


Designing Writing Assignments with Learning Gaps in Mind



 **Tip:** Be mindful of the learning gaps that students have when designing your writing assignment.

I. Common Learning Gaps that Impact Writing Assignments



Knowledge: What do the students need to know?



Skills: What do the students need to learn how to do?



Motivation: What attitudes or beliefs do the students need to have or overcome?



Environment: What contexts, resources, and tools do they need to complete the assignment?



Communication: Is the assignment sufficiently clear and detailed?

II. Solutions to Common Learning Gaps



Knowledge → Curricular Materials, Research, Discussion, Informal Writing



Skills → Practice, Scaffolding, Sequencing, Review, Revision



Motivation → Choice, Competency, Relevance, Support



Environment → Instructor, Peers, Tutors, Learning Centers, Labs, Library Resources, Online Resources (e.g., Excelsior OWL), Tools, Technology, Reasonable Time Expectations



Communication → Clear Instructions, Templates, Models, Rubrics

Adapted from: Dirksen, J. (2016). *Design for how people learn* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: New Riders.