

Create Assignments that Speak to Students: Generating Material

List the three most important learning goals you have for your course.

What writing or multimedia assignment are you considering as part of the course?

How will the assignment turn your learning goals into “outcomes”? Be as specific as possible to each goal, and remember that learning can occur and be demonstrated *throughout the process* of an assignment.

What sample **brainstorming questions** can you provide to get students started thinking about the assignment?

Connect the Assignment to Student Learning and Professional Goals

How will you articulate these important connections for students?

Academic Assignment Stages of the Process	Course Learning Goals	Work of the Professional

Develop a Rubric that Rewards what you Value

List everything that matters in a successfully completed example of the assignment, and consider assigning the greatest weight to the qualities you value most in that list. The template on the back of this sheet may help with organizing your list.

Hint: Over the years, you have no doubt seen many successful examples of this type of assignment.

- As you recall those examples, write down what **qualities**, features, techniques impressed you. You can turn any such list into a rubric by describing what would represent a “proficient,” “developing,” or “unacceptable” level of performance in the final product.
- Next, consider where “highest order concerns” are, and consider how they connect with your learning goals for the students. Give the qualities that align most closely with your **goals** the highest values in your rubric.
- Students will work very hard to satisfy your **criteria** (because they will see the connection to the grade *and* to the learning goals). If we set the bar high, and reward most what we value most, the students will respond. *It’s what they do!*

Common Parts of a Rubric:

Put the greatest reward on what you value most.

Purpose and Development: What are the characteristics of the successful examples of this sort of assignment? How can we tell that the assignment is accomplishing its rhetorical purpose? How do we know whether the ideas are developed well and credibly?

Source Use: When you look closely at successful examples of this kind of assignment, how is the source material used? Are there particular types of sources that are more valued for such an assignment than others? Particular ways of integrating them through quotation, paraphrase, and summary? Preferred documentation styles?

Structure: Can you describe the sequence, unity, and coherence you see in the successful examples of this sort of assignment? Are there structures that succeed? Can you describe them for students in a way that will help them review their own work?

Visual Elements: How does the successful assignment integrate visual elements? When you look at a successful example, how would you describe what you see?

Editing: What do you want to see here? Perfection? A style that promotes interest and comprehension? No distractions from the content? How would you describe it?

Communicating Evaluation Criteria to Students

What **criteria** will you use to guide your evaluation of the projects – both in process and finished -- and will students be able to use these criteria to determine whether they are on track *as they work*?

What **models** of this type of writing or multi-media projects exist that you can share with students?

What are the formatting “**absolutes**” for your assignment? Examples would be page or slide counts, documentation style, etc.

Putting it All Together: the Anatomy of a Successful Assignment

- *Predict the pitfalls students will encounter.*
- *Align the assignment with key course and professional goals.*
- *Focus on the function of the assignment in your instructions to students.*
- *Reward what you value, and help students recognize it in their own work.*
- *Guide students in their work process.*