

Chapter 14

A Foucauldian Perspective on Using the Transparency Framework in Learning and Teaching (TILT)

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ABSTRACT

Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) demands educators inform their students what, where, and why they are expected to learn certain subjective content and how they will be assessed. This allows students to understand the relevance and usefulness of the subjective content covered in their classrooms and what they should do to perform better academically. Yet providing such detailed specifications can restrict students' abilities to be original, critical, and imaginative. Students are no longer able to think out of the box and go beyond current knowledge domains to create new information to transform societies. This chapter integrates the ideologies of Foucault's disciplinary power to deconstruct the totalitarian learning aspect hidden within the three-dimension transparency framework of TILT and how it may hinder the growth and development of students within higher education institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Transparency in learning and teaching (TILT) as an educational design focuses on elucidating the entire learning process to the students, thereby granting them equal opportunities, to succeed academically regardless of their race and economic

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backgrounds (Leuzinger & Grallo, 2019; Winkelmes, 2019a). The transparency framework requires all educators to mention *the purpose* (why the student is learning that information), *the task* (how that activity needs to be completed) and *criteria* (how the entire activity will be assessed). This allows the students to comprehend the objective of different course activities, types of skills to be acquired, instructors' expectations and how the grades will be allocated. Transparency enables both the students and instructors to enter into a partnership agreement to maximize learning, student retention and graduation rates. TILT initiatives can be triggered by making a "small adjustment (or tilt) rather than a massive revision to offer students an honest look at the teacher's rationale for what students are required to do, with the goal of boosting all students' self-awareness of their learning processes" (Winkelmes, 2019a, p. 3). These small tilts or transparency attempts have proven to be effective in increasing students' self-confidence, self-esteem, resulting in better grades, knowledge, and skill assimilation (Leuzinger & Grallo, 2019; Winkelmes et al., 2016).

TILT emerges as an inclusive, equitable teaching strategy which possesses the power to support and assist underserved, minority, first generation college students such as the African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans, who belong to the lower economic strata of the society. These students might be the first from their families to attend college and therefore might lack an understanding on what college life might demand. They may have never seen or know how to write a laboratory report or a research paper etc. Transparency framework enables overcoming such hurdles, it takes up the role of a gatekeeper who integrates the student into the academic environment, shares information on how and where to start, and what is required to be accomplished to succeed in their academic work (Leuzinger & Grallo, 2019; Winkelmes et al., 2016; Winkelmes, 2019a). Transparent assignments, discussions and projects effectively unlock the "*mystery*" surrounding all academic course work by resolving all questions, doubts, dilemmas about how to do it or what is required, or not knowing what needs to be done (Winkelmes, 2019a).

Even though the social justice implications prevalent within TILT cannot be refuted and its potential to emancipate first generation students, with its ability to adapt to a variety of different teaching and learning styles cannot be ignored. Yet simultaneously it cannot be disregarded that TILT, by making the entire expectations of the instructors and their learning requirements transparent, stifles creativity and originality on part of the student. Informing one's students of one's expectations by specifying minute details of the course assignments, providing the students with sample assignments etc. amounts to "*spoonfeeding*", which suppresses the creativity, originality, and imagination of the students. TILT develops preconceived images of "*knowledgeable students*" who *churn* out what is considered appropriate by the educator, in terms of content, knowledge, information and learning. Students are no longer encouraged to be original, or to critique and think outside of the box.

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