

# “How to Ask For What You Really Want: Effective Assignment Design”

A workshop hosted by Dr. William T. FitzGerald

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## *I. Initial questions*

What *is* the assignment?

What are my **goals** for a particular assignment?

Where does this assignment **fit** within my course, field?

What *new* **skills** and **concepts** does this assignment involve?

What *prior* **skills** and **concepts** are involved?

How do I best communicate what I want for this assignment?

## *II. Learning Outcomes*

What **learning outcomes** does this assignment promote?

How will those outcomes be **communicated**?

How will those outcomes be **assessed**?

How will those assessment **measures** be communicated to students?

## *III. Getting Specific*

What is the **audience** and **purpose** of the assignment?

What is the **disciplinary** character of the assignment?

What are the specific **tasks** of the assignment?

What are the **stages** of the assignment?

What are the necessary and available **resources** for the assignment?

What kinds of **framing** and **support** are required for this assignment?

## *IV. From Assignment to Assignment Sheet*

What do students **need** to know, and **when**?

How **much** information is **too** much?

What **necessary** and **useful** information must the assignment sheet include?

What **caveats**, **models**, **milestones**, **formalities** and **rubrics** do you include?

## RESOURCES

### **Learning Objectives (Carnegie Mellon)**

(<http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/design/teach/design/learningobjectives.html>)

### **“The Educational Value of Course-Level Learning Objectives” (Carnegie Mellon)**

(<http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/resources/Teaching/CourseDesign/Objectives/CourseLearningObjectivesValue.pdf>)

### **Syllabus and Assignment Design (Dartmouth)**

(<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/faculty/methods/design.shtml>)

### **Assignment Design (U of Kansas)**

([http://www.writing.ku.edu/instructors/guides/assignment\\_design.shtml](http://www.writing.ku.edu/instructors/guides/assignment_design.shtml))

### **Assignment Design: Checklist (U of Waterloo)**

(<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/assignment-design/assignment-design-checklist>)

### **Assignment Design: Heuristic Questions (Washington State U)**

(<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/15977550/Assignment%20Design%20Guidelines.pdf>)

### **Assignment Design Strategies (DePaul U)**

([http://teachingcommons.depaul.edu/Assignment\\_Design/general\\_strategies.html](http://teachingcommons.depaul.edu/Assignment_Design/general_strategies.html))

### **Matching Learning Goals to Assignment Types (DePaul U)**

([http://teachingcommons.depaul.edu/Assignment\\_Design/assignments\\_learning\\_goals.html](http://teachingcommons.depaul.edu/Assignment_Design/assignments_learning_goals.html))

### **Assignment Design: Sequencing (U Waterloo)**

(<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/assignment-design/sequencing-assignments>)

**Effectively Communicating Assignment Tasks: Telling Students What You Really Want** (<https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/developing-assignments/assignment-design/effectively-communicating-assignment-tasks>)

### **Writing Assignments so Students can Succeed (MIT)**

(<http://writing.mit.edu/wac/teachingresources/integrating/designingeffectiveassignments/providinginformationaboutassignments>)