

Transparency in Teaching and Learning

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Our Organizations

TILT Higher Ed



NILOA

National Institute for
Learning Outcomes Assessment
Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

The Origin Story

... or, where we're coming from

1. NILOA and TILT work on assignment design
2. A commitment to advancing equitable learning
3. A focus on transparency

What Do We Mean by Transparency?

- Transparent purpose (outcomes)
- Transparent task
- Transparent criteria for evaluation
- At multiple levels and in a full range of functions

Overview for today

Purpose

- Understand how transparently designed assignments can offer equitable opportunities for college students to succeed
- Consider applications

Tasks

- Review research findings
- Discuss: sample assignments, context for inquiry

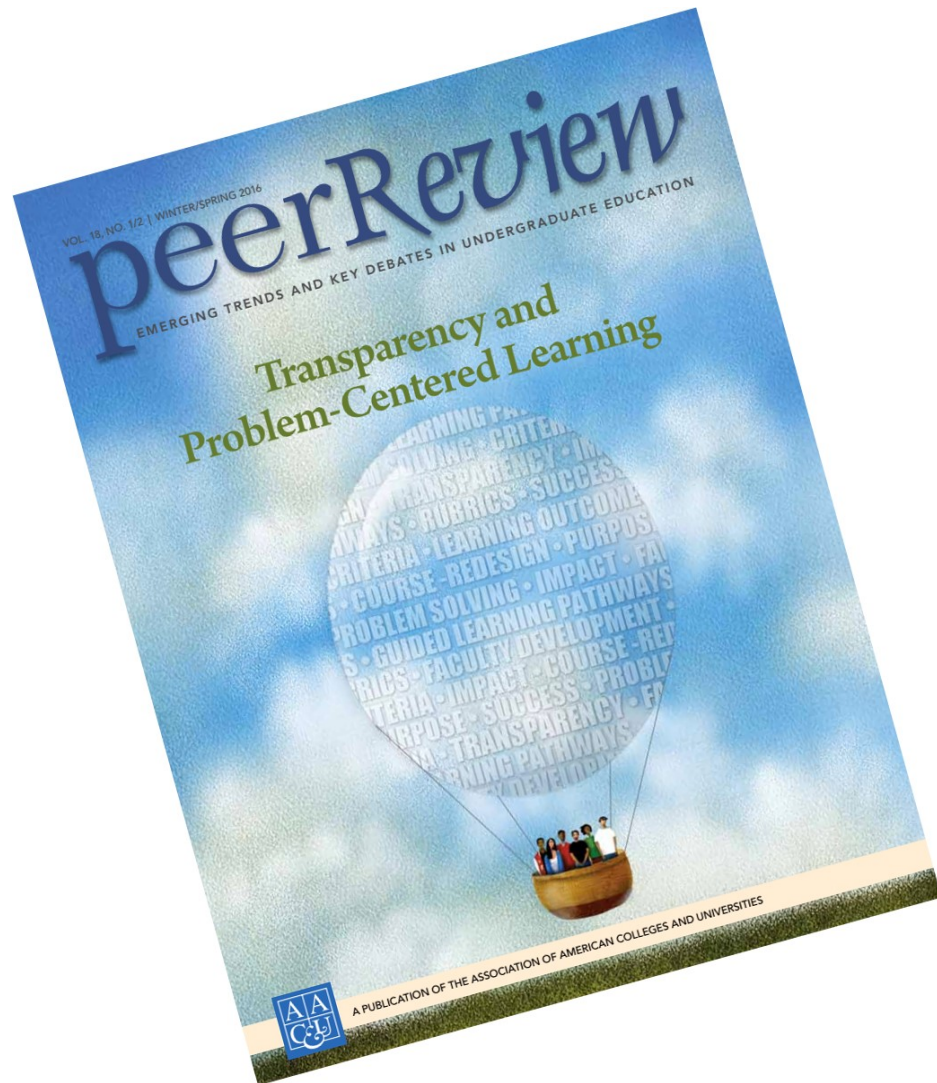
Criteria, or what you leave with

- Understanding of our research
- Plans for communities of inquiry around transparent teaching and learning

Equity Crisis: Access is Not Equity

- Underrepresented, first generation, low income: half as likely to complete college in 4 years
- Gatekeepers stunt research
- High-achievement in HS can frustrate college success
- Well-prepared novices don't think like experts

