

WEBSTER’S ASSIGNMENT MATRIX
“Stimulating Learning, Knowledge, Skill”

The Assignment Matrix was designed for Webster faculty. It offers us an opportunity to reflect, further, on the types of assignments included in our classrooms. It was also designed to stimulate faculty thinking about assignments they may not have tried in the past. The list is not exhaustive but is, rather, representative of a breadth of instructional possibilities. The premise I adopted in creating this matrix was this: classroom assignments play an instrumental role in promoting student learning and have an intimate relationship with whatever learning objectives faculty establish in their courses. If we accept this premise, then we would all do well to consider our pedagogical options, as broadly defined.

It was also assumed that most university assignments require *critical thinking and critical reading skills* thus I did not repeat those themes here.

THE ASSIGNMENT MATRIX: (A – C)

Skill or Knowledge Emphasis	Possible Classroom Assignments	Academic Alignment
Writing to summarize (or for purposes of summation),	Abstracts for research projects	Broad applicability across the disciplines
Writing for brevity and clarity	Executive Summaries for Professional Circumstances	Broad applicability where professions are defined for the discipline
Writing for purposes of investigation and research	Annotated Bibliographies	Broad applicability across the disciplines
Writing & Self-Reflexivity	Autobiographies	English, History, Psychology, Sociology, Writing Programs. Also, broadly applicable where faculty wish to invoke student identity
Writing to inform	Briefing Papers	Political Science, Public Administration, More...
Writing for persuasion	Campaign Speeches	Political Science
Writing, communication, Analysis	Client Reports	Broad applicability; this is especially helpful for legal studies students.
Writing, observation, investigation, literature review, focused attention	Case studies	Broad applicability across the disciplines.
Writing, Teamwork	Collaborative group report	Broad applicability across the disciplines.

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Contact:
 Kathy Marlock, Ph.D., x8697
 Director of Academic Assessment
kmarlock@webster.edu

THE ASSIGNMENT MATRIX: (D – G)

Skill or Knowledge Emphasis	Possible Classroom Assignments	Academic Alignment
Oral Communication Skills, Argumentation, Analysis	Debate or Critique	Broad applicability across the disciplines.
Content knowledge, physical sophistication about dance techniques	Dance – choreograph a modern dance, a ballet, and perform	Dance, Fine Arts
Reflection, self-awareness, awareness of interpersonal impact	“Debriefings” following interviews or media campaigns – have students “debrief” one another	Political Science, Theatre, Communications, Education, and beyond...
Analysis, interpersonal awareness, emotional awareness and sensitivity, other skills ...as well...as you see them.	Dramatization of an event or scenario	Theatre and broad applicability across the disciplines where re-enactments of circumstances are useful pedagogical approaches
Writing and critical reading	Editing of a poorly written paper or newspaper article or textbook entry OR....	Broad disciplinary applicability
Analysis, written and oral communication skills	Evaluation (or critique) of pros and cons of arguments, texts, theories, constructs	Broad disciplinary applicability
Analysis, professional presentation	Employment video of self or Employment CD to offer employers	Broad applicability
Systematic, methodical analysis of scientific issue	Experiment or lab experiences	Sciences – for lab experiences; experiments could be broadly defined to include many disciplines.
Observational skills; should use this assignment “over time” not in a discrete instance – otherwise, it loses its intellectual defensibility	Field Notes	Broad applicability across the disciplines.
Strategy, Analysis, Evaluation, Creativity, Innovation, cost-sensitivity, production,...and more	Game Invention	Broad applicability across the disciplines.
Graphic/Visual Communication Skills	Graph, Chart, Diagram, Flowchart, Visuals	Broad applicability across the disciplines.
Graphic/Visual Communication Skills	Graphic Classification Schema	Broad applicability across the disciplines

Prepared May 7, 2005

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Contact:

Kathy Marlock, Ph.D., x8697

Director of Academic Assessment

kmarlock@webster.edu

THE ASSIGNMENT MATRIX: (H –O)

Skill or Knowledge Emphasis	Possible Classroom Assignments	Academic Alignment
Professional writing skills	Handbook or instructional manual	Broad applicability across the disciplines.
Chronology, self-reflexivity	Journal or Log of events	Political Science, Theatre, Communications, Education, and beyond...
Professional correspondence/writing, expression of self, persuasion, argumentation,...	Letter to an editor or to a business or to a Webster official	Theatre and broad applicability across the disciplines where re-enactments of circumstances are useful pedagogical approaches
Development of conceptual skills and conceptual relationships as well as spatial skills (based on type of map created)	Map-making	Geography, business, conceptual maps - education
Writing and critical reading	Model, simulation, or illustration	Broad disciplinary applicability
Analysis, written and oral communication skills	Narrative	Broad disciplinary applicability
Writing skills, analysis, media skills, production skills, more...	Newspaper story, or personal newspaper about one's family/legacy/history/country or all of the above...	Sciences – for lab experiences; experiments could be broadly defined to include many disciplines.
Expert knowledge	Opera - have students write one	Music, Fine Arts
Observational skills; should use this assignment “over time” not in a discrete instance – otherwise, it loses its intellectual defensibility	Oral history recording of a hospital, church, small business thriving amongst monopolies, family, etc. (this is wide open)	Broad applicability across the disciplines.

Contact:

Kathy Marlock, Ph.D., x8697

Director of Academic Assessment

kmarlock@webster.edu

THE ASSIGNMENT MATRIX: (P – T)

Skill or Knowledge Emphasis	Possible Classroom Assignments	Academic Alignment
Strategy, Analysis, Evaluation, Creativity, Innovation, cost-sensitivity, production,...and more	“Plan” to conduct a project or offer a community service or to develop a business	Broad applicability across the disciplines.
Graphic/Visual Communication Skills	Portfolio	Broad applicability across the disciplines.
Creative thinking, script writing, interpersonal communication, scenario analysis, more	Play – write one and/or produce it	Theatre
Graphic/Visual Communication Skills	Poster, display, exhibit	Broad applicability across the disciplines
Analysis, creativity, oral and/or written communication skills	Presentation, demonstration, or slide show	Broad disciplinary applicability
Micro-analytic skills	Process description – HOW something is to work step by step	Broad disciplinary applicability
Analytic skills, conceptual skills	Proposal for or rationale for a solution to a problem	Broad applicability
Oral communication and memorization skills	Recite	Broad applicability
Critical thinking skills	Review of play or performance.	Theatre, Fine Arts
Evaluative skills, understanding of scoring systems, more.	Review of one’s own work and self-assessment of the same – have students grade and evaluate their own projects, portfolios, work	Broad applicability
Organization skills, writing, interpersonal, analysis, and more	Recruitment plan – for any entity (civic, volunteer, NGO, college, university, church, arts studio, etc.)	Broad applicability
Analysis, writing skills, critical thinking skills	Selected portions of a written document (Introduction to texts, or selected articles of the U.S. Constitution for instance).	Broad applicability
Expert Knowledge	Symphony – have students write one	Music, Fine Arts
Professional Writing	Technical manual	Computer Science and Business/Technology

THE ASSIGNMENT MATRIX: (V - W)

Marketing, Organization, Technical competence and communication skill	Video or Audio recording of one's work	Broad applicability across the disciplines
Technical skills, graphic communication,	Website development	Computer Science and Technology Programs

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Contact:

Kathy Marlock, Ph.D., x8697

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kmarlock@webster.edu