

# The Unwritten Rules of College: Creating Transparent Assignments that Increase Students' Success Equitably

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Transparency in Learning and Teaching



# Overview

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## PURPOSE:

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

## TASKS:

- (me) Review: summary of research findings, cases
- (you) Apply: to sample assignments

## CRITERIA:

You'll leave with

- Understanding of research
- Strategies for applying Transparent Framework to your contexts



# What is Transparent Instruction?

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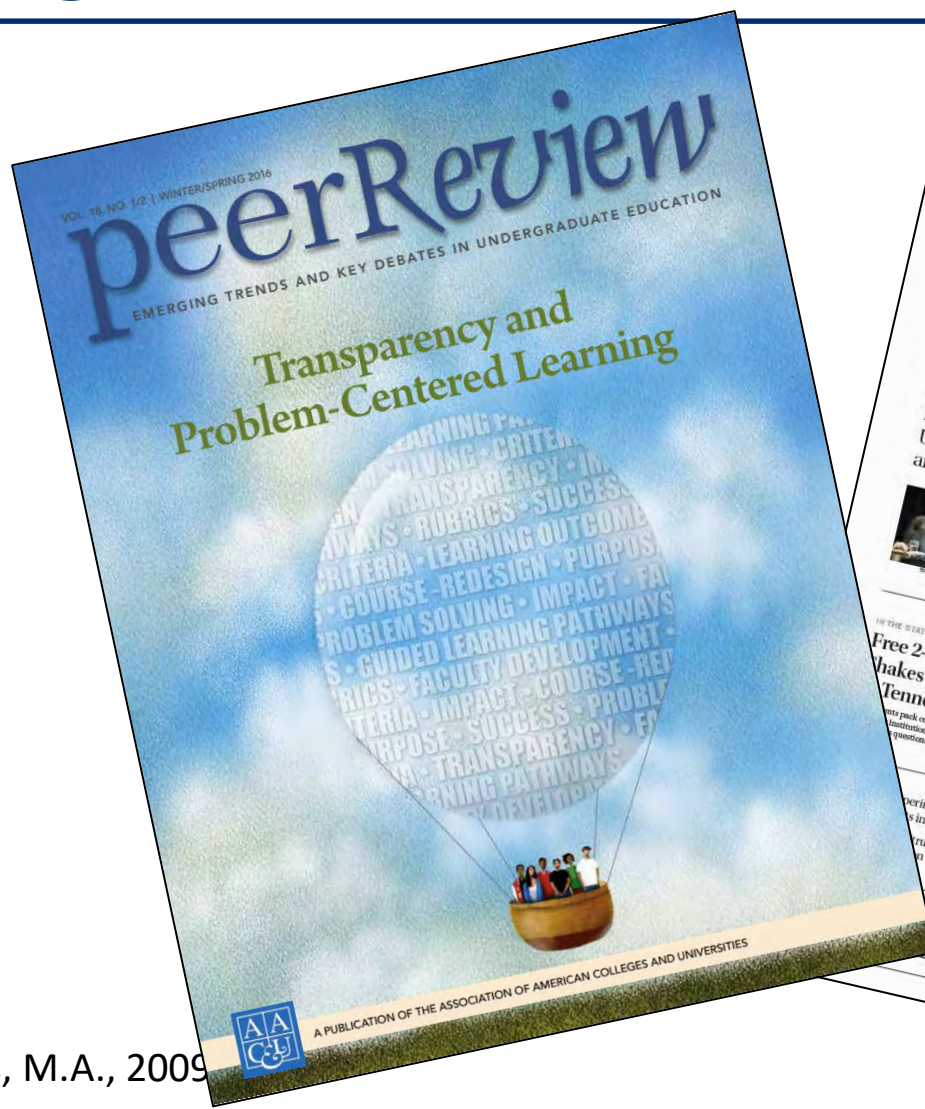
Transparent teaching and learning methods explicitly focus on:

- *how* students are learning course content,
- *why* we manipulate their learning experiences in particular ways, and
- how students will use this learning in their lives after college.





# Gaining attention: 3 main reasons





## Two Research Studies

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- National Study: Association of American Colleges & Universities and TILT
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Student Retention Study



# Equity Crisis: Access $\neq$ Equity

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- Underrepresented, first generation, low income: half as likely to complete college in 4 years as white/Asian peers
- Gatekeepers stunt research
- High-achievement in HS can frustrate college success
- Well-prepared novices don't think like experts

Challenges	Strategies
<b>Preparation</b> Unclear re: expectations Underprepared: writing, math, research, collab, study skills Don't connect to prior/current knowledge	Class time to work w/coaching Discuss clear instructions in advance Students analyze examples in class; what's good and how/why Online office hours
<b>Motivation</b> Lack of exemplars Anxiety, Low self-confidence Don't see relevance to course, world Don't know the steps to take (partners) Reluctant to ask for help	Find relevance to their lives, examples Offer real world authentic examples Low stakes work to practice skills, metacog. Roles and rubrics/checklists for groups Opportunity to recover after mistakes
<b>Time management</b> Procrastination, Poor planning Underestimate time required Competing commitments, family	Provide scaffolding with feedback between Drafts (multiple per project) Reminders, check-ins, checklists, timelines Offer time estimates for tasks
<b>Access to Resources</b> Financial, Mental Health, Transportation Don't know how/when to get help No out-of-class time to seek help Limited computer/internet off campus	Study teams strategize resources Support providers visit during class Work/downloads happen during class Practice good study habits in class



# 1<sup>st</sup> Study: AAC&U **TG**PHILANTHROPY

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Co-PIs: Tia Brown McNair, Ashley Finley, AAC&U  
Mary-Ann Winkelmes, *TILT* Higher Ed

## 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

Publication: ***Peer Review*** (Spring 2016)







# 1<sup>st</sup> Study: Implementation

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2014-2016 AAC&U study funded by

“Transparency and Problem-centered Learning”

- 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**



# Transparent Assignment Design Template

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## Purpose

- Skills practiced
  - Knowledge gained
- } long-term relevance to students' lives  
relation to stated learning outcomes

## •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 (real world examples where students/faculty apply those criteria)



## Results, 2 Studies:

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Boosted students' learning in 3 important ways (medium-large effect for underserved students):

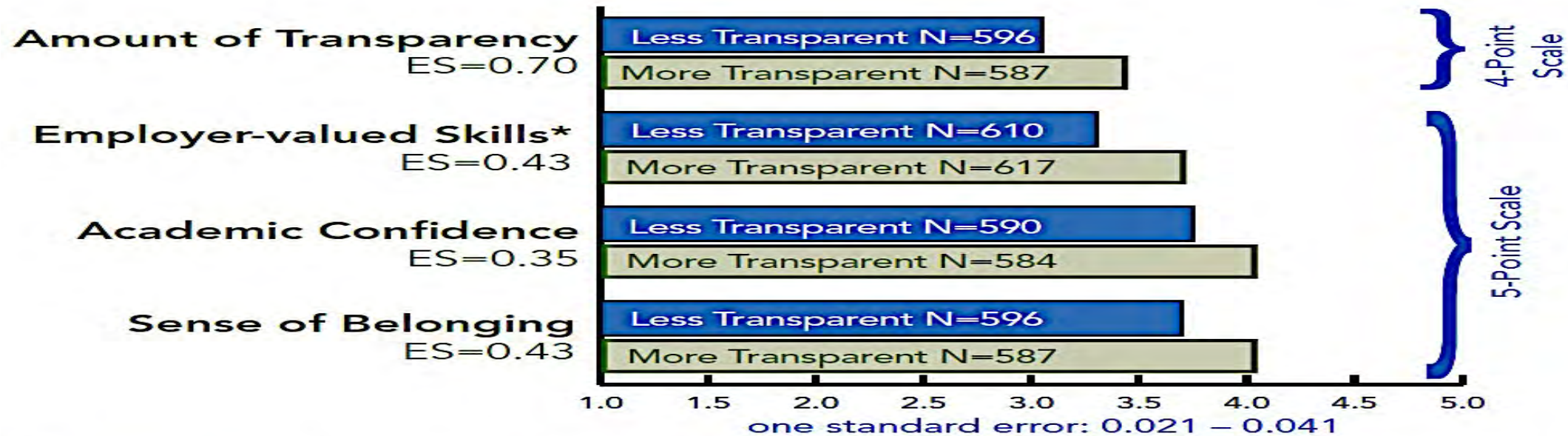
- Academic confidence
- Sense of belonging
- Metacognitive awareness of skill development (employer-valued skills, Hart Research Assoc.)
- Retention rates into 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year

**SUCCESS PREDICTORS**  
Increased persistence, grades



## Impact: Boosted Success Predictors for ALL

### All Disciplines/All Students, End of Term



KEY: N: number of students responding

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 perceived transparency ≥3.3/4

\*Hart Associates 2015, 2013





# Baseline Equivalence

## All Disciplines/All Students, Beginning of Term

### Confidence to Succeed

Please rate your confidence about your ability to succeed in this field.

