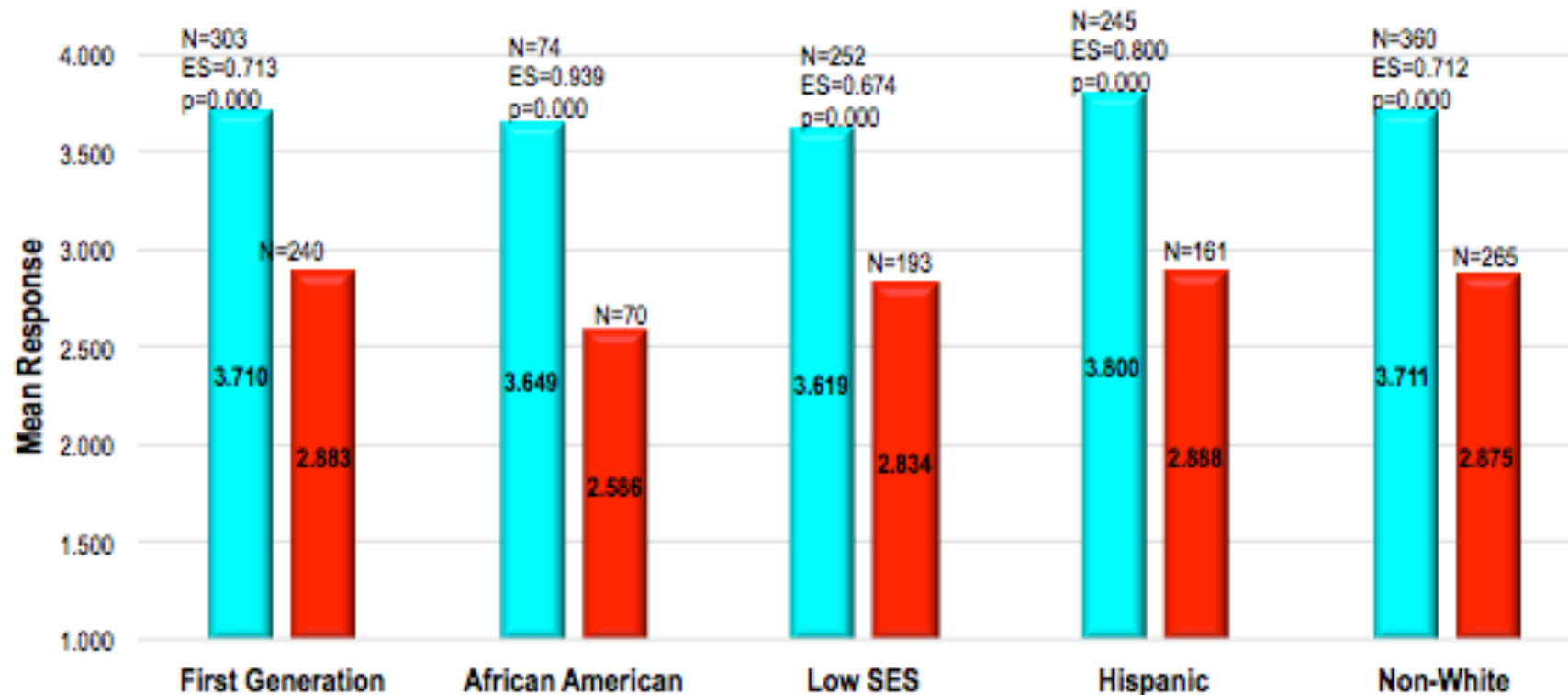
Impact on UNLV students' views of learning

