



## Checklist for Assessing the Quality of an Assignment: Meaningfulness and Challenge

	What this Means	Your Assessment: Comments
<b>Establishes Purpose and Goals = Meaningfulness</b>	Define the goal of this assignment. Discusses <i>relevance and value</i> of the assignment to mastering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• essential knowledge of discipline</li> <li>• skills in the discipline</li> </ul> Identifies the audience	
<b>Links to Learning Outcome(s):</b>	Explicitly aligns the assignment to a course/student learning outcome.	
<b>Communicates Logistics or “business aspects” in positive and inclusive language.</b>	Outlines specifics of the assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due Date</li> <li>• Length &amp; Style Required (e.g., Follow APA or MLA)</li> <li>• Cover, Abstract, Running Head ...</li> <li>• Drafts (how many?)</li> <li>• Particular rhetoric or cognitive model to use</li> </ul>	
<b>Facilitates Critical Thinking;</b>	Requires application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and/or creation (higher order thinking skills).	
<b>Is Sufficiently Challenging</b>	Considers the prior knowledge, background experiences, and skills of the student population. Enlists interest and engagement.	
<b>Potential Resources</b>	Giving students pointers or reminders about venues for assistance or research tips.	
<b>Grading/Scoring Criteria</b>	Criteria for grading is clear to the students– How will grades be determined (e.g., a collaboratively built rubric).	
<b>Provides Options/Choices When Appropriate (e.g., content, process, or product type)</b>	Choice and interest impact student engagement and effort. Consider ways to facilitate individualization, creativity and student decision-making.	
<b>Sample or Model Provided</b>	Exemplars and non-exemplars are helpful – you could even have students evaluate these with a scoring rubric.	
<b>Create Opportunities to 1) Provide Feedback &amp; 2) Engage in Self-assessment</b>	1) Break an assignment into low-stakes assignments and provide frequent, immediate, discriminating, and encouraging feedback. 1o1 conferences. 2) Peer-review sessions- series of drafts with reflection letters.	
<b>Opportunities to collect feedback</b>	Minute paper- reflection activity – SGID - discussion board -	

Adapted From:

Gardner, T. (2005, June 12). Ten Tips for Designing Writing Assignments. *Traci's Lists of Ten*. <http://www.tengrrl.com/tens/034.shtml>

Boye, A. How do I create meaningful and effective assignments? Texas Tech Teaching, learning and Professional Development Center

## Resources:

1. First-year students
  - a. First-Year Seminar: [Assignment ideas](#)
  - b. Thaiss, Chris, Moloney, Kara, & Chaozon-Bauer, Pearl. (2016, December 26). "[Freeing students to do their best](#)": Examining writing in first-year seminars. [Special issue on WAC and high-impact practices]. *Across the Disciplines*, 13(4). Retrieved from <https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/atd/hip/thaisseetal2016.pdf>
  - c. NILOA Assignment charrette for [introductory courses](#) and [assignment library](#)
2. Critical Thinking
  - a. Nilson, L. (2018) [Teaching critical thinking: some practical points](#). Faculty Focus. October 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. Idea: [Gave projects, tests, and assignments that required original or critical thinking](#)
3. Rubrics: AAC&U [Value Rubrics](#)
4. Meaningful writing: Reis, R. # 1610 [What meaningful writing means for students](#). Tomorrow's Teaching and Learning.
5. Assignment options:
  - a. Reis, R. # 1675 [Lights, camera, learning!](#) Tomorrow's Teaching and Learning.
  - b. Reis, R. # 1661 [Creativity and the iGens](#) Tomorrow's Teaching and Learning.
6. Others:
  - a. Podcast Bonnie Stachowiak [Teaching in Higher Ed](#)
  - b. Consultations with us.