

Teaching Learning Center

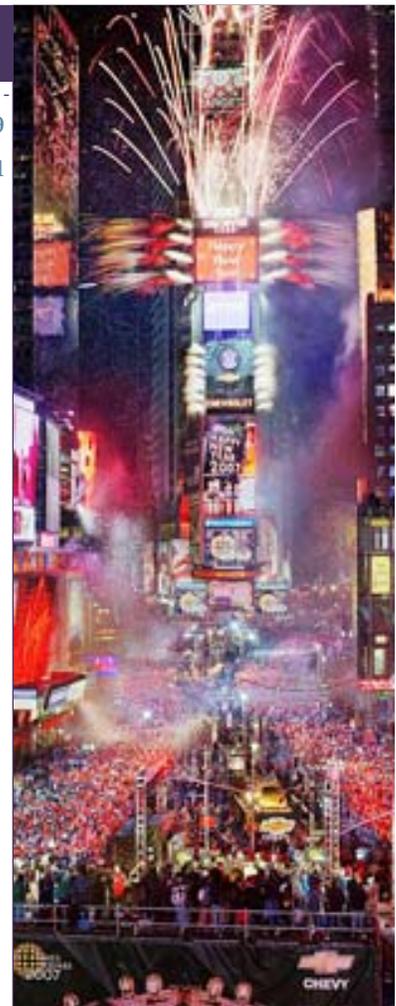
DESIGNING ASSIGNMENTS THAT WORK:

It's difficult to deal with students who are bored or confused and are turning in assignments that don't meet our expectations. Often this is the result of a failed assignment. "A good assignment has clear purpose that is directly related to accomplishing the course objectives" as stated by Deborah Stewart, author of *Effective Teaching: A Guide for Community College Instructors*. She continues to explain that instructors should "explain when the assignment is due, how long it should take, and how it will be used or addressed in class. Students should also know the consequences of failing to complete the assignment." Here are some tips for designing effective assignments:

- ◆ Think about how the assignment relates to the learning objectives for the course. What are the assignments goals? What is the evaluation method?
- ◆ Look for connections between the subject and the methods and then try to communicate these connections to students. A good course feels like one cohesive unit, seamless even though it can be made up of many different pieces.
- ◆ Make sure expectations are clear. Always put assumptions in writing.
- ◆ Give some thought to the possible questions students may have. (e.g., what kinds of topics are acceptable for an assignment?) Students are more likely to submit work that meets our expectations if we communicate our expectations effectively.
- ◆ Think about whether the course evaluation methods are balanced. If the majority of the students' grade rests upon one assignment, what message does that send about the rest of the course?
- ◆ Don't leave everything for the end of the semester. This focuses more on the product rather than the process of learning.
- ◆ Create ways to assess students' progress without grading them.
- ◆ Students are most successful with subjects that are relevant and engaging. Students prefer to have choices whenever possible. Let them decide on the topic for their paper, give them a list of choices.
- ◆ Students can all complete the same assignment but would benefit from brainstorming and working together.

THE TLC CAN HELP:

There are so many loose ends at the beginning and end of a semester. The time has come to make sure your syllabus is ready, your ecampus site is looking sharp, and enrollment is on target. The TLC is a great place to take care of all of these things and much more. We have the technology and know how to make this semester the best one yet for you and your students! Stop by today and let us help you.



JANUARY WORKSHOPS:

- Download Gradebook and Format in Excel.....Nov. 6
- Download Gradebook and Format in Excel..... Nov. 17
- Discussions of Issues
- We Have in Common.....Nov. 17

TIPS FOR MAKING AN IMPACT ON ECAMPUS:

- ◆ Create an eye-catching banner for the top of the announcement page.
- ◆ Change the buttons to suit the theme of your page.
- ◆ Add, remove, or change buttons to reflect course content.
- ◆ Add imagery and/or links to sites of interest.
- ◆ Add a tutorial or video.
- ◆ Keep it clear and simple.



SYLLABUS CHECKLIST:

Once again it's time to prepare for classes to begin and that means updating your syllabus. Here is a check list for you to make sure none of the necessary components are omitted. Make sure to send a copy to your division secretary to keep on record.

- ◆ Office hours & contact information
- ◆ List of required materials
- ◆ Attendance Policy
- ◆ Stop before you drop statement
- ◆ Drop statement
- ◆ Withdrawal policy
- ◆ Financial Aid statement
- ◆ Make-up exam procedures
- ◆ The Texas Success Initiative statement
- ◆ Code of Conduct
- ◆ Classroom Etiquette
- ◆ ADA statement
- ◆ Grading scale
- ◆ Semester Calendar
- ◆ Course description & learning objectives

“A good assignment has clear purpose that is directly related to accomplishing the course objectives.”

-Deborah Stewart, Effective Teaching: A Guide for Community College Instructors

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MID-COURSE EVALUATION TIPS:

- ◆ Give examples on how well the students has met the learning objectives.
- ◆ Address any issues with attendance, participation, & assignment deadlines.
- ◆ Identify specific areas where improvement is needed.
- ◆ Provide encouragement in areas of strength.
- ◆ Be positive but honest and direct.
- ◆ Address student's skills or behavior, but not his/her intellect, personality, life experience, disability, race, class, age, or gender.

From Deborah Stewart's book, Effective Teaching

NEW YEAR'S SUPERSTITIONS:

New Clothes: Many people believe that if they wear new clothes on New Year day they will receive more new garments during the year. People wear red clothes as they believe red is symbolic of happiness and a bright future.

Newborn Babies are Lucky: Babies born on January 1st are considered to be the luckiest people throughout their lives.

Crying Should be Avoided: Many people believe that crying and wailing on New Year day is bad luck.

Keeping the Doors Open: All the doors of the house should be kept open at midnight to let the old year escape.

Kiss at Midnight: It is believed that kissing at midnight increases the affections and attachments that will continue throughout the year.

Dance in Open Air: It is believed that dancing in open air, around a tree on New Years day brings luck in love and prosperity throughout the year.

Drain the Bottle: People believe that draining the last remnants from a bottle of drink on New Years day brings good fortune.

Avoid Washing Dishes and Laundry: Many people believe that washing dishes and doing laundry on New Year day will lead to a death in the family. Most of them don't even wash their hair thinking it to be unlucky.

Avoid Profanity: Many people do not use foul language on New Year day and behave nicely.

Do Not Let the Precious Things Leave the House: It is believed that if any precious things like money, jewelry etc... leave the home on this day, luck will go out of home. In some countries people do not take the garbage out or vacuum on this day.

Erase All Debts: People pay all their debts before New Years day.

Make Noise: People believe that loud noise scares the devil; so New Years is celebrated with as much noise as possible. In many countries church bells ring at mid night for this reason.

Load Wallets and Cupboards: People believe that overloaded cupboards and wallets full of money bring luck and prosperity throughout the year.

Give Gifts: It is believed that one should not leave the home before someone first comes in. The first person to come in should bring gifts.

The Wind's Direction: It is believed that the direction of wind during the sunrise on New Years day decides the luck for the coming year. Wind from east predicts natural calamities and wind from west predicts wealth but death of a person of great national importance. Wind from south predicts prosperity and wind from north predicts bad weather. No wind means prosperity and joy throughout the year.