Assignment Design Checklist

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| The following questions are designed to help you diagnose the specific challenges in your assignments. Start with the section you think most likely will yield helpful results, but do not be afraid to try questions from other sections as well. | |
| **Assignment Type** | Yes |
| Is your assignment based on an authentic genre in the discipline? If not, does it have other characteristics that would make it compelling and engaging for students? |  |
| Is your assignment tied closely to course material? If not directly, do you provide additional supports to help students make the transition to a new topic/theme? |  |
| Are the learning objectives for the assignment appropriate to the level of the class? |  |
| Have you provided appropriate disciplinary models or descriptions of the genre you are looking for? |  |
| Have you defined an audience? And if so, is that audience one that students will likely be able to address? |  |
| Is the assignment broken down into stages that correspond with your main learning objectives? |  |
| Have you thought about how long it will take students to complete the assignment (or the various stages), and given them all the required information well in advance of your deadline? |  |
| Additional Comments: | |

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| **Prompt** | **Yes** |
| How long is your assignment prompt? Is it 2 pages or less? |  |
| Have you consistently defined the genre throughout your instructions? Do you always use the same terms when describing the assignment? |  |
| Have you highlighted the key practical information (length, due date, required citation style, etc.) |  |
| Do you clarify what level of critical thinking is appropriate for the assignment? For example, do you specify that students need to summarize, paraphrase, synthesize or evaluate (whichever is most appropriate)? |  |
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| Additional Comments: | |

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| **Process** | **Yes** |
| Have you mapped out exactly what skills students will need (e.g. research, critical thinking, writing, data analysis, etc.) in order to complete the assignment? Do you provide supports for those that you know students will struggle with? |  |
| Have you broken the assignment down to smaller steps that will support students with the key skills/steps that are critical to the learning objectives? |  |
| Do you begin with low-stakes assignments so that students can build skills and ensure they are on track early on and with little risk? |  |
| If students are derailed early on (for whatever reason, including illness, need for accommodation, misunderstanding of expectations, etc.), are there supports in place that can help them recover and get back on track? |  |
| What are your deadlines for the various stages? Do you factor in how long each stage is likely to take? Have you thought about what other commitments students will have at that time? |  |
| Additional Comments: | |

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| **Evaluation** | **Yes** |
| Do you have a rubric that specifies your evaluation criteria? |  |
| Is the weighting of the assignment appropriate to the amount of work that will be required for students? Is this true for each stage in the assignment? |  |
| Are opportunities for students to receive formative feedback built into the assignment design? |  |
| Additional Comments: | |