

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

Assignment Design Charrette Invitation to Participants

Dear Colleague,

You are invited to be part of an interactive **assignment-design charrette** on [DATE, TIME, sponsored by...etc].

Assignments are powerful teaching tools, and their design is one of the most consequential intellectual tasks that faculty undertake in their work as educators. Yet that work is often private and unavailable for collegial exchange and knowledge building. The charrette—a term borrowed from architecture education, denoting a collaborative design process—will be an opportunity to talk with other faculty [and librarians, and student affairs staff, etc.] interested in trading ideas about the design and use of the various tasks, projects, papers, and performances we set for our students.

The charrette aims to 1) stimulate ideas about how to strengthen the assignment you bring to the session, 2) think together about how assignments can be intentionally linked to important course, program, and institutional learning outcomes in ways that create more coherent pathways for students, and 3) open up a productive “trading zone” for discussion about teaching and learning [and assessment].

Please come to the workshop [or: submit in advance so the assignments can be distributed and read before the charrette] with an assignment you would like to share. This might be a draft assignment you are working on and would like to share with colleagues, one that has worked well but may be in need of a “refresh,” or one that has not worked as you hoped.

To facilitate informed and constructive discussion, we ask that you also prepare a reflective memo to accompany the assignment, indicating:

- 1) The purpose of the assignment: What outcomes is it intended to foster and elicit?
- 2) The context in which it is used—in what course or courses, with what students, at what point in the curriculum?
- 3) Your experience of the assignment at this point? How have students responded? What do they do well? What do they find especially challenging?
- 4) Questions you have about the assignment: What kinds of feedback on the assignment are you hoping for from colleagues attending the charrette?
- 5) How do you assess student work in response to the assignment: please include a rubric or evaluation criteria.

The charrette is modeled on a process developed by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) as part of its Assignment Library Initiative. The Library (see www.assignmentlibrary.org) is an online, searchable collection of assignments from faculty in a wide range of fields and institutional types, keyed to proficiencies identified in the Degree Qualifications Profile [or: keyed out outcomes in five broad areas of learning].

We look forward to seeing you, etc etc.

[If there is a stipend attached to this work, it might also be mentioned. Note whether there is an expectation/requirement that the assignment be revised and resubmitted or shared in some further way--including in an institutional repository, submitted to NILOA, shared at a campus conference....]