ES=0.07

Please rate your confidence about your ability to succeed in school.

ES=0.003

### Skills Highly Valued by Employers\*

I am capable of learning effectively on my own.

ES=0.009

I tend to consider the ethical implications of my actions.

ES=0.031

I am able to apply the things I have learned to new problems and situations.

ES=0.036

When I get information from multiple sources, I have an easy time making connections between them.

ES=0.004

I am good at breaking down theories, ideas, and experiences into pieces, so I can consider them.

ES=0.063

I collaborate well with others on academic work.

ES=0.140

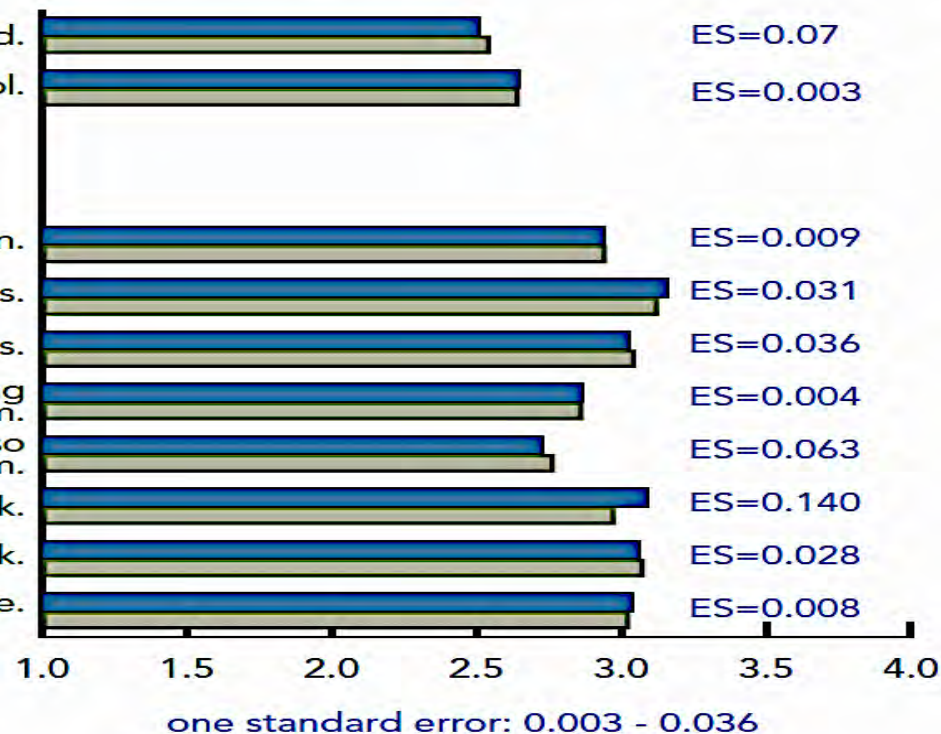
I can communicate effectively when I speak.

ES=0.028

I can express my ideas effectively when I write.

ES=0.008

- Students in Less Transparent Courses (N=630)
  - Students in More Transparent Courses (N=485)
- ES: effect size (Hedges' G)



