

Using Transparent Design to Enhance Teaching Effectiveness

Javier Cavazos Vela, Ph.D.

Director, Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE)

Assistant Professor, College of Education and P-16 Integration

Learning Objectives

- After this interactive conversation on teaching, our objective is for you to be able to:
 - **Identify** criteria for transparent assignments
 - **Reflect** on the extent to which your assignments are transparent
 - **Identify** ways to revise an assignment to become more transparent
 - **Apply** what you learned to create a plan to use what you learned
 - **Complete** a learning assessment activity

FLIP Activity

- Turn to a neighbor and take **3-minutes** to reflect on the following questions:
 - What do you think transparency in teaching means?
 - What does transparency look like to you?
 - What have you heard about transparent design?

What is Transparent Teaching?

- Transparency in teaching refers to “engaging teachers and students in focusing together on how college students learn what they learn and why teachers structure learning experiences in particular ways” (Winkelmes, 2013)



Transparent Design

- With a transparent design, faculty discuss with students in advance the following criteria for assignments:
 - **Purpose** (skills and knowledge that benefits long-term learning and workplace skills)
 - **Task** (what students will do and steps to follow and avoid)
 - **Criteria for success** (checklist, rubric, or annotated examples of what success looks like)

Research-Based Instruction

- In the Transparency in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education project, Mary-Ann Winkelmes and her colleagues (2016) examined the impact of transparent instruction and problem-based learning on “underserved” college students’ success. They were particularly interested in first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students
- This quasi-experimental design included 1,800 students and 35 faculty from universities throughout the United States
- Project team members trained faculty to revise two course assignments to become more transparent and problem-based
- At the end of the semester, students responded to questions about their learning experiences, sense of belonging, academic confidence, and awareness of workplace skills

Research-Based Instruction

- What did first-generation college students in the transparent group report?
 - Increased academic confidence
 - Increased sense of belonging
 - Increase in employer-valued skills
- Magnitude of differences were also found depending on discipline (effect sizes were smaller in STEM-related fields)

Focus Activity

- Take 5-minutes to reflect on one of your assignments.
 - What is the student learning objective?
 - On a scale from 1-10 with 1 being no transparency and 10 being complete transparency, rank your assignment *as it appears on the syllabus* on each criterion.
 - Provide at least one idea to improve your assignment in each of the following sections: purpose, task, and criteria.

Strategies to Design a More Transparent Assignment

- Purpose

- Add details on purpose of assignment
- Connect assignment to student learning objectives and long-term goals

- Task

- Include what you expect students to do and how you expect them to do it

- Criteria for success

- Create and share rubric
- Include sample annotated paper with comments regarding what success *might* look like



Less Transparent Assignment

- **Research Proposal (Statement of the problem, literature synthesis, methods, and implications for practice)**
- The Research Proposal Project should include the following elements: introduction, brief literature review, the statement of research problem, methods, implications for practice, and references.
- Students will choose a topic of interest and use this topic as an anchor for the research project. The research topic chosen will be narrowed down (or expanded) to reformulate into a problem for research. The research problem will include the context and need for studying the topic, the participants to be studied, and the potential research design that would address the problem.
- As part of the course, students will read peer-reviewed research articles and will analyze articles applying the knowledge gained from class lectures, discussions, and textbook reading. The analyses will consist of investigating similarities and differences in ways researchers carried out and reported the research studies on a topic of interest to the student. The research literature synthesis will consist of the synthesis of literature based on analyses carried out throughout the course. The articles must be from peer-reviewed journal articles and should include different kinds of research methodologies.
- The body of the proposal must be at least 8 pages (title page, references do not count toward this amount), 1-inch margins, double-spaced, and in APA format. Proposed research must be plausible enough to conduct the study; however, **please note that you will not actually conduct the study for this class.**

Less Transparent Assignment

- **Research Proposal** (Statement of the problem, literature synthesis, methods, and implications for practice)
- The Research Proposal Project should include the following elements: introduction (1-page), brief literature review (2-pages), the **statement** of research problem, methods (3-4 pages), implications for practice and research (1.5 pages), and references.
- Students will choose a topic of interest and use this topic as an anchor for the research project. The research topic chosen will be narrowed down (or expanded) to reformulate into a problem for research. The research problem will include the context and need for studying the topic, the participants to be studied, and the potential research design that would address the problem.
- As part of the course, students will read peer-reviewed research articles and will analyze articles applying the knowledge gained from class lectures, discussions, and textbook reading. The analyses will consist of investigating similarities and differences in ways researchers carried out and reported the research studies on a topic of interest to the student. The research literature synthesis will consist of the synthesis of literature based on analyses carried out throughout the course. The articles must be from peer-reviewed journal articles and should include different kinds of research methodologies.
- The body of the proposal must be at least 7 pages (title page, references do not count toward this amount), 1-inch margins, double-spaced, and in APA format. Proposed research must be plausible enough to conduct the study; however, **please note that you will not actually conduct the study for this class.**



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What is the purpose of this assignment? What learning objectives does this assignment cover? What about long-term learning goals? Why is this assignment included in this course?