Gaining Attention: 3 main reasons



Transparency Studies

- National Study: AAC&U and TILT
- UNLV Student Retention Study

Design of National Study

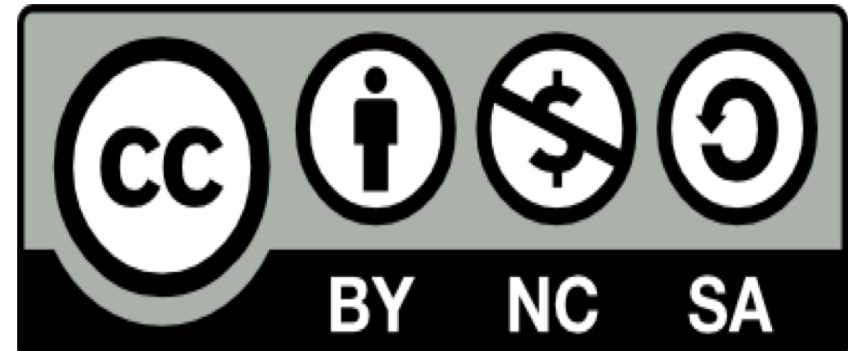
- 7 MSIs
- Faculty agreed to discuss with students in advance, twice in one term:
 - Purpose
 - Tasks
 - Criteria

The Transparency Framework

- **Purpose**
 - Skills practiced
 - Knowledge gained
 - Long-term relevance to students' lives
- **Task**
 - What to do
 - How to do it. Steps to follow. Steps to avoid
- **Criteria**
 - Checklist or rubric *in advance* so students can self-evaluate
 - Real-world work samples where students and faculty apply criteria

Built to be Shared Transparently

Creative
Commons
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NonCommercial-
ShareAlike 4.0
International
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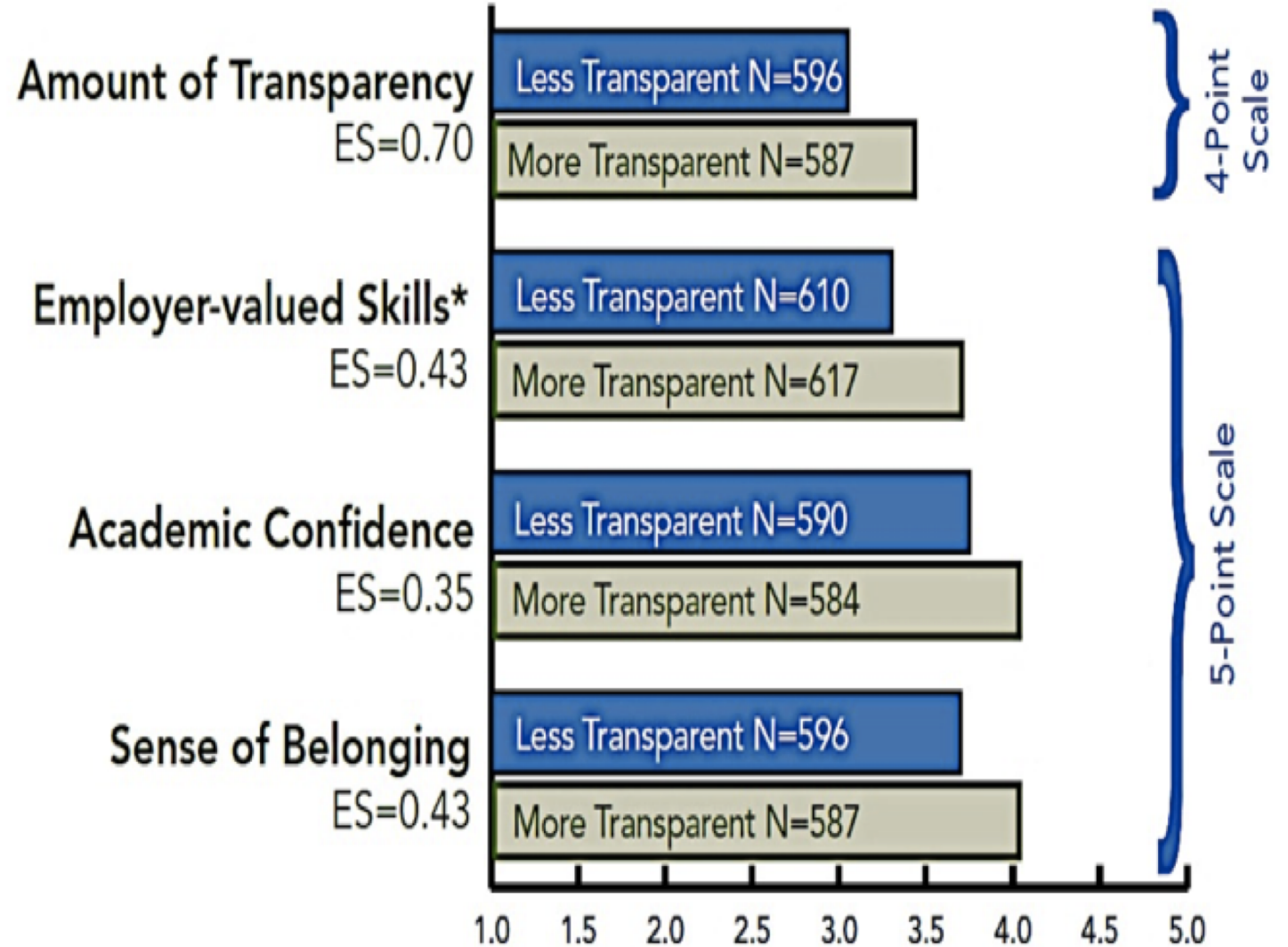
Results

