

DRAFT Checklist for Designing a Transparent Assignment

Thank you for helping to test this DRAFT checklist. Please send your suggestions and feedback to mary-ann.winkelmes@unlv.edu

PURPOSE:

Skills

- Does your purpose statement specify a skill or skill set that students will gain from doing this assignment?
- Does your purpose statement link that particular skill set to the larger context of:
 - recent topics of class sessions?
 - this part of the course?
 - the whole course?
 - the major? the discipline?
 - your institution's main learning outcomes?
- Does your purpose statement indicate the relevance and/or usefulness of this skill to the students' lives:
 - beyond the course? beyond the major? beyond college?

Knowledge

- Does your purpose statement specify content knowledge that students will practice while doing the assignment?
- Does your purpose statement link that particular knowledge to examples/contexts where this skill was important in the context of:
 - recent class sessions?
 - this part of the course?
 - the whole course?
 - the major? the discipline?
 - your institution's main learning outcomes?
- Does your statement indicate the relevance and/or usefulness of this knowledge to the students' lives:
 - beyond the course? beyond the major? beyond college
- Would this assignment benefit from segmenting it into several assignments, each one focused on a discrete set of skills that should be mastered to insure students' successful completion of the next assignment in the sequence?

TASK:

- Does your description of the task:
 - Identify the very first thing students should do when they begin working on the assignment?
 - The very next thing they should do?
 - The next, etc.
- Does your description of the task help students to avoid wasting their time on unnecessary steps, unproductive time expenditure?
- Does your description help students to focus their time efficiently on producing the highest quality work possible in the time given?
- Would students benefit from some practice exercises (in the form of a pre-task) in class to prepare them to perform the task outside of class on the graded assignment?

CRITERIA:

- Can students use the criteria while they are working on the assignment to determine whether they are completing the assignment efficiently and effectively?
- Do the criteria take the form of a checklist students can use to evaluate the quality of their efforts while they are working on the assignment?
- Does the checklist specify characteristics of high quality work for this assignment?
- Can you help students apply the checklist to evaluating some sample work in class, so they understand how each criterion would look in practice?
- With your guidance, can the students collaboratively annotate several examples of work to indicate where/how the work satisfies the criteria? (These annotated examples may then be shared as a reference for students to use while they work on their own assignments.)
- Would a rubric ([AAC&U VALUE examples](#)) be helpful to students for this assignment?
- Does the rubric provide an amount of information that helps students at this phase in their learning?
- Does the rubric provide an overwhelming or counterproductive amount of information for students at this phase in their learning?
- Did you provide examples of good work, annotated to identify exactly where and how this work satisfies your criteria?
- Can you provide students with examples in class so they and you can test out your criteria checklist or rubric to be sure students know how to apply the criteria to multiple examples of work, and eventually their own work?

Less Transparent

AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY - Visual Assignment

SHARED READING: James Morton Turner, *The Promise of Wilderness: America: Environmental Politics Since 1964* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013)

ASSIGNMENT: Create a “visual narrative” consisting of approximately 3-6 images with one-paragraph captions and list of sources. You should also include a “mind map,” as discussed, explaining the evolutions of thought, culture, politics under review. Imagine this will be part of an exhibit open to leading scholars of the field but also a general audience and undergraduate students. Due March 17 in class.

More Transparent

Visual Assignment How to Read Photographs for Environmental History Research (25%)

Due Date: Tuesday, December 12, 2017 11:59 PM

Points Possible: 100

Purpose: The purpose of this assignment is to provide an opportunity for you to do some primary research in environmental history and use your insights about the field w interpretation of topic of importance to students of the field.

Skills: Learn and practice the techniques of visual analysis and deep reading of photographs that support research in the field of environmental history. Learn how to use more familiar primary sources such as maps and documents to support deep reading of photographs. Learn how to better explain historic context with images as part of the evidence for argument and analysis. Understand how reading historic photographs enhances ability of environmental historians to study cultural landscapes overtime.

Knowledge: By doing this assignment you will better understand interactions of nature and culture over time. More specifically you will gain insights into the environmental history of Southern Nevada and the American Southwest.

Tasks:

1. Carefully survey the Landscapes of Southern Nevada digital collection (link below) and note photographs that you wish to study in more depth.
2. Survey the primary documents and historic maps included in the collection.
3. Choose an individual image to analyze
4. Search for one related primary document in the collection and one related historic map that will aid your analysis of your image.
5. Decide what broader environmental history topic, theme or research area these three sources might support. For example, land use, resource conservation, water, etc....
6. Use the Library of Congress Photo Analysis worksheet (attached) to guide your deep reading of your photograph keeping in mind that you are using these sources to better understand an environmental history research topic, theme or issue.
7. Based on your analysis and notes from the worksheet write a concise but detailed analysis of your photograph. Then explain how this photographic primary source expands our knowledge of your chosen environmental history topic

Criteria for Success: Submit your completed (500-800 word) analysis with your photograph attached below and in the Photo Analysis Discussion Forum for review by your peers. Review the submissions of your classmates and participate in discussion of assignment results. Adequate assignments will include clear responses to all parts of the assignment. Excellent assignments will be complete, with careful analysis of the photograph and insightful use of the photograph as a source to understand an environmental history topic, theme or issue.