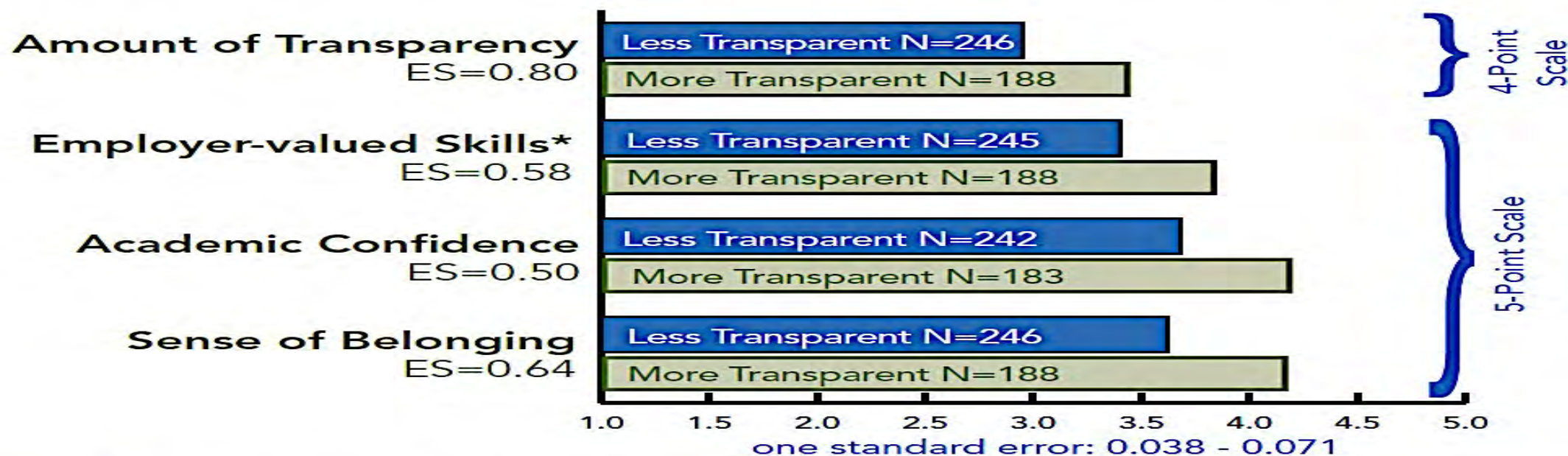
\*Hart Associates 2015, 2013





# Greater Gains for Underserved Students

## First-Generation College Students, End of Term

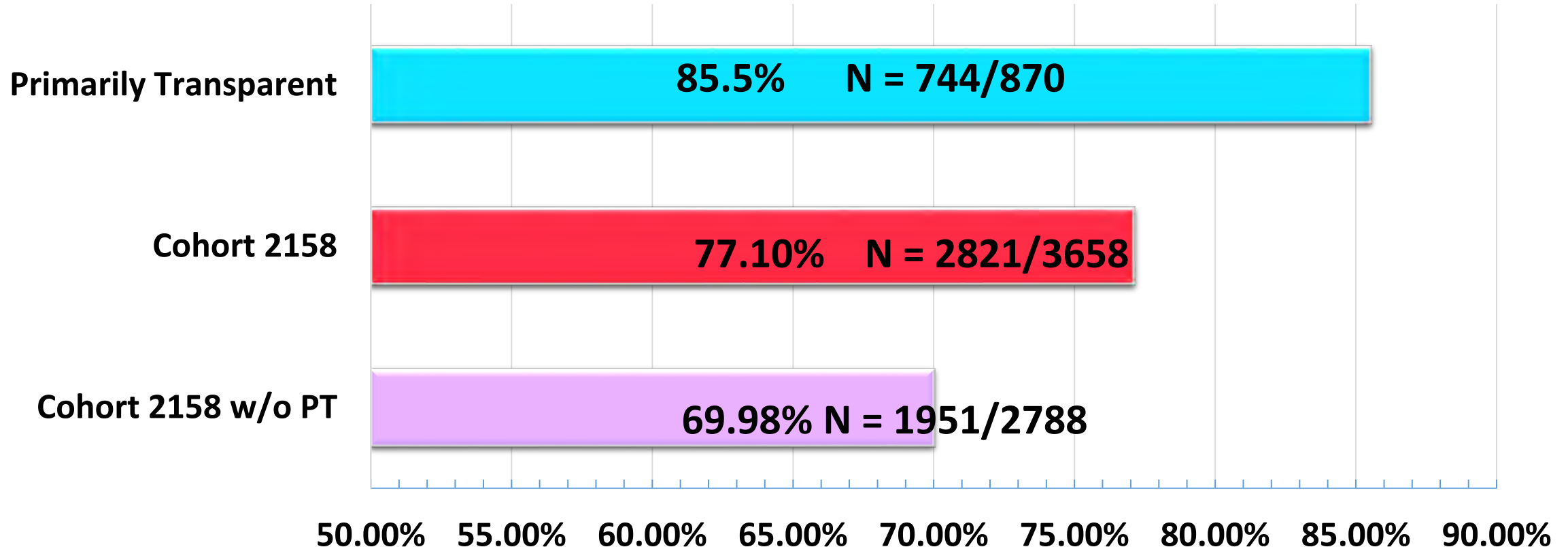


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\*Hart Associates 2015, 2013



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Study UNLV: 1-year Retention Rates Increase



**Blue:** UNLV first-time, full-time 1st year students in 2015-2016 enrolled in "primarily transparent" courses in Fall 2015 or Spring 2016, retained 10/2016

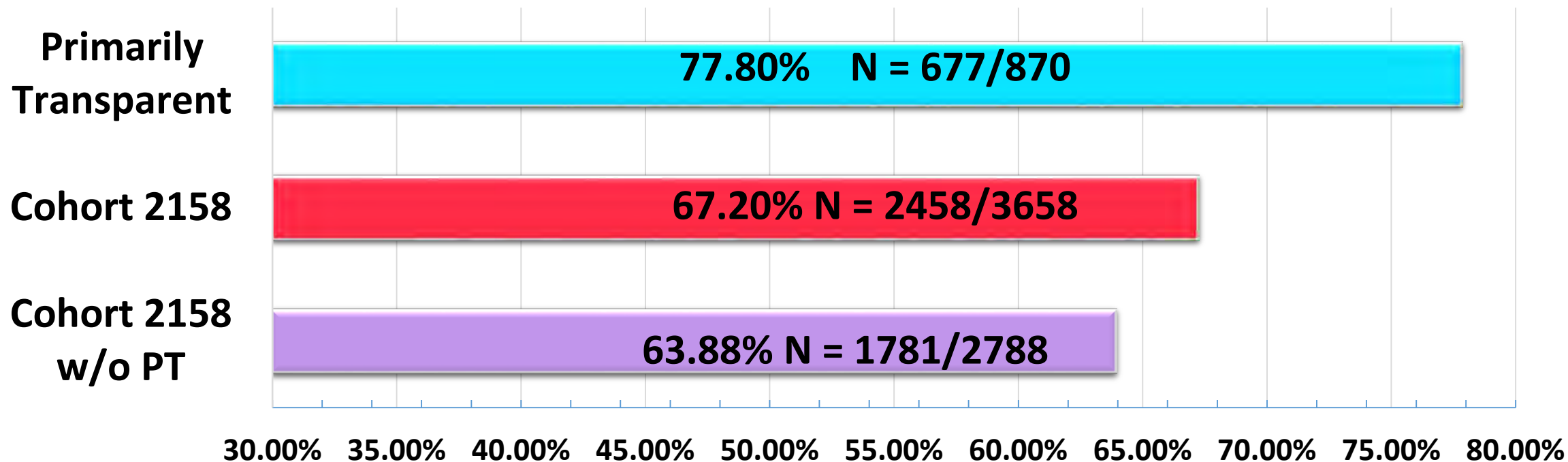
**Red:** All UNLV first-time, full-time 1st year students in 2015-2016, including those in "primarily transparent" courses, retained 10/2016

**Purple:** UNLV first-time, full-time 1st year students in 2015-2016, **excluding** those in "primarily transparent" courses, retained 10/2016

(Sources: TILT Survey; UNLV Data Warehouse/Office of Decision Support, 10/23/2017)



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Study UNLV: 2-year Retention Rates Increase



**Blue:** UNLV first-time, full-time 1st year students in 2015-2016 enrolled in "primarily transparent" courses in Fall 2015 or Spring 2016, retained 10/2017

**Red:** All UNLV first-time, full-time 1st year students in 2015-2016, including those in 2015-2016 "primarily transparent" courses, retained 10/2017

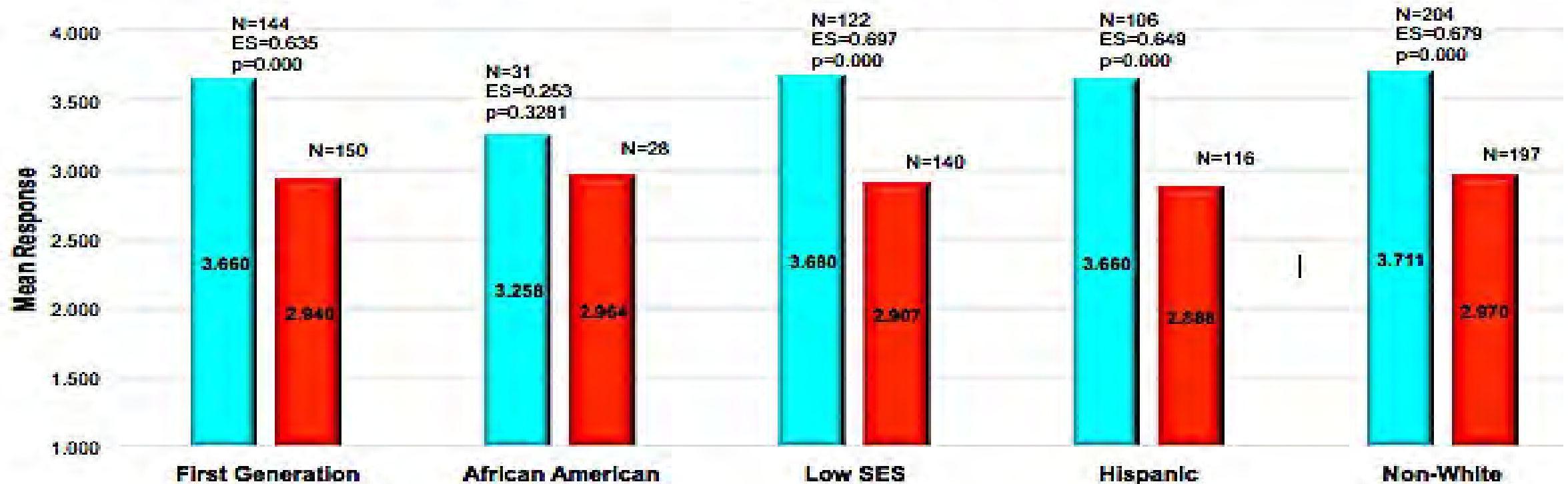
**Purple:** UNLV first-time, full-time 1st year students in 2015-2016, excluding those in 2015-2016 "primarily transparent" courses, retained 10/2017

(Sources: TILT Survey; UNLV Data Warehouse/Office of Decision Support, 10/23/2017 and 03/02/2018)



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Study UNLV: Students See Increased Skill Development