Boosted students' learning in 3 ways that are success predictors:

- Academic confidence
- Sense of belonging
- Metacognitive awareness of skill development

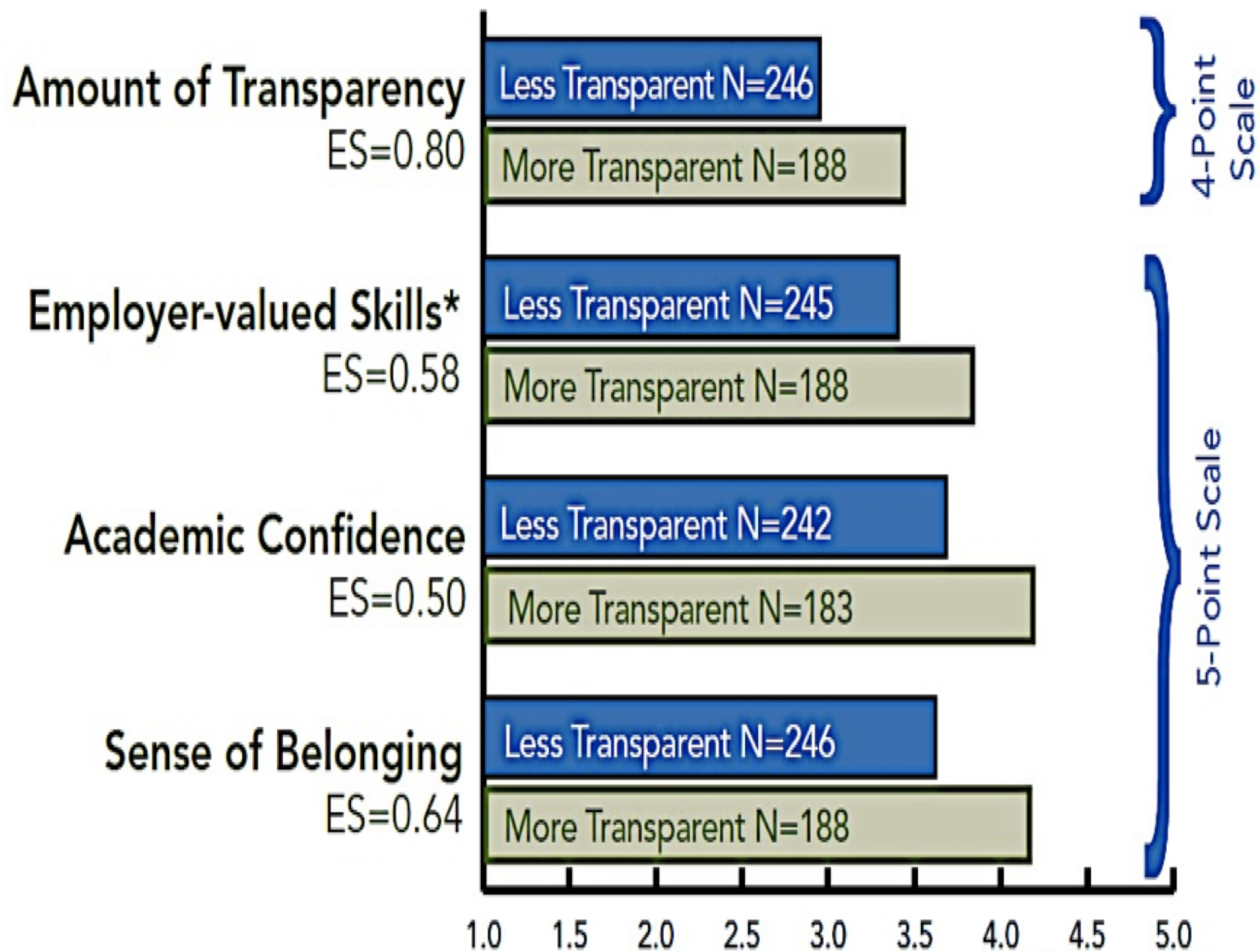
Impact 1 of 2

