

# Transparent Assignment Design

DANA BOYKO

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, TEACHING STREAM IN FINANCE

ROTMAN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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# Agenda

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Background

What is Transparent Assignment Design?

RSM336 Example

Further Directions

# Background

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## Transparency in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education Project

- Reworking assignments - make purpose & grading criteria clear to students
- Tell students about your rationale for why assignment is structured in this way & what is expected

## Benefits

- Increased student clarity about assignment; fewer student questions
- Improved student performance
- Can set recurring assignments to same template – structure & efficiency

## Transparent Assignment Design Template

# Transparent Assignment Design

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## 1. PURPOSE

**Skills** students will gain from doing the assignment

- Use Bloom's Taxonomy to describe skills

**Knowledge** students will gain from doing the assignment

- For both categories: Useful for the course, the discipline, beyond university?

## 2. TASK

What specifically is required? Allow students to focus time efficiently / produce highest quality work. What is the first thing they should do?

## 3. CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT

Rubric, checklist, exemplar

# Transparent Assignment Template

For instructors

For students

## Transparent Assignment Template\*

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*This template can be used as a guide for developing, explaining, and discussing class activities and out-of-class assignments. Making these aspects of each course activity or assignment explicitly clear to students has demonstrably enhanced students' learning in a national study.<sup>1</sup>*

**Assignment Name**  
**Due date:**

**Purpose:** Define the learning objectives, in language and terms that help students recognize how this assignment will benefit their learning. Ideally, indicate how these are connected with institutional learning outcomes, and how the specific knowledge and skills involved in this assignment will be important in students' lives beyond the contexts of this assignment, this course, and this college.

**Skills:** The purpose of this assignment is to help you practice the following skills that are essential to your success in this course / in school / in this field / in professional life beyond school:

*Terms from Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives may help you explain these skills in language students will understand. Listed from cognitively simple to most complex, these skills are:*

- understanding basic disciplinary knowledge and methods/tools
- applying basic disciplinary knowledge/tools to problem-solving in a similar but unfamiliar context
- analyzing
- synthesizing
- judging/evaluating and selecting best solutions
- creating/inventing a new interpretation, product, theory

**Knowledge:** This assignment will also help you to become familiar with the following important content knowledge in this discipline:

- 1.
- 2.

**Task:** Define what activities the student should do/perform. "Question cues" from this chart might be helpful: <http://www.asainstitute.org/conference2013/handouts/20-Bloom-Question-Cues-Chart.pdf>. List any steps or guidelines, or a recommended sequence for the students' efforts. Specify any extraneous mistakes to be avoided.

### Criteria for Success:

*Define the characteristics of the finished product. Provide multiple, annotated examples of what these characteristics look like in practice, to encourage students' creativity and reduce their incentive to copy any one example too closely. With students, collaboratively analyze examples of work before the students begin working. Explain how excellent work differs from adequate work. It is often useful to provide or compile with students a checklist of characteristics of successful work. This enables students to evaluate the effectiveness of their own efforts while they are working, and to judge the quality of their completed work. Students can also use the checklist to provide feedback on peers' coursework. Indicate whether this task/product will be graded and/or how it factors into the student's overall grade for the course. Later, asking students to reflect and comment on their completed, graded work allows them to focus on changes to their learning strategies that might improve their future work.*

\* The author developed an earlier version of this template at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

<sup>1</sup> Winkelmes, Mary-Ann. "Transparency in Teaching: Faculty Share Data and Improve Students' Learning." *Liberal Education* 99.2 (Spring 2013); Winkelmes et al, "A Teaching Intervention that Increases Underserved College Students' Success." *Peer Review* (Winter/Spring 2016).

# Questions for Discussion

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Have you used exemplars or checklists? What has been your experience?

How much direction should we provide to students?

# RSM336 Investments

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Rotman Commerce – required course for Finance majors

Term Project

- Manage simulated investment portfolio according to stated criteria
  - Create groups
  - Identify investment styles to implement in the account
  - Submit proposal of how they will manage the money
  - Manage account
  - Written report & group presentation during the last week of term
- Revised using Transparent Assignment Design for Winter 2022

# INFORMATION ON YOUR GROUP PROJECT

## RSM 336 INVESTMENTS – WINTER 2022

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is for your group to apply portfolio management concepts learned in class; and experience activities and challenges encountered by real-world portfolio managers. You will practice managing investments in current markets, and communicating about your investment strategy and results.

