

Syllabus Essentials

Maximizing the promise to students



Workshop Objectives

- Identify components of an effective course [syllabus]
- Identify components for making your [syllabus] more learner-centered, increasing transparency, accessibility, inclusion
- Identify the minimally-required syllabus elements for a KBOCC course and how to use the updated Syllabus Template
- Understand ways to leverage your syllabus to increase learning

Positionality

Measuring the Promise: A Valid and Reliable Syllabus Rubric

Guide to Assessing the Focus of Syllabi

Michael Palmer, Dorothe Bach, & Adriana Streifer
University of Virginia, Center for Teaching Excellence

Contents:

- Overview
- Rubric
- Validity
- Scoring
- Inter-rater Reliability
- Data Analysis for Pre-Post Pairs
- Supplemental Rubric
- References
- Appendix A: Verbs for Significant Learning

Rubric

Essential components are shown in gold, *important* components in silver, and *less-important* components are in white.

Criterion	What the component looks like:	Ideas for where to look and examples of what to look for (not all need to be present):
Learning Goals & Objectives	<p>Learning goals and objectives are not an "afterthought," but are a central element of the course.</p> <p>1. Explicitly or implicitly stated learning goals (i.e., long-range, high-level goals) encompass the full range of Fink's dimensions of significant learning (i.e., knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring, learning how to learn).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning goals are often found in the course description, especially affective goals. • Implicit goals may appear in other sections of the syllabus (e.g., assessment, schedule, tips for student success).
	<p>2. Course-level learning objectives are clearly articulated and use specific action verbs to describe in measurable terms what students will be able to do, value, or know at the end of the course. Like the goals they are derived from, the learning objectives map onto the full range of Fink's taxonomy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course-level learning objectives are in a prominent and easily identifiable location (i.e., labeled section). • Learning objectives with non-quantifiable terms, such as "understand" and "know," are avoided. For examples of strong verbs, see Appendix A: Verbs for Significant Learning. • The syllabus considers the full range of Fink's taxonomic dimensions (including the affective ones). It is not necessary that course objectives list affective dimensions, as long as there is evidence elsewhere in the syllabus that they are being considered. • Typically, 5-8 course-level objectives are appropriate. More or fewer could be problematic.
	<p>3. Learning objectives are appropriately pitched to the course level, class size, position of the course within the curriculum, and characteristics of students taking the class.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is likely difficult to assess without knowledge of the discipline and curriculum.
Assessment Activities	<p>All major assessment activities positively support the learning objectives.</p> <p>4. It is clear that the objectives and assessments are aligned. In other words, the major assessment activities map onto the full range of learning objectives and the degree of mapping correlates with the weighting of the assignment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though a complete mapping may not be possible without input from the instructor, connections between the objectives and major assessments should exist (i.e., the each major assessment activity should map to one or more learning objectives).
	<p>5. The basic features of the major summative assessment activities are clearly defined. The assessment instructions provide students with a rationale and, whenever possible, with an authentic task.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course-level assessments are in a prominent and easily identifiable location (i.e., labeled section). Grading percentages may be included in assessment descriptions, but there should be a distinct section detailing grading (see component 8).

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Constructing a Learner-Centered Syllabus: One Professor's Journey

IDEA Paper #60 • September 2016



Aaron S. Richmond • Metropolitan State University of Denver

Abstract

Educators increasingly agree that a learner-centered syllabus is associated with better rapport between students and teachers and increased student motivation, achievement, and empowerment. Accordingly, in 2009 Cullen and Harris developed a rubric for assessing the degree to which a syllabus is learner-centered versus teacher-centered. To date, however, there has been no such resource to explain how to actually construct a learner-centered syllabus. Therefore, I set out to provide a primer: In the first half of this paper, I review the history of syllabus construction and then discuss the research that assesses the impact of learner-centered syllabi. In the second half, I provide an assessment tool for teachers, based on the work of Cullen and Harris, for evaluating a syllabus to determine its learner-centeredness. I then explain specific elements of a learner-centered syllabus and provide examples of how to include these elements in your syllabus.