Boosted predictors of success significantly for all students, all disciplines



Impact 2 of 2

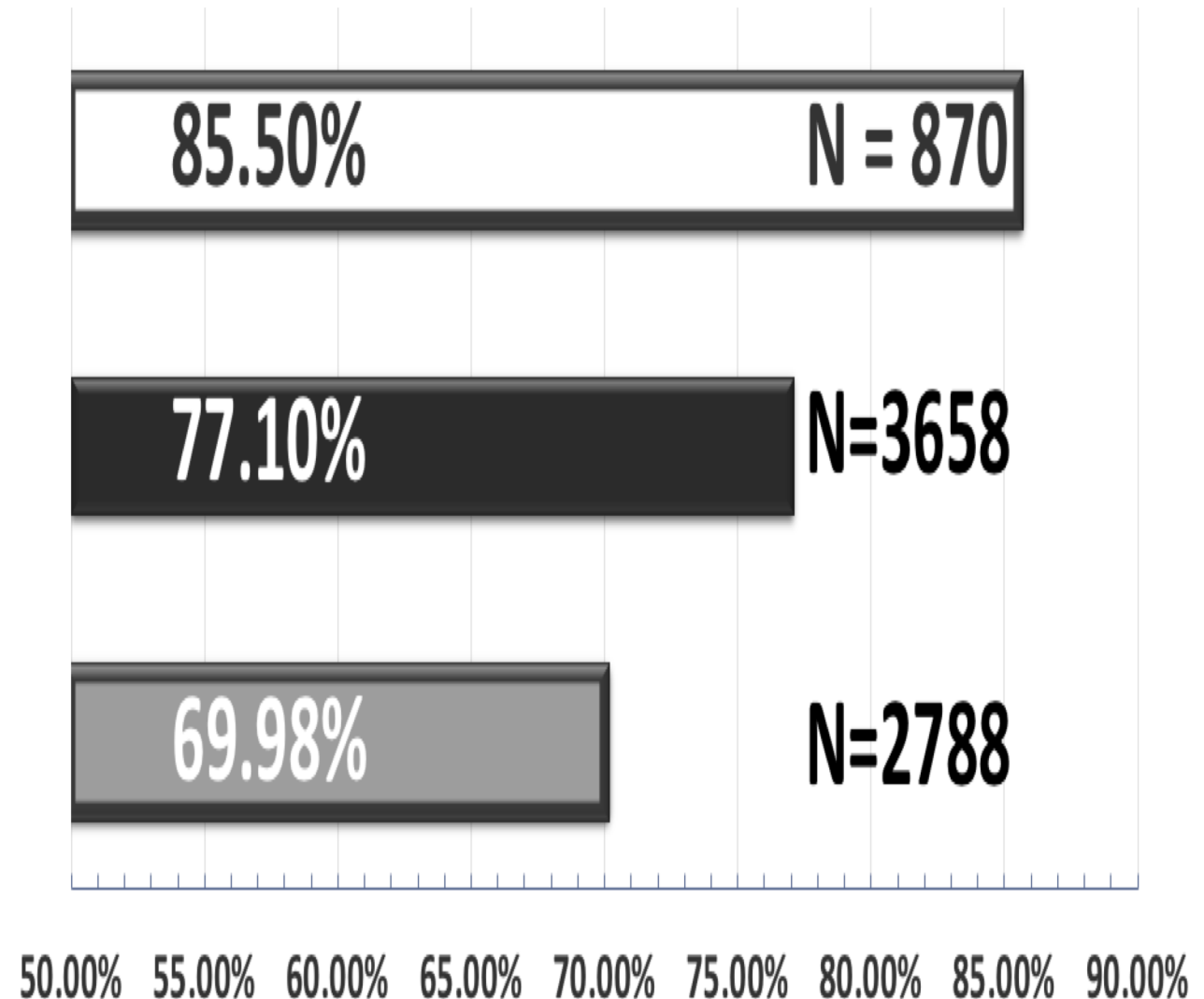
Benefits are greater for underserved students, i.e. first-generation