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What are students expected to do in each section of the proposal?



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How will students be evaluated? What is the criteria for success? Is there a rubric?

More Transparent Assignment: Purpose

- **Purpose:** One of the [learning objectives](#) of this course is for you to demonstrate understanding and knowledge of quantitative and/or qualitative research designs. Another [learning objective](#) is to identify how to critique research to inform counseling practice. The purpose of this assignment is to prepare a research proposal on a counseling-related topic using a quantitative and/or qualitative research design. I want you to review counseling research and prepare a quantitative or qualitative proposal that can advance knowledge in the counseling profession. As [a future school or clinical mental health counselor](#), you might be asked to prepare evaluation reports, write a grant, or prepare a research-based presentation. This assignment will help you practice and develop skills necessary to produce a research or grant report.

More Transparent Assignment: Task

- **Task:** Select a counseling-related topic that you are motivated to research in this course, other courses, and your future career. Your task is to write a research proposal with the following sections: introduction (literature review, purpose statement), method, implications for practice, implications for research, and references.
 - In the [introduction section](#), I expect you to establish the problem or significance of your topic, review literature about the topic, identify gaps in current literature on the topic, and identify purpose of proposed study.
 - In the [methods section](#), I expect you to describe the participants, data collection methods, data analysis methods, procedures, and ethical guidelines. I will provide detailed questions to address each section on blackboard. I expect you to provide sufficient details so that other researchers would be able to replicate your study.
 - In the [implications for practice and research section](#), I want you to think about potential findings from your proposed study. Based on potential findings, what are some implications for counselors and researchers? How can counselors use results to influence their practice? How can researchers build on your potential findings in a future study? I expect you to provide at least 3-implications for practice and 3-implications for research that are aligned with your findings and previous research.
 - In the references section, I expect you to use APA format to reference all in-text citations.

More Transparent Assignment (continued): Task

- In order to perform all of the aforementioned tasks, you need to incorporate at least 7 [peer-reviewed articles](#) into your proposal.
- Your final proposal should be between 7-8 pages (typed, double-spaced) and in APA format. You do not need to include an abstract.
- Steps to avoid:
 - DO NOT collect data for this study.
 - If you choose to collaborate with your colleagues, please make sure to select your group based on perceived performance. While collaborative learning can be positive, group work can also produce detrimental effects. So, please proceed with group work at your own risk.

More Transparent Assignment: Criteria for Success

- Your work will be graded using a [rubric](#) that is on blackboard and integrated in our conversations about the research proposal.
- I will provide an [annotated example](#) of a research paper in APA format.
- I also will provide an [annotated example](#) of previous students' successful parts of each section of the proposal. For example, I will provide examples of a successful purpose statement, introduction, and method section.

More Transparent Assignment: Criteria for Success

COUN 6301 Research Proposal Rubric:

Student _____ Score _____

Criteria (15 total points)	0 Non-performance	1 Basic	2 Proficient	3 Distinguished
Provides and connects implications for practice to potential findings and previous research (3 points)	Fails to discuss any potential implications for practice	Provides but does not tie potential implications for practice with potential findings and previous research.	Provides and connects 1-2 implications for practice with potential findings and previous research.	Connects 3 potential implications for practice with potential findings and previous research.



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Notice differences among criteria for basic, proficient, and distinguished performances. In order to receive a "3," you need to connect at least 3 potential implications for practice with potential findings and previous research. For example, if you develop a correlational study and think you will find a relationship between hope and academic achievement, what is an implication of this finding? Perhaps you could recommend that counselors use an evidenced-based intervention to help students increase hope toward their future (this is how you link potential findings with an implication for practice). And, you will also need to link this implication with previous research by citing a source for the evidence-based intervention.