**Skills:** This project will help you to practice the following skills that are important to success in Finance & in your professional life:

- Conducting investment research, analyzing & valuing securities
- Making effective decisions under uncertain and dynamic market conditions
- Evaluating performance results and identifying relevant factors
- Working effectively as a team
- Writing clearly and communicating effectively.

**Knowledge:** This project will help you become familiar with the following important content knowledge in portfolio management:

- Characteristics of various investment strategies and styles
- Criteria used to pick securities for the selected styles
- How company, economic, and market news affects securities prices and market behaviour



## TASK

You will work in groups of five students. All students must be in the same section. Your group will manage a simulated C\$1 million investment portfolio from January 31 to March 25, using investment strategies that you learn about in this course or through your own independent research. You will select a **minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3 active investment strategies** and implement them by buying/selling individual securities in your portfolio using Rotman Portfolio Manager (RPM) software from the Finance Lab. You are required to manage the account according to objectives and constraints set out below.

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At first, this task may seem overwhelming because markets are uncertain, there are many investment options, and there is much available information (not all of it relevant). Real-world finance professionals face the same challenges. This project will help you practice identifying relevant information, creating processes, and working effectively as a team. It is OK to make mistakes; experience is the best teacher. Your report will be marked on the quality of your analysis and insights. A scoring rubric will be posted.

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## B. IMPORTANT DATES AND DELIVERABLES

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Begins Jan 17</b>	Group Signup on Quercus	Sign up in groups of 5 – all students in the same section. See “How to Sign up for a Group” on Quercus. Groups will be finalized by the instructors on Jan 25.
<b>Jan 17-28</b>	RPM Practice period	Open an RPM account. Include your Group # in the account name. See posted guide for information. Practice trading. All ”practice” trades will be eliminated before project start.
<b>Sat Jan 29 11:59pm</b>	Fund Proposal due	Submit on Quercus. One submission per group. See requirements below.
<b>Jan 31</b>	Project trading opens	All accounts reset to C\$1 million in cash
<b>Mar 25</b>	Project trading closes	Download required data from RPM over the weekend (Mar 25-27)
<b>Apr 4 week</b>	Group Presentations	Submit PowerPoint presentation by 6pm the day before your presentation
<b>Apr 8 11:59pm</b>	Project Report due	Submit on Quercus. One submission per group. See requirements below.

## **C. REQUIREMENTS: ONE-PAGE FUND PROPOSAL**

## **D. REQUIREMENTS: FINAL REPORT**

- **PURPOSE**
- **TASK**
- What is required. Pitfalls to avoid.
- Formatting Requirements

## **E. HOW TO GET STARTED**

- List of 11 points – logistics, sources for ideas, follow economic/market news, organize group tasks

## **F. SOME FINAL THOUGHTS FOR YOUR SUCCESS**

- Coaching Resources

**RUBRICS** – one for each deliverable

# Other Directions

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Review with students the difference between excellent and adequate work

Provide a checklist – peer review

Ask students to reflect and comment on completed work after marks released.  
Allows them to focus on how to improve learning strategies & future work.

# References

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Winkelmes, M.-A. (2013). *Transparent assignment template*. Retrieved from [https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page\\_files/27/Provost-Faculty-TransparentAssgntTemplate-2016.pdf](https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/27/Provost-Faculty-TransparentAssgntTemplate-2016.pdf)

Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT Higher Ed) project. *Much* information here. <https://tilthighered.com/tiltexamplesandresources>

- Includes samples of more & less transparent assignments across disciplines

Winkelmes, M.-A., Copeland, D., Jorgensen, E., Sloat, A., Smedley, A., Pizor, P., . . . Jalene, S. (2015, May). Benefits (some unexpected) of transparently designed assignments. *The National Teaching and Learning Forum*, 24(4), 4–6.

<https://tilthighered.com/assets/pdffiles/Authors%20of%20Examples.pdf>