Results: UNLV Study

1-year Retention Rates

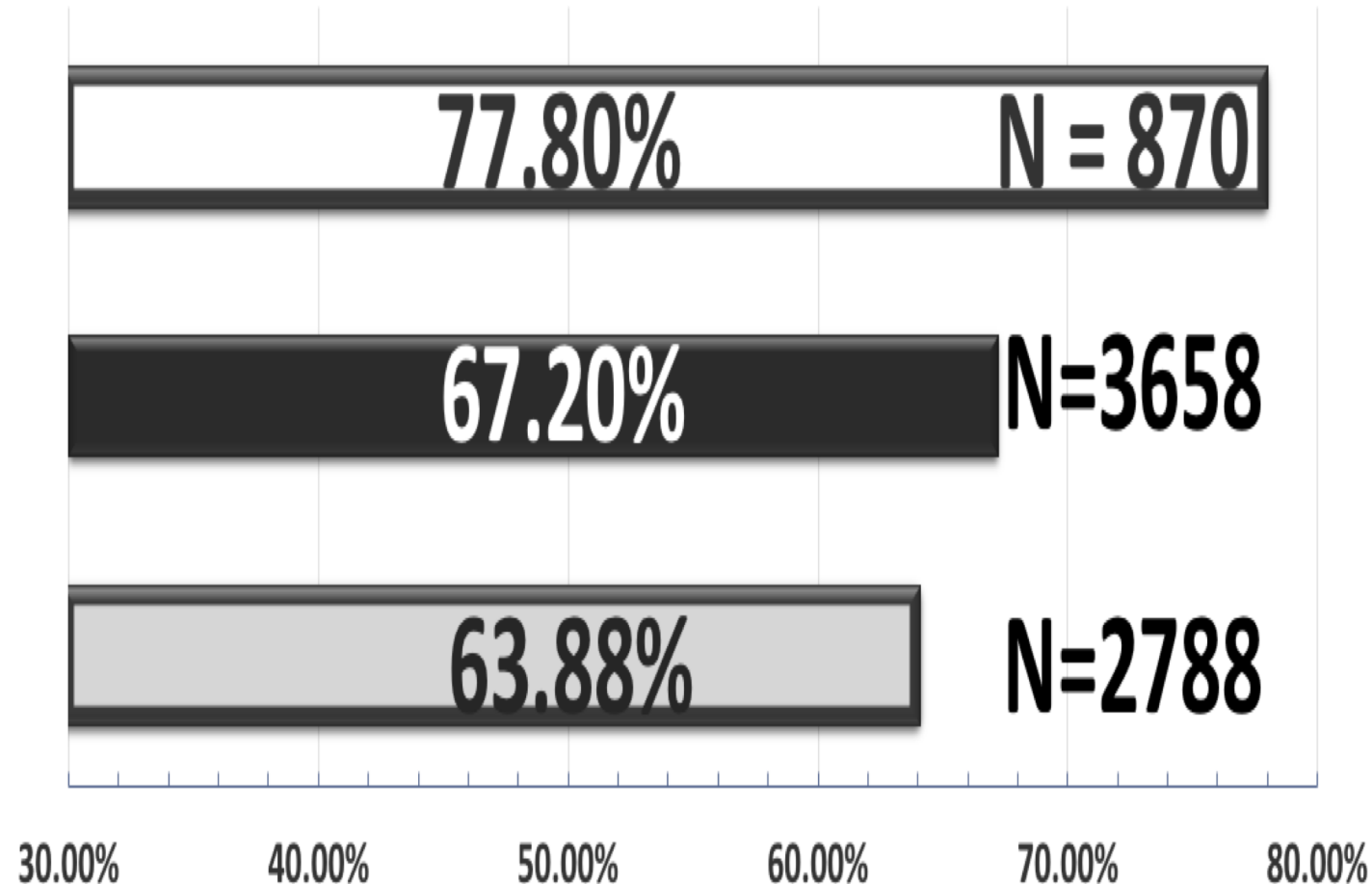
- Most diverse student population, US universities
- 870 students who received transparent instruction retained one year later at higher rate than those who did not