### Helped Collaborating Effectively: 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 Spring 2015-Fall 2015



# 2<sup>nd</sup> Study UNLV: Students See Increased Skill Development

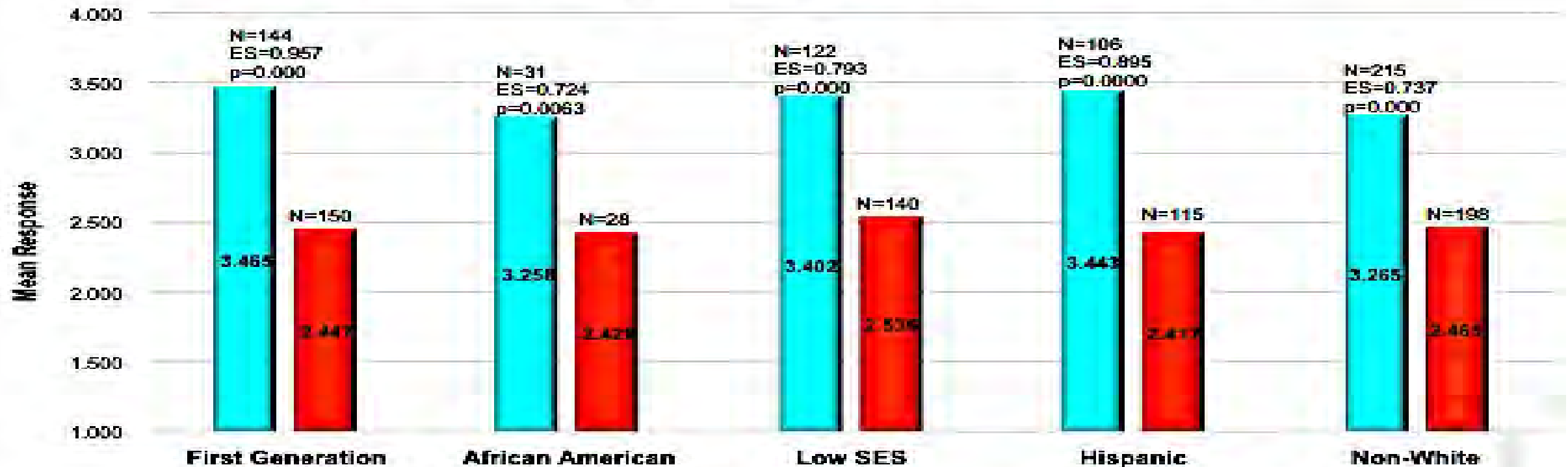
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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Study UNLV: Students See Increased Skill Development

### 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 Spring 2015-Fall 2015



# Two Studies: The TILT Intervention

## Purpose

- Skills practiced
  - Knowledge gained
- } long-term relevance to students' lives

## •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 (real world examples where students/faculty apply those criteria)

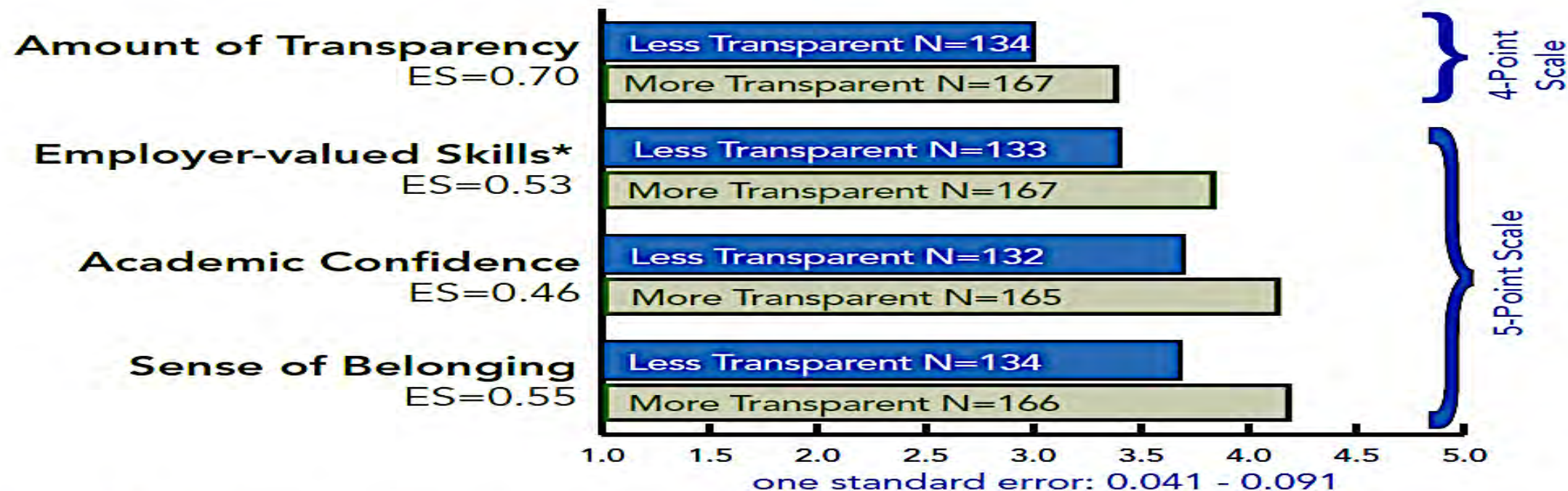
# OPTIONAL

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Questions / Comments



## Multiracial Students, End of Term



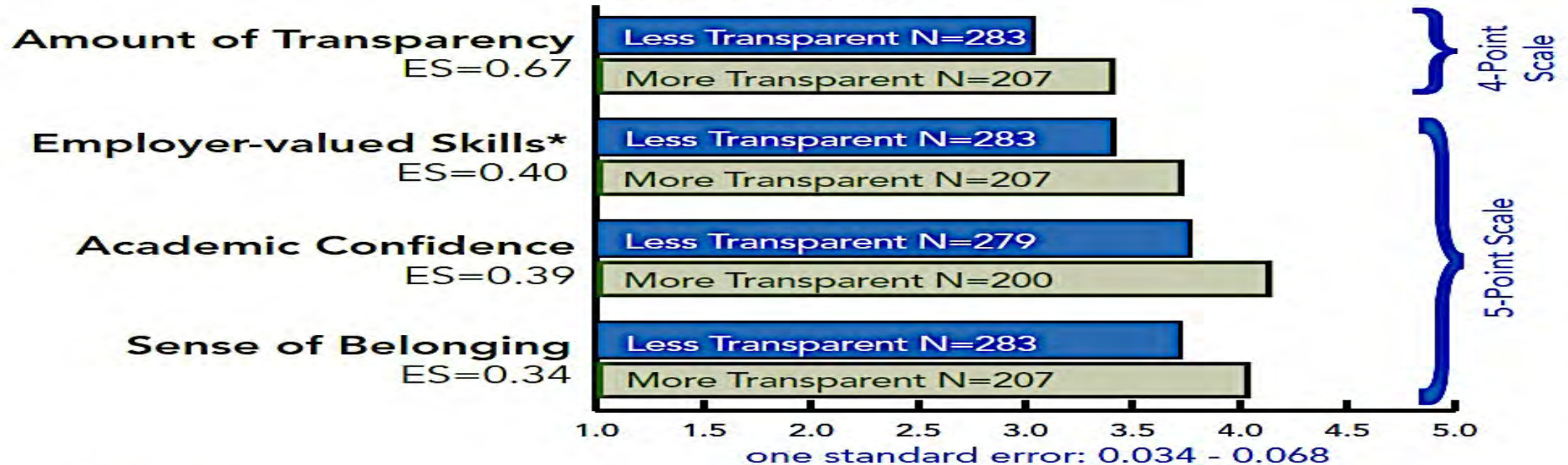
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\*Hart Associates 2015, 2013





## Low Socioeconomic Status Students (Bottom Quartile), End of Term



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Less Transparent: mean perceived transparency <3.3/4

