

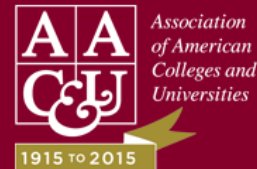
FACULTY COLLABORATIVES

Catalyzing Collaborative Work on Assignment Design

Webinar #6

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leap.aacu.org/toolkit/projects/faculty-project/participant-resources





Project Overview

Catalyzing Collaborative Work on Assignment Design: Lessons from NILOA's Assignment Library Initiative

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The Plan

- Setting the stage
- Thinking about assignments
- Models for campus work
- Resources

**--Ideas about how your campus or system or state
can engage more faculty more deeply
In learning-centered reform**

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

NILOA's mission is to discover and disseminate effective use of assessment data to strengthen undergraduate education and support institutions in their assessment efforts.

● SURVEYS ● WEB SCANS ● CASE STUDIES ● FOCUS GROUPS ●
OCCASIONAL PAPERS ● WEBSITE ● RESOURCES ● NEWSLETTER ●
PRESENTATIONS ● TRANSPARENCY FRAMEWORK ● FEATURED WEBSITES ●
ACCREDITATION RESOURCES ● ASSESSMENT EVENT CALENDAR ●
ASSESSMENT NEWS ● MEASURING QUALITY INVENTORY ● POLICY
ANALYSIS ● ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN ● DEGREE QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE
AND TUNING ● ASSIGNMENT LIBRARY INITIATIVE



www.learningoutcomesassessment.org

What is the DQP?

- A framework for what students should be expected to know and do in all majors
- In 5 areas of proficiency
- At 3 successive degree levels

1. Intellectual Skills
2. Specialized Knowledge
3. Broad Integrative Knowledge
4. Civic and Global Learning
5. Applied and Collaborative Learning

NILOA as Harvester of DQP Work: What We've Learned

- Clarifying and aligning outcomes
- Curriculum mapping
- Facilitating transfer
- Rethinking assessment
- **A focus on assignments**



Turning to the Field

- Inviting faculty applications (with draft assignment)
- Bringing the group together for a day of conversation and peer collaboration
- Working in 5-6 person, facilitated “charrettes”

What's a "Charrette"?

"Charrette" (Fr.) means a small cart. Because architecture students once deposited their assignments in it as the cart was rolled through the studio, architects now use the word to refer to **an intense creative effort in a limited time period.**



The Assignment Library

www.assignmentlibrary.org

- 50-some assignments aligned with DQP proficiencies
- Revised and improved with feedback
- Contributed by faculty from a wide range of fields and institutional types
- Online, indexed, and searchable
- With a scholarly citation
- **Stimulating assignment work on campuses**

On My Campus...

1. Assignments are mostly seen as “my work” and not shared.
2. Some colleagues share assignments in informal ways.
3. Support for work together on assignment design is provided through special workshops or a teaching center.
4. Evidence from assignments is valued in the institution’s approach to student outcomes assessment.
5. Work on assignments (and other pedagogical materials) is seen as scholarly work and appropriately rewarded.

Thinking about Assignments



The challenge of moving
“from lofty, broad, and
sometimes vague
descriptions of student
performance to
demonstrable evidence that
students have indeed
become proficient (Kuh and
Ikenberry, 2013).

Things We Know about Assignments but may not think about

- They animate high level outcomes.
- They send powerful signals to students about what matters.
- At their best they both foster learning and document/assess it.
- Professional development opportunities may be few and far between.
- Creating a good assignment is challenging intellectual and creative work that should be recognized and rewarded.

What Is a Good Assignment?

1. It depends
2. Intentional
3. Clear to students
4. Engaging (Task as Intriguing Problem: John Bean)
5. Respecting and reflecting different ways of knowing, levels of preparation: equity mindedness
6. Allowing useful, formative feedback
7. Scaffolded
8. Linked to and aligned with other assignments
9. What else?

A COUPLE EXAMPLES...

- **An Assignment on Quantitative Reasoning from the University of North Dakota**_(Carmichael, J., Kelsch, A., Kubatova, A., Smart, K, & Zerr, R., 2015)
- You are about to graduate from college – congratulations! Although you have accumulated some debt over the years, you received three offers of employment just last week. You have some decisions to make since your job offers are in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. Many factors might influence which job you choose to take. For example, you'll want to optimize your earning potential while factoring in costs of living in the three cities. Your parents, always willing to provide advice, are strongly encouraging you to choose the job in New York.
- Your job is to evaluate your parents' claims and decide which job offer to accept. To do so, please answer the questions that follow using only the supporting documents provided. Your answers should include quantitative summaries of any relevant data drawn from the documents provided to support your position .