Results: UNLV Study

2-year Retention Rates

- Effects of transparent instruction are long-term
- 870 students who received transparent instruction retained two years later at higher rate than those who did not



Questions?

Sample Assignments

Activity: Sample A, page 2

- Time Allotted– 5 minutes
- On your own, skim through Sample A on page 2.
- In table groups, identify only the Purpose
(Skills practiced; Knowledge gained)
- Wave when you located the Purpose

Activity: Sample B, page 3

- Time Allotted– 5 minutes
- On your own, skim through Sample B on page 3.
- In table groups, identify main differences A / B
- Suggest improvements to Sample B?

Student Quote

"I actually spend a lot more time learning the material rather than devoting a lot of unnecessary time to unscrambling what I'm supposed to be doing. I get a lot more out of class time."

What do Faculty Say?

“... [S]tudents are driven and engaged when they find meaning in their coursework; considering why and how they are learning the content can help them discover a meaning that resonates,”

“This has not only changed how I approach each assignment, but also each class meeting. Incorporating the purpose-task-criteria framework helps me focus on the main goals for each day, which helps students see the purpose of every class session.”

Transparent Assignment Template for Students

Before you begin working on an assignment or class activity, ask the instructor to help you understand the following. (Bring this document to help frame the conversation.)

Purpose

- Skills you'll practice by doing this assignment
- Content knowledge you'll gain from doing this assignment
- How you can use these in your life beyond the context of this course, in and beyond college

Task

- What to do
- How to do it (Are there recommended steps? What roadblocks/mistakes should you avoid?)

Criteria

- **Checklist** (Are you on the right track? How to know you're doing what's expected?)
- **Annotated examples of successful work**
(What's good about these examples? Use the checklist to identify the successful parts.)

Please Join Us!