It is the first day of class, and what are you discussing? Yes, the syllabus! You do what you have always done: review certain elements of the syllabus (e.g., grading policies, due dates, assignments, and assessments)—all the important things that you want your students to know. When you are finished, you might even have a little time left to start teaching course content. After class, you reflect on how the first day went, and a few questions surface. You might ask yourself, *What is the purpose of my syllabus? My students seemed very disengaged today. Why? Now that I think of it, the syllabus doesn't match who I am as a teacher. Why not? Ultimately, you conclude that something must change and that you need to investigate how to improve your syllabus.*

The good news is that there is an increasing amount of available research on best practices in syllabi construction (e.g., Altman & Cashin, 1992; Cullen & Harris, 2009; Grunert, 2000; Slattery & Carlson, 2005). However, more important, a growing body of research and practice suggests that learner-centered syllabi can have several positive impacts on students (e.g., DiClementi & Handelsman, 2005; Harrington & Gabert-Quillen, 2015; Richmond et al., 2014; Richmond, Slattery, Morgan, Mitchell, & Becknell, 2016a; Richmond, Morgan, Slattery, & Venzke, 2013; Saville, Zinn, Brown, & Marchuk, 2010). Moreover, Cullen and Harris best define a learner-centered syllabus as "an attempt to create community, a sharing of power and control over what is learned and how it is learned as well as a focus on assessment and evaluation tied directly to learning outcomes" (p. 117).

However, let's not get ahead of ourselves. Prior to discussing the construction of a learner-centered syllabus, it is important to understand the main purpose of a syllabus as traditionally researched and practiced and the benefits of a learner-centered one.

The Purpose of a Syllabus: A Historical Review

The syllabus can take many different forms and serve many different purposes (Altman & Cashin, 1992; Slattery & Carlson, n.d., 2005). First, and in some cases foremost, the syllabus is viewed as a contract (Elberly, Newton, & Wiggins, 2001; Habanek, 2005; Richmond, Boysen, & Gurung, 2016a). Robinson, Wolf, Czekanski, and Dillon (2014) suggest that the syllabus defines and establishes the respective duties, roles, and responsibilities of the students and the teacher. Contractual syllabus elements may include a description of and rules regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty; a calendar of course events; and policies on grading, exams, revising and redoing assignments, turning in late work, and implementing elements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (Parkes & Harris, 2002; Slattery & Carlson, 2005).

Second, the syllabus is also considered a permanent record that contains detailed and accurate information about the course requirements and content (Parkes & Harris, 2002). Examples include the course-catalog description and accurate summaries of student learning objectives (SLOs); evaluation procedures; course content; and required readings, textbooks, and other materials (Richmond, et al., 2016a).

REFRAMING ASSESSMENT TO CENTER



THEORIES, MODELS, AND PRACTICES

EDITED BY GAVIN W. HENNING, GIANINA R. BAKER, NATASHA A. JANKOWSKI, ANNE E. LUNDQUIST, AND ERICK MONTENEGRO



Why syllabus?



IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

This message brought to you by every instructor that ever lived.

WWW.FHPGCOMICS.COM

"The Higher and Greater" by Jorge Ordoñez

Our promise to students

- To outline a course
- To provide basic course information
- To serve as a contract between instructor and students
- **To become an interactive learning tool**
- **To encourage students to become co-learners**
 - Engagement and motivation
 - Learner autonomy in learning
 - Deeper and more enthusiastic learning

Content (teacher) vs. Student-centered Syllabi

- **Content-focused**

- Focuses on what the “course will do”
- Instructor is “impartor of knowledge” while students listen
- Dry course descriptions, use mechanical and robotic language, and have a calendar that includes only due dates and course readings

- **Student-Centered**

- Instructors focus on what “students will learn” and how the course can be structure to support learning
- Invites students to be co-creators of their own learning, engaging them in decision about what, when, and how they learn
- Teachers take on the role of a guide or facilitator of learning experiences
- Engaging course descriptions, clear measurable learning outcomes, alignment between objectives and assessment activities, transparent and meaningful assessment activities, positive and inviting tone, and detailed and interactive calendar

TEACHING STYLE SPECTRUM



Learner-Centered Syllabi

- Benefits
 - Transitions students from passive to active learners
 - Acknowledges individuality
 - Allows for collaboration and dialogue between educator and student
 - Build stronger, better relationships
 - Opportunity for students to increase academic confidence and sense of belonging
 - Improve students' appreciation for their role in the learning process
- Goes beyond addressing basic course information to anticipate questions and **promote academic success**
- Mounting evidence that learner-centered syllabi can have positive effects on both students and teachers, including the ability to increase many desirable student learning outcomes and improve perceptions of the teacher and the course
 - Students are empowered and “behave” better in class, have greater rapport with teacher, and remember more details from syllabus (DiClementi & Handelsman, 2005; Richmond et al, 2014; Saville et al, 2010; Harrington & Gabert-Quillen, 2015)
 - Students perceive the teacher as exhibiting higher levels of master-teacher qualities (Richmond et al, 2016b; Saville et al, 2010))
 - Students perceive the instructor as significantly more motivated, warm, and approachable as well as a less difficult teacher (Harnish and Bridges, 2011)
 - Syllabi that have been peer reviewed by syllabi experts and published tend to be more learner-centered



