

Title: Applying TiLT (Transparency in Learning and Teaching) to Catapult Courses

Audience: Faculty

Topic: TiLT Strategies to Increase Student Engagement and Success

Summit track: Catapult Courses

Objectives

- Train faculty on using TiLT to clarify learning objectives, expectations, and success criteria in catapult courses.
- Develop transparent assignment structures to improve student understanding and motivation.
- Develop a methodology to evaluate the impact of TiLT on student performance and engagement in foundational courses.

Session Description

Assignments Matter: This interactive session explores the pedagogical potential of making our assignments more transparent. Drawing from the Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TiLT Higher Ed) framework, we'll explore what happens—for teachers and for students—when we clarify three elements: purpose, task, and criteria for success.

Participants will engage with real examples—a comparison of a “before” (un-TiLTed) and an “after” (TiLT-ed) assignment—as a way to examine three key predictors of student success: academic confidence, sense of gaining employer-valued skills, and a sense of belonging. These predictors are not abstract ideals; they are measurable outcomes of thoughtful design, supported by decades of research and confirmed in the initial TiLT study conducted by Dr. Mary-Ann Winkelmes and Dr. Tia McNair.

We'll also explore how educators are translating this framework into practice—especially in foundational or high-stakes courses—and what we're learning about what it takes to move from good ideas to changed practice. We'll look closely at the role of faculty learning communities and communities of practice as structures that support sustained, iterative learning and local inquiry.

While we won't engage in one today, we'll also introduce the assignment charrette—a collaborative, collegial process that helps educators revisit and revise their assignments with peers. Charrettes foster a culture of pedagogical appreciation and offer a space for giving and receiving feedback that's both rigorous and supportive.

Whether you're new to TiLT or looking to deepen your practice, you'll leave with ideas, inspiration, and strategies to bring back to your campus.

Speaker Bio

Jennifer Whetham's professional journey reflects a deep commitment to inquiry and improvement in teaching and learning. From 2001 to 2013, she served as a faculty member, and since 2013, she has worked as an educational developer—first at the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) and now as an Associate Dean at Reed College. She designed the "2,1,1 TILT: Equitable Assignment Challenge," which generated the "Washington Data," linking transparent assignment design to students' sense of belonging. Currently, she facilitates sustained communities of practice at Harrisburg Area Community College (HCCC) and Delaware County Community College (DCCC), where faculty and staff are collectively investigating and improving their assignment design through iterative cycles of inquiry.

Handouts

- Agenda: <https://bit.ly/MeauxmentumTILTSessionsAgenda>
 - Un-TILT-ed & TILT-ed STEM Assignment: <https://bit.ly/mutantwormsassignment>
 - Un-TILT-ed & TILT-ed Humanities Assignment: <https://bit.ly/EnvironmentalHistoryunTILTedTILTed>
- How to select your two assignments to TILT: <https://bit.ly/HowtoSelectYour2AssignmentstoTILT>