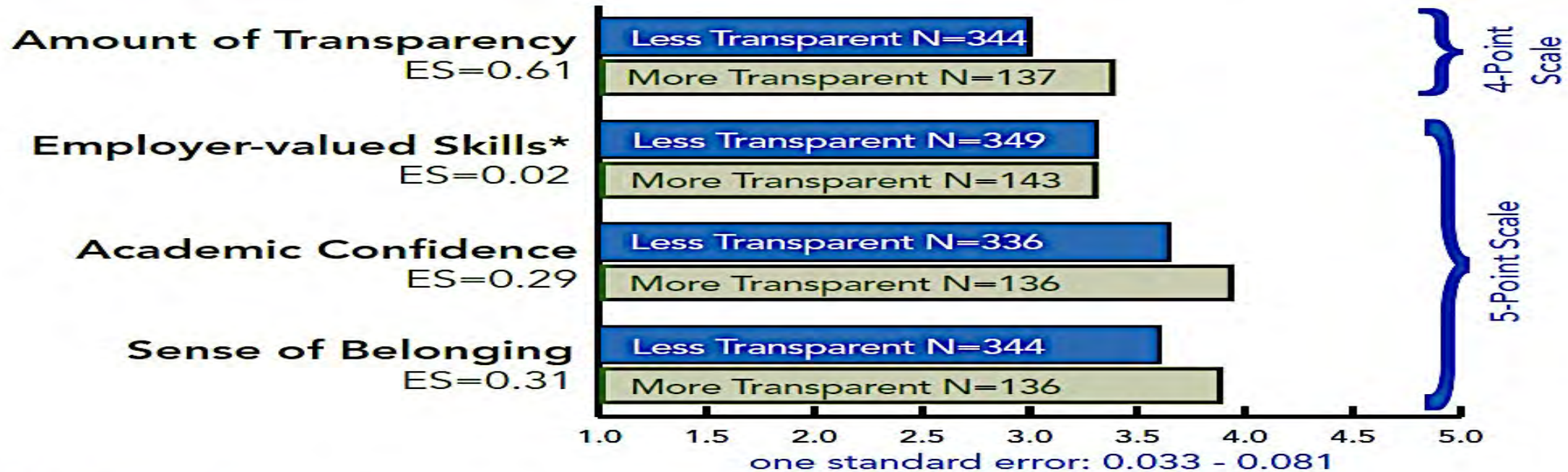
More Transparent: mean perceived transparency ≥3.3/4

\*Hart Associates 2015, 2013





# STEM Students, End of Term

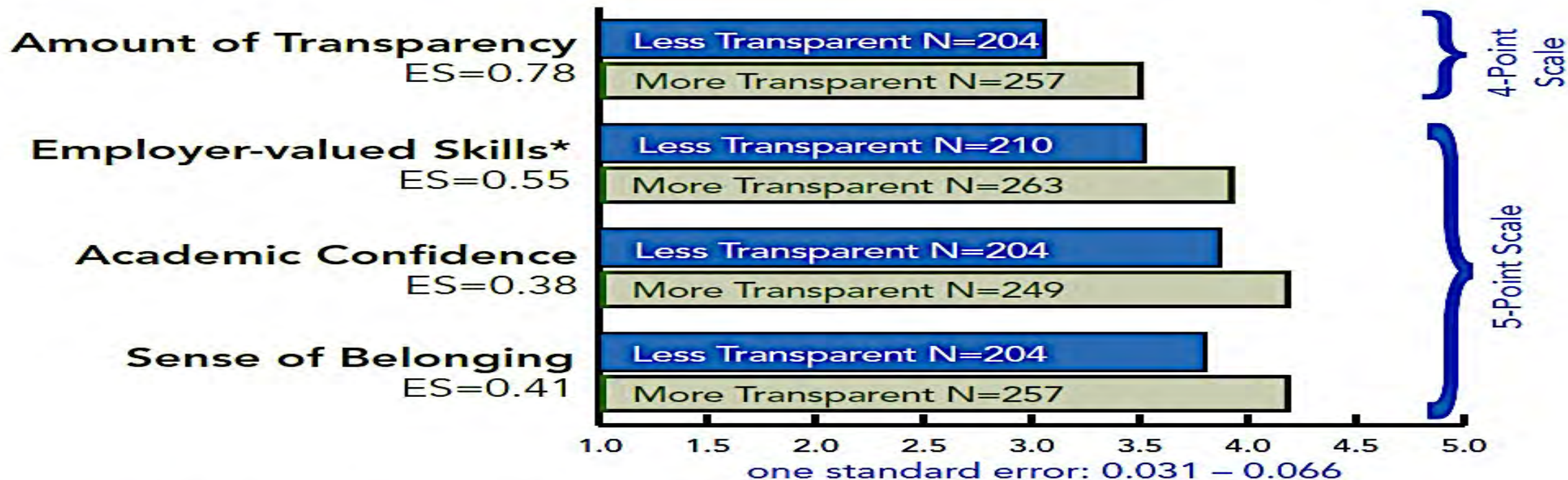


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\*Hart Associates 2015, 2013



## Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, End of Term



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**Less Transparent:** mean perceived transparency <3.3/4  
**More Transparent:** mean perceived transparency ≥3.3/4

\*Hart Associates 2015, 2013



# Perceived Transparency in the Course

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36. In this course, I knew the purpose of each assignment.

37. Each assignment included a section that explained how the assignment was related to the objectives of the course.

38. My instructor identified a specific learning goal for each assignment.

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36. In this course, I knew the steps required to complete my assignments.

37. Each assignment included a detailed set of instructions for completing it.

38. My instructor provided detailed directions for each learning activity that was assigned.

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36. In this course, I knew how my work would be evaluated.

37. My instructor provided students with annotated examples of past students' work.

38. My instructor provided tools I could use to assess the quality of my and others' work.

----Never, Sometimes, Often, Always

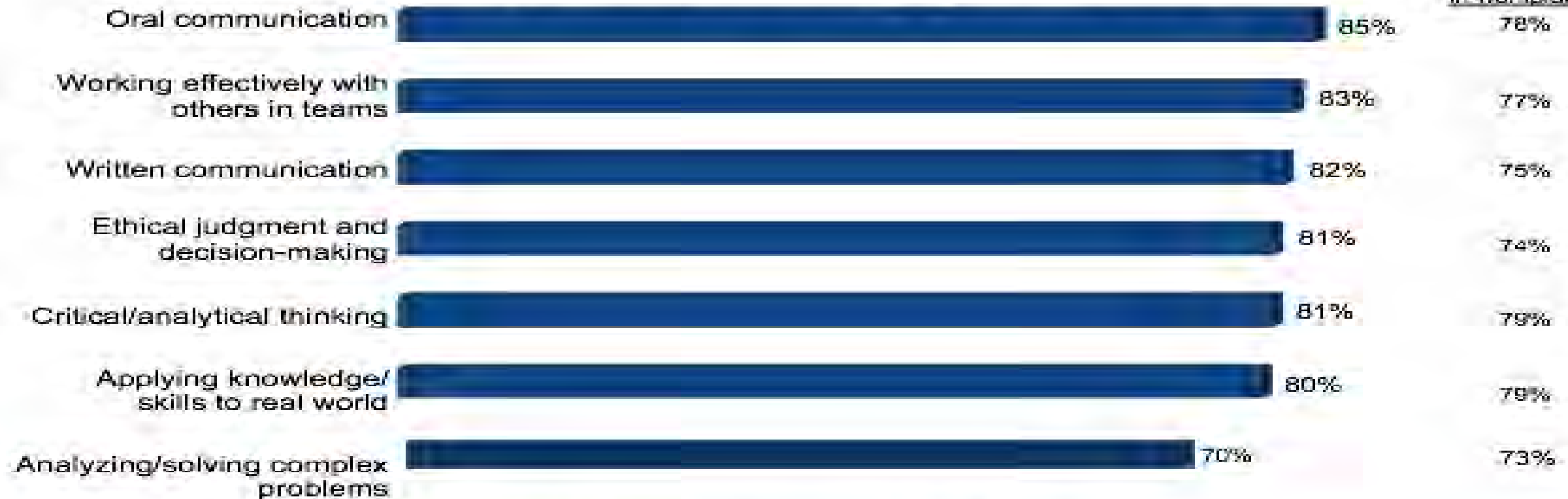




## Learning Outcomes that at Least Four in Five Employers Rate as Very Important

*Proportions of employers rating each skill/knowledge area as very important for recent college graduates to have\**

*Students:  
very important  
for success  
in workplace\**



\*8, 9, 10 ratings on zero-to-10 scale, 10 = very important



# Awareness of Improvement of Employer-valued Skills

4. How much has this course helped you in writing effectively?
5. How much has this course helped you in communicating your ideas effectively in your spoken statements?
6. How much has this course helped you in collaborating effectively with others?
8. How much has this course helped you in improving your ability to separate and examine the pieces of an idea, experience, or theory?
9. How much has this course helped you in learning how to connect information from a variety of sources?
10. How much has this course helped you in learning how to apply concepts to practical problems or in new situations?
11. How much has this course helped you in considering the ethical implications of your actions?

