

Assignment Design Charrette Overview & Instruction Handouts

Overview of Recommended Structure & Timing

- Timing: 2.5 Hours
- Structural focus: Review 3 assignments per table
- If more time available: add time to Step 1 and Steps 3 & 4
- If less time available: reduce # of assignments per table in Step 2

Recommended Outline:

Welcome/Introductions, Whole Group – 5min

Overview of the Charrette Purpose and Process, Whole Group– 15min

Step 1 – Individual Reading of the Assignments – 20 min. *See prompts*

Step 2 – Assignment Sharing & Feedback @ tables – 90 min. *See prompts*
3 rounds of 25 min ea. + break.

Round A

Presenter explains assignment without interruptions – 5min

Listeners ask questions and offer feedback – 15 min

Listeners offer written feedback to give to the presenter – 5min

Break – 15 min

Round B

Presenter explains assignment without interruptions – 5min

Listeners ask questions and offer feedback – 15 min

Listeners written feedback to give to the presenter – 5 min

Round C

Presenter explains assignment without interruptions – 5min

Listeners ask questions and offer feedback – 15 min

Listeners offer written feedback to give to the presenter – 5 min

Step 3 - Individual Reflection – 10min. *See prompts*

Step 4. Whole Group Wrap up – 10 min.

Ask a few participants to share a revision they are considering as a result of the process.

Consider what was learned, next steps.

Assignment Design Charrette
Prompts for Individual & Group Work

Step 1 Individual Reading (20 min):

Please spend the next 20 minutes reviewing the finalized rubrics and carefully reading the assignments prepared by other faculty at your table. Please use the questions below to guide your individual reading of the assignment and its relationship to our shared learning goals. (Later, in Step 2, you will hear your colleagues describe their assignment in their own words; but it will be helpful to get a sense of the assignment before that.)

- a) What are the strengths of the assignment? What do you like most about it?
- b) Do you have questions about the assignment? What do you need to know more about?
- c) What Core Competency does this assignment address? What Communication Ability? Looking at the rubrics, what dimensions of the Competency (and Ability) does the assignment clearly address? What aspects of the Competency/Ability pair will students be able to demonstrate?
- d) Is there a Competency or Ability dimension that gets overlooked or needs more attention? What is it? What could be done to strengthen the assignment in this regard?
- e) How does the assignment support students in articulating and reflecting upon their learning? Do you have any suggestions in this regard?

The attached NOTES page provides space for you to take notes on each assignment.

Step 2: Assignment Sharing and Feedback– 3 rounds of 25 min. each.

Each person/team at your table will now have an opportunity to share their assignment and receive suggestions and feedback from the group. In order for everyone to have an opportunity to give and receive feedback, we will use a timed charrette process. There will be three rounds of the charrette. If you brought an assignment to share, you will be a “presenter” for one round and a “listener” for the other two rounds. If you do not have an assignment, you will be a “listener” for all three rounds.

Each round will be twenty-five minutes, organized in this way:

Presenter Explains (5 min): Please introduce the assignment & provide background information. Begin by explaining the purpose of the assignment & addressing these questions:

- a) *How does this assignment fit into the course?*
- b) *How did you seek to address your chosen Competency/Ability?*
- c) *At what level (Novice, Developing, Competent, Proficient)?*

Once you’ve briefly described the assignments and its connection to the Core Competencies, address one or more of these questions as time allows:

- d) *In your experience, what do students learn from doing the assignment?*
- e) *What pedagogical supports and “scaffolding” do students need to succeed on this assignment? How does this assignment prepare students to perform at the next level? In the next course?*
- f) *Are there aspects of the assignment that you would especially like feedback about? Things you suspect might be strengthened and would like to discuss with colleagues?*

Listener: Please do not interrupt the presenter while they are speaking. Allow your colleague to have the full 5 minutes to talk. Take notes as needed.

Listeners Ask (15 min): Please respond to what you heard and what you read, taking turns asking questions, sharing thoughts, feedback, etc. The purpose of this discussion is to help your colleague strengthen their assignment and its alignment with the relevant Competency and Ability; please be constructive and collegial. Also, please mind the time and help each listener to contribute.

Use your reading notes, the assignment presentation and these questions to guide your feedback:

- a) *How does the assignment address its Core Competency and Communication Ability? What are its strengths in this regard? How could it be refined to he build student learning in these areas?*
- b) *What dimensions of the Competency/Ability combination does the assignment most productively address? What needs more attention? What suggestions do you have?*
- c) *Are the expectations of the assignment appropriate, given students’ preparation? Does the assignment prepare students to perform at the next level? In the next course?*

Listeners Write (5 min): Based on the discussion, please use a copy of the attached Feedback Form to give presenter written feedback and suggestions.

Presenter: Please use this time to write down some notes about your assignment, based on what you just heard.

Step 3: Individual Reflection (10 min)

After you've completed your written feedback on the final assignment shared in your group, please take the next 10 minutes to make some notes to yourself, using the following questions as a guide.

A) Revising Your Assignment (5 min). Please quickly review the written feedback you received from your colleagues, and identify two or three concrete changes you will make to strengthen the assignment, and in particular, its connection to the Core Competencies/Abilities.

B) Transferrable Learning (5 min): What was the most interesting thing you learned from this process? What insights did you get into our Competencies and Abilities? Into pedagogy and practice at LaGuardia? How might you use these insights, moving forward?

Learning Matters Assignment Design Charrette
Individual Reading Notes Page

Assignment 1

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for taking notes on Assignment 1.

Assignment 2

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for taking notes on Assignment 2.

**Learning Matters Assignment Design Charrette
Assignment Feedback Form**

To: _____

Assignment: _____

From: _____

1. At this point, what do you see as the main strengths of this assignment, overall? Is the purpose of the assignment clear for students?

2. What are the strengths in relation to the Core Competency/Ability combination that this assignment aligns with? Given students' preparation and experience when they complete this assignment, are the assignment expectations at an appropriate level? What could be done to further strengthen the productive alignment with the dimensions of the relevant Competency and Ability rubrics?

3. What questions do you have about the assignment and its use?

4. What suggestions do you have? What possibilities do you see?

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 Rejitha Nair, rnair@lagcc.cuny.edu, to learn more. If you would like someone to come in and help you plan and lead a Charrette workshop, Rejitha will work with you to send in an experienced leader to work with you.

10. Where can I get more information? For more information, visit <https://www.laguardia.edu/assessment/> or contact ALT@lagcc.cuny.edu.