TILThigher.org

Participate



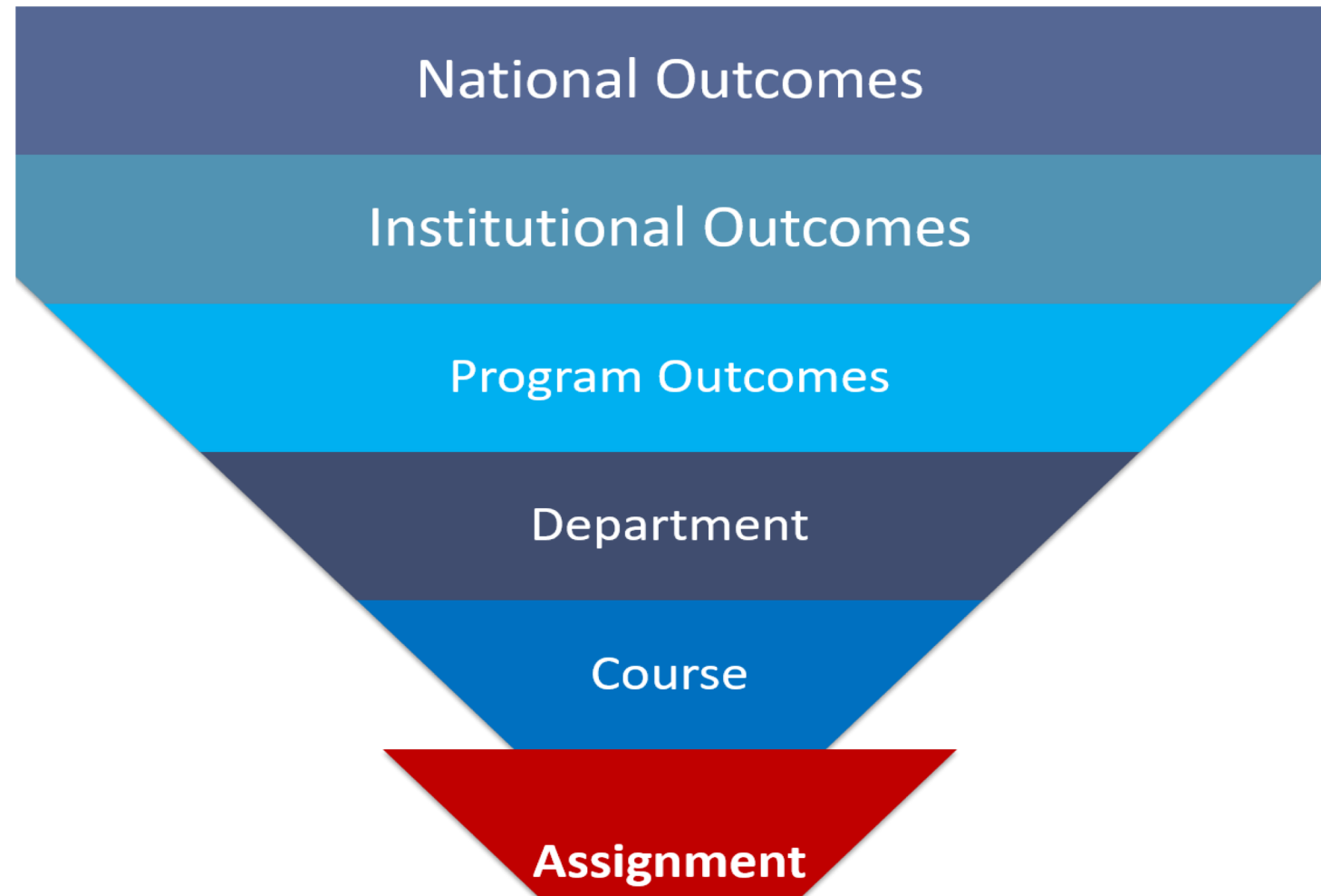
Zooming Out

Fractal: A never ending pattern that repeats itself at different scales.



Transparency Across Levels

What are the purposes, tasks and criteria at each level?



Features of a Transparent Institution

1. Common purpose—in the form of institution-level outcomes for all students, aligned at every level
2. Alignment of tasks: rowing in the same direction
3. Agreement about what success looks like: indicators
4. **Communities of practice and inquiry (COPs)**

Why COPs?

“The biggest effects on student learning occur when teachers become learners of their own teaching”

John Hattie, *Visible Learning*,
2009

What it Looks Like

- Working across disciplines and functions
- Bringing your skills and habits as academics to the work of teaching and learning
 - Posing questions about students' experience as learning
 - Generating and exploring evidence that illuminates those questions
- Using what is learned to make changes
- Repeating the cycle to determine if changes are improvements and what needs to happen next

Example: Collaborative Inquiry About Assignments

- Share assignments with one another ([NILOA charrettes](#)).
- Share **student** work.
- Use Transparency Framework to strengthen assignments
- ...and to link or align them to create pathways for students.
- Test out revised assignments with students (inquiry).
- Use what is learned to make further improvements.

A Thought Experiment

See page 4 on
your handout.

- How could such groups work on your campus?
- What would you like to see them doing?
- What would constitute success?

USS Higher Education



The COP Tug Boat

- Scholarly
- Nimble
- Responsive
- Pushy



How did we do?

Purpose

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Final Assessment

Please jot down answers and hand to Jen:

- What are the most important take-aways for you?
- What more do you need?

Resources

Materials

- NILOA Assignment Library
www.assignmentlibrary.org/
- TILT Materials:
TILThigher.org

Research and Publication Opportunities

- TILT: email request to mary-ann.winkelmes@unlv.edu
- NILOA
www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/

Contact

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