Not at all, A little, A moderate amount, A lot, A great deal

22. As a result of taking this course are you a better or worse judge of the strengths and weaknesses of ideas, or has the course made no difference?
24. As a result of taking this course are you a better or worse judge of the reliability of information from various sources, or has the course made no difference?

Much worse, Somewhat worse, No difference, Somewhat Better, Much Better

32. Are you likely to apply knowledge and skills you gained from this course in contexts outside of this course?

Not likely, Slightly likely, Moderately likely, Very likely, Extremely likely

## New STEM-focused skills questions:

How much has this course helped you in designing experiments or processes to address a problem?

How much has this course helped you in analyzing and interpreting data and/or problems?

How much has this course helped you in choosing methods appropriate to solving a problem?

Response options: Not at all, A little, A moderate amount, A lot, A great deal





# Skills: Beginning and End of Course

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The following 10 questions are asked at the beginning and end of term:

- I can express my ideas effectively when I write.
- I can communicate effectively when I speak.
- I collaborate well with others on academic work.
- I am good at breaking down theories, ideas and experiences into pieces so I can consider them.
- When I am given information from multiple sources, I have an easy time making connections between them.
- I am able to apply the things I have learned to new problems and situations.
- I tend to consider the ethical implications of my actions.
- I am capable of learning on my own.
  - Response options: Never, Sometimes, Often, Always
- Please rate your confidence about your ability to succeed in school.
- Please rate your confidence about your ability to succeed in this field.
  - Response options: Low, Moderate, High



# Academic Confidence & Sense of Belonging

## Confidence

30. Please rate your confidence about your ability to succeed in school.
31. Please rate your confidence about your ability to succeed in this field. Low, Moderate, High
25. As a result of taking this course are you more or less confident about your ability to succeed in school, or has the course made no difference?
26. As a result of taking this course are you more or less confident about your ability to succeed in this field, or has the course made no difference?
- Much less confident, Somewhat less, No difference, Somewhat more, Much more confident

## Belonging

34. How much did class meetings incorporate the students' suggestions and interests?
35. How much did the instructor value you as a student?

**New:** How much did this course help you feel that you are a member of your school's community?  
Not at all, A little, A moderate amount, A lot, A great deal

**New:** I feel that I am a member of my school's community. Never, Sometimes, Often, Always

**New:** When things go wrong



# Examples from Foundational Research

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## How to Offer Transparency in Assignments

# Research on Learning

# Implications for Transparent Instruction

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



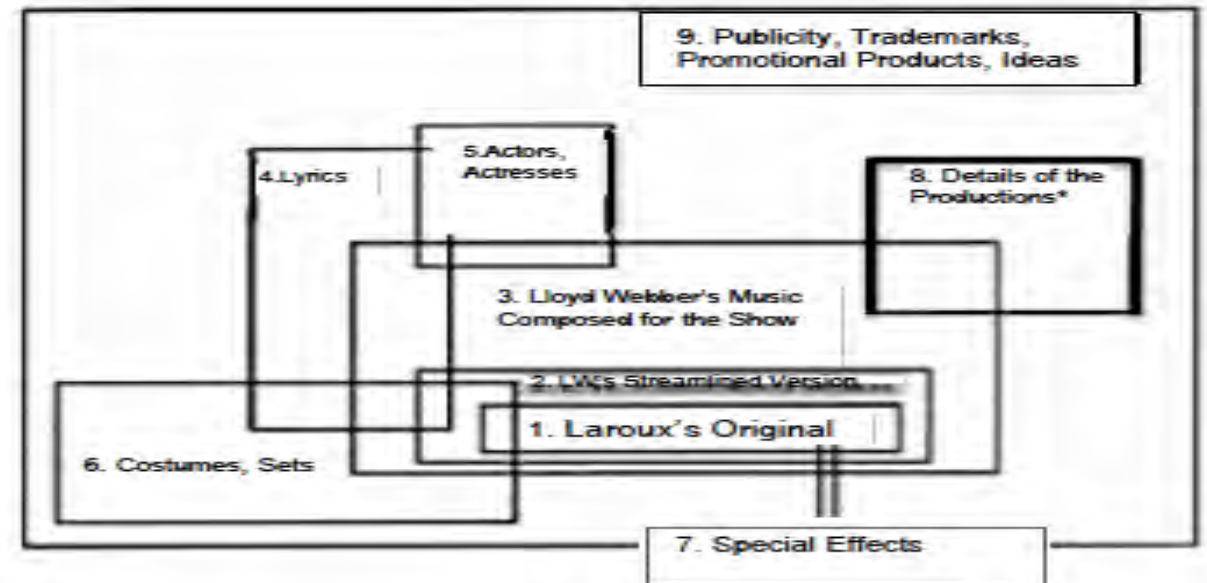
# 1.Varied and/or flexible formats appeal equitably

## Music in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*

**Argument:** Andrew Lloyd Webber's orchestration relies on conventional Western styles of musical phrasing and instrumentation. It exploits the natural tendencies of music to correspond with the ebb and flow of emotions, and allows the music to reflect the mood and/or tone of a scene, thereby making the musical accessible to a large general audience.

- 1) Introduction
  - a. The popularity of Phantom and its music
  - b. Possible reasons: story, spectacle, characters' success mainly comes from orchestration
- 2) Critics of Andrew Lloyd Webber's music
  - a. What reviewers criticize
  - b. Why they are wrong
- 3) Why the music does deserve praise
  - a. Tactics of Western music that Lloyd Webber uses
  - b. Exploits the natural tendencies of musical phrasing
  - c. Orchestrates the numbers with instruments commonly associated with different moods
  - d. Relies on recurring themes, bringing back melodies associated in audience's memories with certain character roles and types.
  - e. In scenes with romantic implications, couples orchestration with rhythm of the lyrics to amplify sensuous overtones and transmit

This map shows how I visualize that Lloyd Webber's Phantom production came into existence. Before I could come up with an outline for my argument, I had to pin down all the ideas that I wanted to use in a compact form. Most of my ideas were still fuzzy, and refused to come into focus until I constructed this visual aid to guide the development of my ideas.







# 1. Varied and/or flexible formats appeal equitably

- What is your topic? What position will you take?
- What are the major primary and secondary sources essential to this topic? List full citations. What main pieces of evidence will support your idea(s) about the topic?
- What are possible counterarguments? What evidence might support these? What are some possible ways to refute counterarguments? What evidence can be used?
- What problems or questions do you have?



## 2. Show students your plan for building their skills in a sequence

### Assignments for a sample business course

This chart indicates how each required assignment for the course helps you practice the disciplinary skills needed for passing the course.

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	Use of information technology <sup>4</sup>	Communication abilities: oral and/or written <sup>4</sup>	Teamwork: Understanding group and individual dynamics in organizations <sup>4</sup>	Understanding of domestic and global economic environments	Multicultural and diversity understanding <sup>4</sup>	Analytic skills <sup>4</sup>	Applying learned concepts to practical situations <sup>4</sup>	Understanding of professional responsibility, including ethical reasoning regarding self, organizations, society <sup>4</sup>	Research: locating, evaluating and selecting useful information and resources <sup>4</sup>	Reflective, self-evaluative thinking skills <sup>4</sup>
1.	8/31/NOON		+								
2.	9/1		+								
3.	9/11	+	+	+							
4.	9/11	+			+						
5.	9/25				+						
6.	10/9						+		+		
7.	10/23						+		+		
8.	11/6					+			+		+
9.	11/13							+	+	+	
10.	12/4							+	+	+	+
11.	12/10							+	+	+	+

<sup>4</sup> from American Association of Colleges and Schools of Business "Assurance of Learning Standards," in *Eligibility Procedures and Accreditation Standards*...