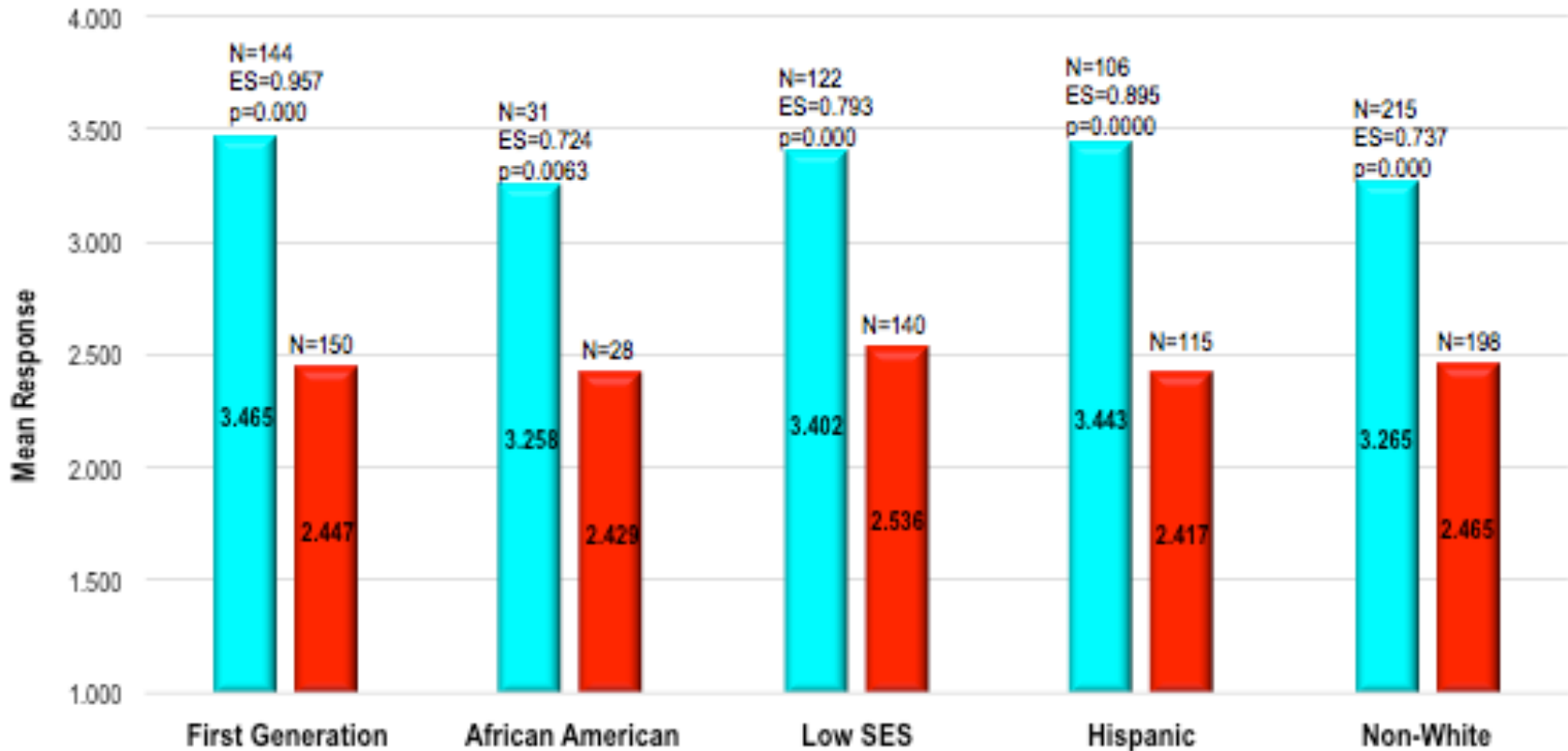Helped Communicating: Writing, STEM & Life Sciences

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 Spring2015-Fall 2015

What does Transparent Assignment Design look like?

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

Purpose

- Skills practiced $\Big\}$ 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)

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Where does Transparent Assignment Design Come From?

Research on Learning	Implications for Transparent Design	
Elbow, Jaschik/Davidson, Mazur Ambrose, Bergstahler Gregorc, Kolb	PURPOSE: Low stakes for greater creativity / risk Varied and/or flexible formats appeal equitably to students' strengths; inclusive	**1**
AAC&U HIPs, Bass, Bloom, Colomb, Felder, Perry	PURPOSE: Build critical thinking skills in sequence. Target feedback to phase, don't overwhelm	**2**
Doyle, Felder, Tanner, Winkelmes	PURPOSE: Specify knowledge/skills, criteria and encourage self-monitoring.	**3**
Fisk/Light, Tanner	TASK: Provide annotated examples of successful work w/criteria applied, before students begin work	**4**
Aronson, Dweck, Fisk, Light, Schnabel, Spitzer, Steele, Treisman, Yeager/Walton, Vygosky	TASK: Structure and require peer instruction, feedback; positive attribution activities.	**5**
Finley/McNair Winkelmes et al Yeager, Walton	CRITERIA: Explicate purposes, tasks, criteria in advance. Give students a compass, set expectations; Explicate applicability, relevance; Engage students in applying shared criteria to increase belonging.	**6**

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Apply all that research to designing transparent, equitable assignments!