Criteria for Success: More Transparent

Scruggs, T. E., Mastropieri, M. A., & Casto, G. (1987). The quantitative synthesis of single
subject research: Methodology and validation. *Remedial and Special Education*, 8,
24–33. doi:10.1177/074193258700800206

Schimmack, U. & Diener, E. (2003). Predictive Validity of Explicit and Implicit Self-esteem for
Subjective Well-Being. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37, 100-106.
doi:10.1016/S0092-6566(02)00532-9



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Reference is cited using perfect APA format.



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There should be a comma after "U."



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Reference contains numerous APA errors. Most words of a journal article should not be capitalized.



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Journal and Volume number should be in italics.



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APA references should have a DOI number.

Interactive Pause and Reflection

- What do you think about transparent design?
- Do you want to apply transparent design to your teaching? Why or why not?

Evaluation and Learning Assessment Techniques

- **SACSCOS:** UTRGV non-academic units need to develop an assessment plan to measure services, programs, and learning experiences.
- **CTE's Objectives and Assessment:** Some of CTE's objectives are to help faculty reflect and apply what they learn to improve teaching and learning as well as demonstrate foundational knowledge in target teaching areas. The purpose of today's learning assessment techniques (Barkley & Major, 2016) are to:
 - Determine if you are able to **reflect** on what you learned
 - Determine if you are able to **demonstrate** a plan to **apply** what you learned to your teaching or learning, which are indicators of lifelong learning
 - Determine if you **demonstrate foundational knowledge** in key teaching area

Exit Ticket

- **Purpose:** The purpose of the initial three questions on the exit ticket are to determine if you are able to demonstrate important foundational knowledge in target teaching area.
- **Task:** Identify a criterion that is not in a transparent design, identify a component of transparent design, and identify a strategy to create a more transparent assignment.
- **Criteria for Success:**
 - Identification of a criterion that is not in a transparent design = 1 point
 - Identification of a specific component = 1 point
 - Identification of one strategy to create a more transparent design under criteria for success = 1 point

What? So What? Now What? Journal

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this learning assessment technique is to determine if you are able to reflect on what you learned and apply what you learned to develop a plan in target teaching area.
- **Task:** We want you to reflect and write your responses to the following questions. A total of 5 sentences will be sufficient if you address each question.
 - What? (1) What happened in today's session?
 - So What? (2) What did you learn today? (3) What connections can you make between what you learned today and previous learning experiences?
 - Now What? (4) How can you apply what you learned? (5) What would you like to learn more about and how will you learn more about this or a similar topic?

Criteria for Success

- Rubric:
 - What? = 1 point
 - So what? = 1 point + 1 point for a connection to a previous learning experience
 - Now what? = 1 point + 1 point for a concrete action plan to apply what you learned or learn more about topic
- There are a total of 5 points.

Sample Response

- I attended a keynote address at the SACCOS annual convention. *In this presentation, the speaker presented important findings from a transparency in higher learning project.* I observed a lot of people who were interested and engaged with this topic.
- *I learned that transparency in teaching and learning can produce important benefits such as academic confidence, self-confidence, and workplace skills.* I also learned that the following criteria are involved in transparent designs: purpose, task, and criteria for success. *I can connect what I learned today with Dr Julie Schell's keynote presentation on problem-based learning.* When students tackle real work problems and are given evidence that their assignment is connected to later work or life goals, they might be more likely to be motivated to engage in such assignments.
- I plan to do two things after this presentation. First, *I want to create transparency in my assignments,* particularly my research proposal in COUN 6301. Although I might explain assignments in class, I know that I can describe these assignments on the syllabus with better transparency. I also want to do a better job of describing the purpose of all my assignments. Second, *I want to lead a CTE conversation on transparency with UTRGV colleagues.* This conversation will not only lead to improved understanding and insight but also a plan to engage in meaningful dialogue about future applications.

References and Helpful Resources

- TILT Higher Ed Examples and Resources (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency/tilt-higher-ed-examples-and-resources>
- Transparency in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>
- Transparency and Problem-Centered Learning (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.aacu.org/problemcenteredlearning>
- Winkelmes, M. A., Bernacki, M., Butler, J., Zochowski, J. G., & Weavil, K. H. (2016). A teaching intervention that increases underserved college students' success. *Peer Review: Transparency and Problem-Centered Learning*, 18.
- Winkelmes, M. A., Copeland, D. E., Jorgensen, E. Smedley, A., Sloat, A....et al. (2018). Benefits (some unexpected) of transparently designed assignments. *The National Teaching and Learning Forum*, 24, 4-6.