<sup>4</sup> from Benjamin Bloom, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*

<sup>4</sup> from Han Research Associates, *It Takes More than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success*, April 2013.



## 2. Show students your plan for building their skills in a sequence

### Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

Competence	Skills	Assignment Cues
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• observation and recall of information</li><li>• knowledge of dates, events, places</li><li>• knowledge of major ideas</li><li>• mastery of subject matter</li></ul>	list, define, tell, describe, identify, show, label, collect, examine, tabulate, quote, name, who, when, where, etc.
Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• understanding information</li><li>• grasp meaning</li><li>• translate knowledge into new context</li><li>• interpret facts, compare, contrast</li><li>• order, group, infer causes</li><li>• predict consequences</li></ul>	summarize, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, distinguish, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extend
Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• use information</li><li>• use methods, concepts, theories in new situations</li><li>• solve problems using required skills or knowledge</li></ul>	apply, demonstrate, calculate, complete, illustrate, show, solve, examine, modify, relate, change, classify, experiment, discover
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• seeing patterns</li></ul>	analyze, compare, order



## 2. Show students your plan for building their skills in a sequence

### **UNIT 1 SKILLS) Understanding the frameworks: contexts, techniques, terms, art as history**

Jan 20: Michelangelo's David and its meanings over time

Focus questions: Who made it and how? Who commissioned it and why? Who saw it, used it, and how? How does it involve or appeal to viewers? How has its context and meaning changed? What happened to it over time? What does it mean to us now?

Jan 22: Places and purposes of art in daily life in Renaissance Italy

Reading: Paoletti 12-15, 43

Focus questions:

- What are some examples of religious art and architecture in contemporary cultures?
- How might examples of religious art and architecture in Renaissance culture be similar/different?
- How do we define "religious" and "Renaissance" and "art," and how do our definitions affect the ways we study and understand the history, art and artifacts of Renaissance Italy?

Jan 27: Materials, Techniques and Conditions of Artistic production ...

### **UNIT 2 SKILLS) Analysis and Synthesis: using artifacts, primary and secondary sources to construct the story**

Feb 19: Formal Visual Analysis practice in class ...

Feb 26: Analysis of primary sources: Michelangelo's Last Judgment

Reading: primary sources in class

Focus questions:

- Are primary sources more reliable than secondary sources?
- What makes a source reliable?
- When primary sources contradict each other, how to judge?
- When secondary sources contradict each other, how to judge?



## 3. Specify criteria and encourage self-monitoring

### Core assessment criteria for essays

1. Addressing the question	<p>The relevance of the content of the essay to the question or title set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Good essays</b> select relevant material (knowledge, concepts, interpretation, theoretical models, others' perspectives).</li><li>• <b>Better essays</b> make it clear throughout how the material is relevant to the question.</li></ul>
2. Using evidence	<p>The use of externally sourced material, such as research findings, facts, quotations, or other forms of information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Good essays</b> include information from outside sources that backs up the points made in the essay.</li><li>• <b>Better essays</b> explicitly highlight or interpret the evidence to support a more general claim or idea or point being made in the essay.</li></ul>
3. Developing argument	<p>The construction of a coherent and convincing set of reasons for holding a particular point of view; the following of an analytical path leading from a starting point to a concluding point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Good essays</b> contain expressions of positions on the issues raised by the essay.</li><li>• <b>Better essays</b> develop arguments throughout the essay, with each element building on the last.</li></ul>
4. Critical evaluation/analysis	<p>Determining the value, significance, strengths and/or</p>





## 3. Specify criteria and encourage self-monitoring

### **CHEM 223 - Analytical Chemistry Lab**

Kasia Kudzilo, University of Illinois

This document is an attempt to clarify the lab report organizational summary found in the online CHEM 223 Lab Manual.

#### **I. Title of Experiment**

#### **II. Introduction**

This section should concisely state the purpose of the experiment and the general means of accomplishing that purpose i.e., the method or instrumentation used. This includes stating your unknown (ex. Unknown A) and what you were trying to find out about it.

#### **III. Procedure**

This section should only reference the procedure in the online manual and any deviations from it. The procedure is not meant to be repeated. A deviation example would be if there were different solution concentrations used than what was given in the manual or any necessary added steps. Other important information includes drying time, temperature, cooling time, reagent amounts and not just what was given in the manual but what you actually did). For example, if the manual said to weigh out 1.0 g NaCl, write what you actually got on the balance – 1.2 g, 0.9 g etc.



## 4. Discuss multiple examples of successful work

Carol Augspurger, School of Integrative Biology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Used by permission of Carol Augspurger.

*Use "invented triangle" to  
organize introduction.  
First, give big picture/context.*

*Topic sentence of paragraph;  
all sentences in paragraph  
relate to this topic.*

*Background information.*

*Key references included.*

*No direct quotations – only  
paraphrases with sources.  
Proper literature format used.*

*Importance of study  
highlighted (Why should  
reader care?)*

### INTRODUCTION (4-5 paragraphs)

Both extrinsic and intrinsic factors affect the relative population size of species of small mammals in local habitats. Extrinsic factors may include the amount of food availability (Bell 1989), presence of competing species (Holt et al. 1995), and the presence of predators (Batzli and Lin 2001). Intrinsic factors may relate to their diet and food preferences (Heskie 2004), competitive ability (Holt et al. 1995), and body shape (Hoffmeister 1989) that affects their speed and agility in escaping predators. Differences in these factors are expected to result in varying population sizes of species of small mammals among local habitats. Understanding the factors that affect a species' population size is important



## 5. Structure Peer Practice and Feedback Activities

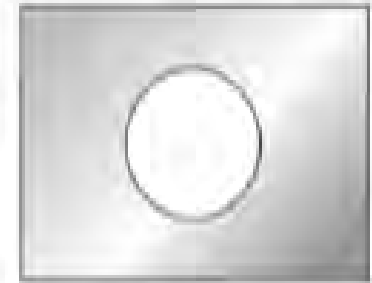
Teach a concept

- Ask a multiple choice question to test students' understanding
- Students answer the question; indicate confidence
- Students discuss for 1 minute
- Students answer the question again: greater accuracy and confidence

Mazur Group: improving education through research: [www.mazur.harvard.edu](http://www.mazur.harvard.edu)

### 1) EXAMPLE CONCEPTTEST

Consider a rectangular metal plate with a circular hole in it.



When the plate is uniformly heated, the diameter of the hole

1. increases.
2. stays the same.
3. decreases.

Eric Mazur, Harvard University

# 5. Structure Peer Practice and Feedback Activities

## Peer Response Sheet (Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard U)

Read the paper through once, rather quickly, without pausing to write comments. Then put the paper aside and answer ...

1. What single feature of the paper stands out to you as a reader?
2. What do you think is the writer's main point?
3. Was there anything in the paper that seemed confusing to you?
4. Underline the thesis statement. Is it clearly stated? If not, what seems confusing?
5. Is there any place where the writer needs to support an idea with more concrete detail or explanation? If so, where?  
...
8. List at least two things you like about the paper.
9. What would you like to know more about? What questions do you still have?
10. Ask of the essay "so what?" after you finish reading. ... "in what way(s) is this interesting, surprising, intriguing, etc.?" If the paper lacks a "so what," point that out and discuss the possibilities.



## 6. Students know purpose, tasks, criteria in advance

### Purpose

- Skills practiced
- Knowledge gained



long-term relevance to students' lives  
relation to stated learning outcomes

### •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 (real world examples where students/faculty apply those criteria)





## 6. Students know purpose, tasks, criteria in advance

### Purpose

- Skills you'll practice by doing this assignment
- Content knowledge you'll gain
- How you can use these in your life beyond this course/college

### Task

- What to do
- How to do it (steps to follow, mistakes to avoid)

### Criteria for success:

- Checklist or rubric in advance so you can self-evaluate
- What excellence looks like (real world examples where you and professor apply those criteria)



## 6. Students know purpose, tasks, criteria in advance

---

**Before** you begin working on an assignment or class activity, ask the instructor to help you understand the following. (Bring this document to help frame the conversation.)