Sample Assignments   Sample A (p. 7)

Purpose

- Skills practiced   } long-term (problem-centered) relevance to students' lives

- Knowledge gained } connection to learning outcomes

Task: What to do

How to do it (steps to follow, avoid)

Criteria

- Checklist or rubric in advance to help students to self-evaluate

- What excellence looks like (multiple annotated examples)

Sample Assignments   Sample B (p. 7)

Purpose

- Skills practiced   }   relevance to students
- Knowledge gained   connection to LOs

Problem-centered

Task: What to do

How to do it

Criteria

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

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Sample Assignments   Sample C (p. 8)

Purpose

- Skills practiced   } relevance to students
- Knowledge gained } connection to LOs

Task: What to do; How to do it

Problem-centered

It's A, revised

Criteria

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

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Sample Assignments   Sample D (p. 8)

Problem-centered

Compare to B

Purpose

- Skills practiced   } relevance to students
- Knowledge gained } connection to LOs

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 did we do?

PURPOSE:

– Understand how transparently designed assignments can offer equitable opportunities for all college students to succeed; and consider applications

TASKS:

– Review: summary of research findings

– Apply: to sample assignments

CRITERIA:

You'll leave with

– Understanding of our research

– Strategies for applying transparency in assignments

Gather Feedback on Your Own Assignment

Why are we doing this now?

Purpose
– Knowledge: share feedback, insights;
  promote student success
– Skills: apply transparency; engage community of practice

Task
– Four steps, 2-4 min each, in pairs / 3s

Criteria
– draft you can use in your course
– helpful insights from colleagues *as novices*

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Apply Transparency to Assignment: Set up

1. Volunteers: Who has an assignment for an upcoming course – from 1st half of term?
2. Sit with a **disciplinary stranger** who has an assignment

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 your partners
   (2 min each)

Feedback on Your Assignments, part 1 of 3
handout: page 6

As a novice student, offer feedback on the <u>Purpose</u>

(3 min per assignment)

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?   *(p. 2 may help)*

- Why are these important to students?

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Feedback on Your Assignments,   part 2 of 3
handout page 6

As a novice student, offer feedback on the <u>Task</u>

In groups, discuss and define   (2 min)

As a novice, list the steps you'd take to do the assignment.

Feedback on Your Assignments, part 3 of 3
handout page 6

As a novice student, offer feedback on the <u>Criteria</u>

In groups, discuss and define   (3 min)

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?

Additional Research-based Strategies
handout page 1

Offer feedback in groups, (2 min)

- Which additional research-based methods could be used?   *(charts, pp. 1-2)*

Your in-class Activities

3 years out Knowledge & Skills	Purpose	Task	Task Cues Bloom chart	Criteria	Stakes % high/low	Assessed by peers/teacher	6 Transparent * Strategies
1) Knowledge, disciplinary • methods/tools • content							
2) Analysis / Application	[------You just did this part in pairs. --------------------medium-----------------------]						
	This is where an in-class activity can prepare students to excel on next assgt.						
3) Evaluation	------Are students now ready to excel on *this* graded assignment?---------						
4) Creative Contribution							

Your in-class Activities

3 years out Knowledge & Skills	Purpose	Task	Task Cues Bloom chart	Criteria	Stakes % high/low	Assessed by peers/teacher	6 Transparent * Strategies
1) Knowledge, disciplinary • methods/tools • content							
	In-class activity for practice _before_ students do it for a grade (low stakes)						
2) Analysis / Application	**Take-home assignment**			**med/hi stakes**			
	In-class activity for practice _before_ students do it for a grade (low stakes)						
3) Evaluation	**Take-home assignment**			**med/hi stakes**			
	In-class activity for practice _before_ students do it for a grade (low stakes)						
4) Creative Contribution	**Take-home assignment**			**med/hi stakes**			

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How did we do?

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*

– Strategies *(charts, pages 1-2)*

– Long term: improved student confidence, skills, success

Resources

Materials and resources (online)

- NILOA assignment library http://www.assignmentlibrary.org/
- TILT materials   http://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning
  - TILT online sign-up triggers:
    - » joint IRB approval request
    - » approved survey links for your students
    - » individualized instructor report
- Transparent 2nd Tuesdays at 2:00 pm https://zoom.us/s/337401450

Research and publication opportunities:

- TILT: email request to mary-ann.winkelmes@unlv.edu
- NILOA Assignment Library submission:
  http://www.assignmentlibrary.org/submitAssignment

Please join us!
http://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning

Transparent 2nd Tuesdays at 2:00 pm
https://zoom.us/s/337401450