TILT OVERVIEW – Transparency in Learning and Teaching = TILT Project

What is TILT's Purpose?

- To improve students' success, especially that of first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented college students"—in gateway courses, in persistence, and retention. The TILT framework has been shown to improve overall student success, improve knowledge transfer, and significantly close achievement gaps by clarifying the purpose, task, and evaluation criteria for assignments. In other words, it helps answer those universal student questions, "Why am I doing this?" "What am I supposed to do?" "How will I be graded?" and "How will this help me?"

Task and Guiding Principles

- To decode the assignment requirements for all students
- To bring to the fore the larger purpose of the assignment and how it fits with the student's own plans and motivations

Research question and assessment

The project's basic research question in the 2014–2015 academic year was:

What is the effect when teachers provide two transparently designed, problem-based take-home assignments (compared to the unrevised, business-as-usual take-home assignments in the comparison group) on spring-term first-year college students' learning experiences, especially underserved students' experiences, as measured by:

- the amount of transparency students perceived in the course
- students' self-ratings of three important predictors of success: academic confidence, sense of belonging, and improved mastery of skills that employers value
- direct assessment of students' work as indicated by scored student work samples, selected randomly
- short-term retention rates

Results[1]

- Initial study: students in transparency courses reported greater sense of belonging and greater confidence, and greater overall success across all measures, etc.
- UNLV study: undergraduates enrolled in more transparent introductory-level courses, *90.2% students returned the subsequent academic year*, in contrast to the average retention rate of 74.1% for first year full-time students.

Template Components

- **Purpose**: Skills and knowledge gained (provides relevance to students 5 years out, connect to learning outcomes)
- **Task**: What to do and how to do it
- **Criteria for Success**: What excellence looks like (provide a model example) and criteria in advance to help students to self-evaluate (e.g., rubric)

This handout was modified from Mary-Ann Winkelmes work: http://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning

1. Winkelmes, M., Bernacki, M., Butler, J., Zochowski, M., Golanics, J., and Weavil, K. H. (2016), A teaching intervention that increases underserved college students' success. Peer Review, 18(1/2).