



Transparent Assignment Template

Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) is a teaching framework that emphasizes clear communication of how all components of a course align both with the educational goals of the course and with the knowledge and skills students will need to work in specific careers. It moves away from simply the “what” of teaching to place emphasis on the “why” and “how,” improving the educational experience of students and faculty. Using this template for your assignments will ensure that you have organized your assignment with TILT in mind.

Assignment Name:

Due Date/s:

Introduction:

A general overview of the assignment is helpful for students. Your overview should include

- **Purpose:** A statement of the assignment’s purpose or an alignment statement, indicating how the assignment is related to course learning outcomes. (e.g. In this assignment, you will practice some of the components of primary literature evaluation, building toward achievement of CLO 2: Evaluate the primary literature.)
- **Course Context:** A summary of how the assignment is related to other assignments in the course. (e.g. This assignment builds upon the foundation you established in the Literature Search Assignment, and will help to prepare you for your final research paper.)
- **Professional Context:** A summary or list of knowledge and skills practiced that are valued by employers or used in professional practice. (e.g. This assignment will help you improve skills used in other courses and in professional contexts, including a) summarizing disciplinary knowledge, methods, and tools; b) Applying disciplinary knowledge in new contexts; c) Analyzing the premises, arguments, and evidence presented by psychological researchers; d) Using research data to evaluate treatment options.)

Instructions:

Clearly define the actions students should take to complete the project. This list should indicate the order in which students are expected to complete the steps, and may include useful tips, strategies, or guiding questions to help students avoid pitfalls and common mistakes. E.g.:

1. **Review** instructor comments on your literature search, and consider how to apply them to improve your work.
2. Based on your review, **determine** which papers you will read.
3. **Read** the papers with the intent of understanding. Pro-tip: Each research paper is part of a larger conversation between scientists. You may have to review the references for a paper and read a few of those papers to fully understand any particular paper.
4. **Write summaries** of each of the papers, including a summary of context of the study (background), goals or hypotheses tested, methods, findings, and implications.
5. **Review the case assigned to you.** Consider which information in the case is relevant to finding treatment options.
6. **Analyze and evaluate** each study you read; Assess the concepts, data, and arguments made in the introduction (was the evaluation of the authors accurate? Missing something?). Assess the methodology. Were methods appropriate/reliable based on your reading of the literature? Were the findings interpreted correctly? Are there other interpretations? How could you address any concerns you have with the research? Indicate how it might apply to your case study.

7. **Summarize your evaluation**, and add it to the written summary of each paper.
8. **Format your document**: Use a 12 point Times New Roman Font, single spaced, with one inch margins.
9. **Upload summaries and evaluations** to Canvas.

Grading criteria:

Students appreciate when instructors are as transparent as possible in how they score/grade assignments. Like identifying learning outcomes, being transparent in what you are looking for in a paper provides a target for students to hit, allowing them to focus their efforts to greatest advantage. To incorporate effective learning assessments, the criteria for grading should reflect the learning outcomes being assessed.

At the very least, instructors should provide a score breakdown, indicating criteria and how many total points students might gain from doing well. A better solution is to use a detailed rubric. CITL encourages the use of rubrics when possible, as they make grading criteria clearer to students, and can reduce faculty time and effort in grading. A good rubric lists criteria, explicitly aligned with learning outcomes, and a description of what should be present in the student's work to demonstrate that they have exceeded expectations, met expectations, partially met expectations, and failed to meet expectations for each criterion. Rubrics can be built directly into Canvas and attached to specific assignments, allowing you to use rubrics in SpeedGrader. Combined with use of the OUTCOMES tool, Canvas allows you to build rubrics that automatically record student progress toward learning outcomes, reducing time and energy spent in data collection for program and GEP outcome assessment.

CITL designers would be happy to discuss other means of indicating grading criteria in online courses. Please feel free to ask them about it.

References and Resources

[Tilt Higher Ed](#) website

Boye, A., & Tapp, S. (2019). Faculty voices and perspectives on transparent assignment design: FAQs for implementation and beyond. In M.- A. Winkelmes, A. Boye, & S. Tapp (Eds.), *Transparent design in higher education and leadership: A guide to implementing the transparency framework institution-wide to improve learning and retention* (pp. 55-69). Stylus Publishing.

Winkelmes, M.A.(2023) [Introduction to Transparency in Learning and Teaching](#). *Perspectives in Learning* 20(1).

Winkelmes, M.-A., Bernacki, M., Butler, J., Zochowski, M., Golanics, J., & Weavil, K. (2016). A teaching intervention that increases underserved college students' success. *Peer Review*, 18(1/2).