

Assignment Design Charrette FAQs

1. What is an Assignment Charrette? A Charrette is a collaborative curriculum development/ professional development structure designed to strengthen assignments and their productive linkage to our Competencies and Abilities. The step-by-step process consists of carefully timed quiet reading, listening, discussion, and writing. The Charrette model was developed by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), who borrowed the term from architecture education.

2. We do assignment sharing all the time. How is this different? The Charrette structure slows things down, leading to deeper understanding of the Competencies and a more careful focus on targeted assignment revision. Written feedback creates concrete take-aways, facilitating follow-up.

3. Why write down the feedback? Writing pushes us to think harder and be more specific with our suggestions. It assures that everyone's ideas are heard. And it creates takeaways that can help faculty recall the conversation and more effectively do the follow-up assignment revision.

4. How long should a Charrette workshop take? We suggest Charrette workshops be scheduled for 2.5 hours, allowing time to introduce the process, review 3 assignments, and wrap up. A bare minimum of 2 hours is needed for an abbreviated but meaningful process.

5. How crucial is the timing? Timing is everything! Especially when it comes to the success of the Charrette process. Part of what makes this assignment review process effective is careful attention to structure and timing. Be sure to designate timekeepers in each group or a single timekeeper for the room to assure that each part of the Charrette is given appropriate space to develop.

6. How should the group work be organized? The heart of the Charrette takes place in groups of 3-5 people per table. Each person sharing an assignment gets focused attention from the table. Our timing assumes that 3 people per table will share assignments and also give feedback. Any others at the table will contribute by giving feedback. It's useful to create table assignments before the workshop, based on RSVPs, but you may need to adjust, depending on actual attendance.

7. What do I need to do before the Charrette? Tell your participants that it's crucial they bring copies (rec. 5 copies) of relevant draft or working assignments to the Charrette. It's also helpful to have participants RSVP, so that you can create table assignments beforehand. Finally, it's important to have copies of the relevant rubrics for each participant, as well as the prompts and feedback forms.

8. Is quiet important during the Charrette? The quiet reading and writing and careful listening portions of the Charrette have proven to be major factors in what sets this process apart. If people start chatting during the individual reading or written feedback sections of the Charrette, we suggest you politely remind people of the importance of these quiet activities.

9. Who should lead a Charrette workshop? Anyone can lead a Charrette workshop with a little training and preparation. If you are interested in getting the training needed, talk with Ros Orgel, roslyno@lagcc.cuny.edu, to learn more. If you would like someone to come in and help you plan and lead a Charrette workshop Ros will work with you to send in an experienced leader to work with you.

10. Where can I get more information? Charrette handouts and powerpoints will be available on the Assessment webpage at <http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/assessment/>. NILOA has published a small booklet at: http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/Assignment_report_Nov.pdf