Robinson, D., & Levinovitz, A. (2015). Designing an object of play. James Madison University

Small groups of students combine theoretical knowledge of play and practical skills such as 3d printing in the making of a toy or game.

The object of play is then presented in a “sales pitch” format, which requires students to articulate the considerations that went into their design and manufacture process.

The presentation occurs as part of an exhibit tailored to the general public, during which students speak directly to visitors and get feedback on their work.

While the assignment is meant specifically for a class on play, the general structure could be used by any instructor who seeks to have students transform theoretical knowledge into a material product.

**Applied and collaborative
learning**



Models for Campus Work



One way to think about it:

Individual
faculty
working
on their own
assignments

Cultivating a wider
circle of
involvement:
peer collaboration,
comm of practice

Working together
to design
assignments that
connect, align,
scaffold one
another

Building student
capacity for
signature work

Diverse Entry Points

1. Begin with an open exploratory conversation
2. Align existing assignments with shared learning outcomes
3. Create assignments de novo
4. Start with student work
5. Approach assignments through curricular mapping
6. Organize by discipline, by outcome, or ?
7. Build attention to assignments into campus culture and processes

Lessons from Campus Experience

- Start where people are and what they care about
- Define “faculty” broadly
- Involve students
- Take advantage of existing structures for support and coordination
- Create mechanisms for making good work visible, and for recognition and reward
- Collaborate across campuses, disciplines, with employers

Resources

- Quality Collaboratives: <http://www.aacu.org/qc>
- Peter Ewell: The Degree Qualifications Profile: Implications for Assessment
- Cliff Adelman: To Imagine a Verb: The Language and Syntax of Learning Outcomes Statements
- Hutchings, Jankowski, & Ewell: Catalyzing Assignment Design on Your Campus
- NILOA Assignment Library:
www.assignmentlibrary.org

DQP Assignment Library

The purpose of this website is to provide a searchable online library of collegiate-level course assignments in a wide variety of academic disciplines that link to one or more proficiencies in the [Degree Qualifications Profile \(DQP\)](#).

The [National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment \(NILOA\)](#) has been working with groups of faculty from various institutions to revise and strengthen assignment alignment to specific proficiencies. The assignments and commentaries here are works in progress, generously shared by faculty members from a wide range of fields and institutional types committed to advancing and documenting student learning. To learn more about the assignment library initiative click [here](#). To see a list of advisors to the project click [here](#).

This library allows you to:

- Browse assignments
- Borrow and adapt an assignment to fit your needs
- Submit an assignment to the library – coming soon!
- Consult a resource
- Comment on and ask questions about assignments - coming soon!
- Start a conversation on your own campus
- Give us feedback!

DQP Assignment Library

NAME: Your Philanthropic Autobiography

AUTHOR: Tyrone McKinley Freeman, Director, Undergraduate Programs, Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis

CITATION: Freeman, T. M. (2014). Your Philanthropic Autobiography. Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis.

DESCRIPTION:

This assignment presents students with an opportunity to compose an autobiography of how their lives intersect with philanthropic organizations through a 3-page essay by combining the powerful practice of storytelling through autobiography to explore students' own personal connections to philanthropy and the nonprofit sector.

Background and Context:

This assignment relates to at least three areas of learning in the degree qualifications profile for the bachelor's level: 1) Applied Learning; 2) Specialized Knowledge; and 3) Communication Fluency/Intellectual Skills. For Applied Learning, the Philanthropic Autobiography assignment connects knowledge from the students' personal and professional experiences to knowledge in the field of Philanthropic Studies, which uses multiple disciplines (i.e., the humanities, the social sciences, and the professions) to understand the phenomenon of philanthropy in society. It also requires writing and later incorporates multi-media methods when students create their digital stories. For Specialized Knowledge, the Philanthropic Autobiography assignment enables students to explore definitions and boundaries of philanthropy and the nonprofit sector as well as the central questions and rationales for the field of Philanthropic Studies. Through the process of revision, students gain facility in defining and properly using the principal terminology and theories of the field. For Communication Fluency, the assignment is first completed as a written narrative in the introductory course and primarily shared with the instructor and classmates. It is later revised in the capstone course and translated into a digital story, which utilizes visual and audio media to produce a video clip presentation. The digital story is not only presented to peers in the class, but is designed with a particular audience in mind, be that a potential employer or graduate admissions officer.