Purpose

Skills you'll practice by doing this assignment

Content knowledge you'll gain from doing this assignment

How you can use these in your life beyond the context of this course, in and beyond college

Task

What to do

How to do it (Are there recommended steps? What roadblocks/mistakes should you avoid?)

Criteria

Checklist (Are you on the right track? How to know you're doing what's expected?)

Annotated examples of successful work

(What's good about these examples? Use the checklist to identify the successful parts.)

# Sample Assignments to Discuss

---



## Sample A, p. 7

---

1) Read the assignment and look for:

### Purpose

- Skills practiced
  - Knowledge gained
- } relevance to students

2) Wave when you locate the purpose.



## Sample A, p. 7

---

**1) Read the assignment and look for:**

### **Purpose**

- Skills practiced
  - Knowledge gained
- } relevance to students

**2) Wave when you locate the purpose.**

**3) (2 min) Talk to your colleagues: Do you agree?**





## Sample A, p. 7

---

**1) Read the assignment and look for:**

### **Purpose**

- Skills practiced
  - Knowledge gained
- } relevance to students

**2) Wave when you locate the purpose.**

**3) (2 min) Talk to your colleagues: Do you agree?**

**4) Report back**



## Sample C, p. 8

---

**1) Read the assignment and look for:**

- How is it different from Sample A?**
- How is it similar to Sample A?**



## Sample C, p. 8

---

**1) Read the assignment and look for:**

- **How is it different from Sample A?**
- **How is it similar to Sample A?**

**2) Discuss with your colleagues: Do you agree?**



## Sample C, p. 8

---

**1) Read the assignment and look for:**

- **How is it different from Sample A?**
- **How is it similar to Sample A?**

**2) Discuss with your colleagues: Do you agree?**

**3) Report back**



# How did we do?

---

## PURPOSE:

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

## TASKS:

- (me) Review: summary of research findings, cases
- (you) Apply: to sample assignments

## CRITERIA:

You leave with

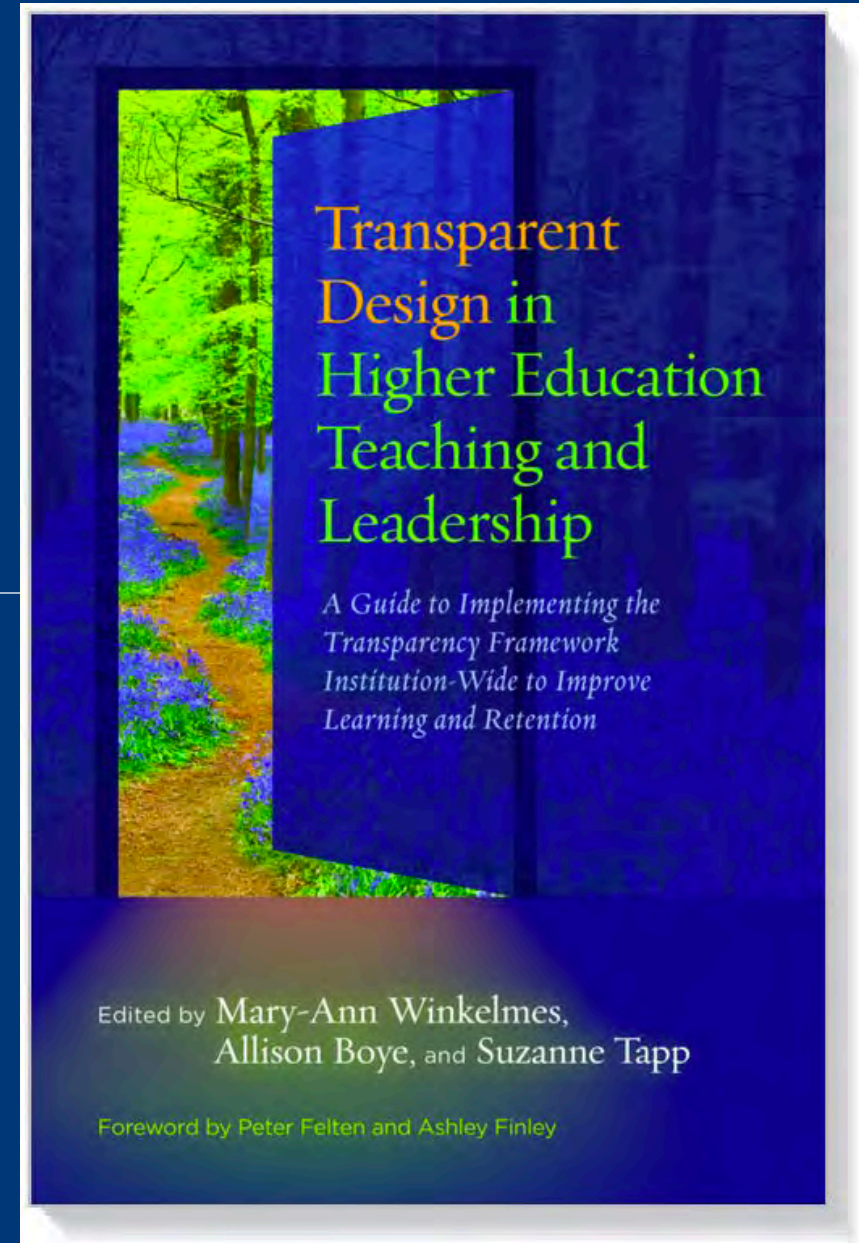
- Understanding of research
- Strategies for applying Transparent Framework to your contexts



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# YOUR ASSIGNMENTS

---



Sit with a disciplinary stranger

*show of hands:*  
*Arts and Humanities*  
*Social Sciences*  
*STEM*



# Workshop Overview

---

## Purpose

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

## Task

- 5 steps, 3-4 min each, in pairs

## Criteria

- draft you can use in your course or context (center/office)
- helpful insights from colleagues ***as novices***





## Think / Write (3 min)

---

1 of 6

Think about the purpose of your assignment.

Write your purpose in 1-2 sentences for a student audience  
(or colleague/mentee/employee audience).



# Partners: Share purpose; describe assignments

2 of 6

**(2 min each)**



# Offer Feedback about the **PURPOSE**, 2 min each

---

3 of 6

## Five years after completing the assignment,

1. What essential **knowledge** should students/colleagues retain from doing this assignment?
2. What **skills** should they still be able to perform from this?
3. Why/How are these knowledge/skills important 5 years later?



## Revise the **PURPOSE** Statement (2 min)

---

4 of 6

Revise your purpose statement (for an audience of students or colleagues):

1. Overall summary statement
2. What essential **knowledge** should students/colleagues retain from doing this assignment (5 years later)?
3. What **skills** should they still be able to perform?
4. Why/How are these knowledge/skills important 5 years later?



# Share, Offer Feedback on the **TASK**

---

(2 min each)

- List out loud all the steps you'd take (as a novice) to do your partner's assignment.





# Make Any Final Revisions to Your **TASK** (1 min)

---

## (1 min each)

Bloom's taxonomy verbs (p. 2) may help.



# Partners Offer Feedback on the **CRITERIA**

---

What would a novice student or colleague **NEED** to answer yes:  
(3 minutes each)

- Are you confident you are doing the task effectively?
- Are you confident you are doing excellent work?
- Have you discussed multiple good examples of real-world work in this discipline and how they meet/approach the criteria?



# Make Any Final Revisions to Your **CRITERIA**

---

(2 min each)



# How did we do?

---

## PURPOSE:

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

## TASKS:

- (me) Review: summary of research findings, cases
- (you) Apply: to sample assignments

## CRITERIA:

You leave with

- Understanding of research
- Strategies for applying Transparent Framework to your contexts



Brandeis

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