The Philanthropic Autobiography assignment is considered a signature assignment by the faculty in the undergraduate program in Philanthropic Studies at Indiana University. It requires students to compose a brief 2-3 page essay about their personal engagement with philanthropy and nonprofit organizations throughout their lives. It is based on two very important concepts in the field of Philanthropic Studies: 1) philanthropy is voluntary action for the public good based on closely held values and beliefs about how to improve society; and 2) everyone has a connection to philanthropy and nonprofit organizations (Payton & Moody, 2008). There is great educational value in naming and exploring these personal connections early in one's studies to construct a reservoir of experiences from which to relate the formal study of philanthropy. In the PHST-P 201 Introduction to Philanthropic Studies course, newly declared majors and minors in Philanthropic Studies complete the philanthropic autobiography as an exploratory assignment that initiates them into the program and the field. A first draft of the essay is due during week 3 of the course and it serves as a touchstone throughout subsequent weeks with the final draft due during the final week of the course.

Philanthropic autobiography as continuing narrative (2009). For this reason, students may consult their essays throughout their studies, but are given a formal opportunity to revisit

Assignment: *Your Philanthropic Autobiography*

Storytelling is powerful. It can be used to educate and entertain others, and to transmit and inculcate ideas, values, and beliefs across time, space, and cultures. As a college student and emerging professional in your field of choice, storytelling is particularly important because it can help you understand, interpret, and communicate your own personal and intellectual development. Storytelling can help shape the manner in which you present yourself as a candidate for employment or applicant for graduate school.

Autobiography is a particular form of storytelling through which we convey the stories of our lives to others. Each of us could tell the story of our lives from a variety of viewpoints. You could write about your educational experiences, your family background, your employment history, or you could present your story using particular talents, interests, or passions, such as singing, sports, animals or your romantic relationships. This assignment combines the powerful practice of storytelling through autobiography to explore your own personal connections to philanthropy and the nonprofit sector.

The nonprofit and voluntary sector is made up of nonprofit organizations, voluntary associations, as well as individuals who give their time, contribute their money, earn their living, or use the services of these same organizations. Your Philanthropic Autobiography (see page 21 in Payton & Moody text) is the story of your life told from the perspective of your involvement with these nonprofit organizations and voluntary associations. What organizations and associations have you been involved with – as a contributor, as a volunteer, as a user/customer/patient/member, or as an employee? What organizations have meant the most to you and why? What values are reflected in your interactions with these nonprofit organizations? And how have you personally benefited as a recipient of the support that others have given directly to you or through these organizations and associations?

For the assignment, you will write a 3-page essay indicating how your life has intersected with these organizations and activities. It is important that you tell the story of your connections to philanthropy and the nonprofit sector rather than simply present a list of your activities. Your essay should contain a thesis statement and appropriate development of supporting elements of your story. When describing a particular person, organization, or experience, be sure to provide adequate background to orient the reader.

As you prepare for this assignment, remember the definitions of philanthropy, nonprofit organizations, and voluntary action, and remember the great diversity of organizations and activities represented in the sector, such as private/parochial schools, hospitals, houses of worship, community centers, neighborhood watches, community sports leagues, book clubs, etc. You may also have experience with giving behaviors that do not quite fit formal definitions, and you may explore those as well.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average
Thesis Statement	Names topic & outlines 3-4 main points in support of topic	Names topic & outlines 1-2 main points in support of topic	Outlines some or all main points but does not name topic	Does not name topic or outline main points
Examples of philanthropy, nonprofit organizations, voluntary action	Provides specific & relevant examples of philanthropy, nonprofit organizations, voluntary action for each main point	Provides 1-2 specific & relevant examples of philanthropy, nonprofit organizations, and voluntary action for main points.	At least one example is specific and relevant	Examples are not specific or relevant
Examples of student's role as donor, volunteer, user, employee, or recipient	Provides specific examples and discussion of student roles for each main point	Provides specific examples and discussion of student roles for 1-2 main points	Provides at least one specific example of student role	No student roles are given
Discussion of values reflected in interactions with activities	Identifies & discusses the organizational or personal values reflected in each example or role	Identifies organizational or personal values reflected in at least 2 examples or roles	Discusses organizational or personal values in general apart from examples and roles	Does not identify or discuss organizational or personal values
Grammar and spelling	No errors in grammar & spelling	1-2 errors	3-4 errors	More than 4 errors

Questions and Comments?

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