- Sets the (welcoming & inclusive) tone for the course
- Communicate what, when, and how students will learn
- Establish how students can be successful in the course
- Communicate expectations, roles
- Articulate course, institutional policies
- Motivate students to refer to syllabus

Effective Syllabus

Underlying Assumptions

Assessment

- Clear definition and understanding of assessment
 - Various levels: Course vs. Program
 - Formative vs. Summative
 - Assessment vs. Grading

Learning Outcomes

- Definition/understanding of student learning outcomes
 - Learner-centered
 - Action-verbs from domains/dimensions of learning

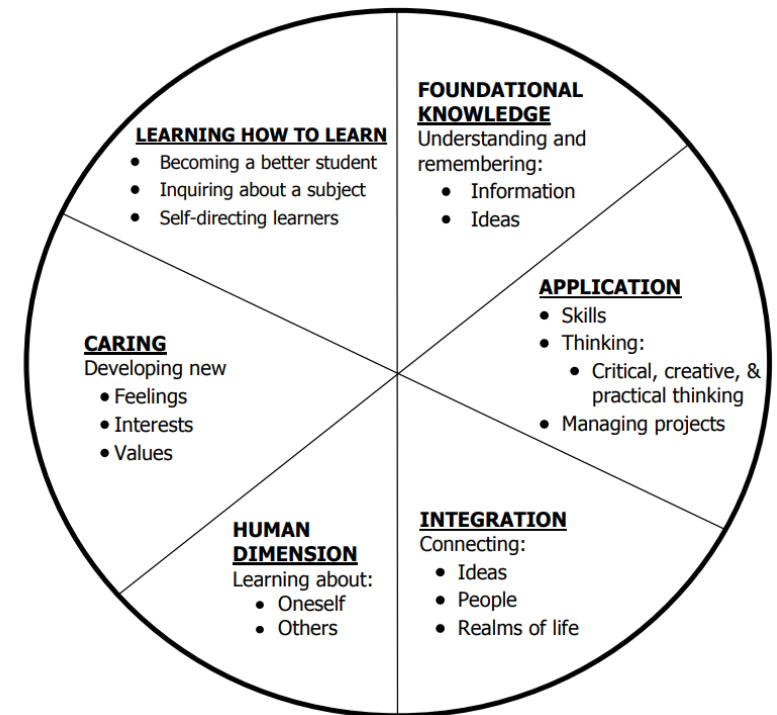
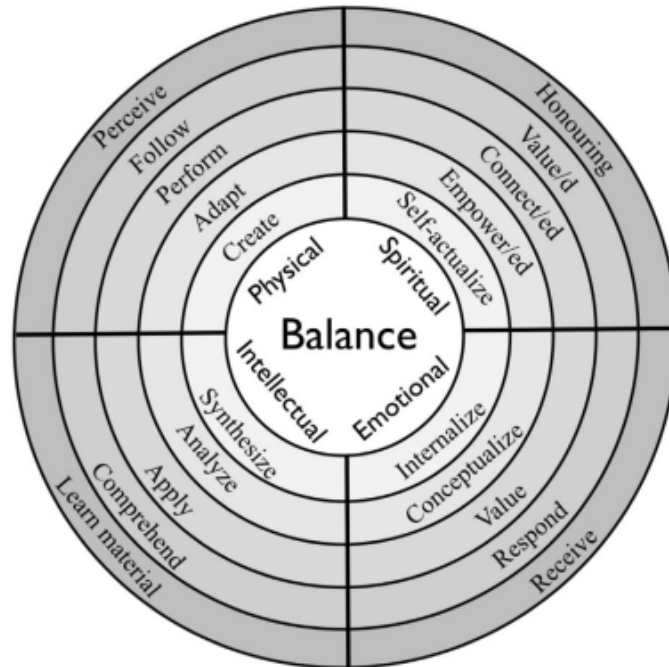
Alignment

- Critical concept in course design/development:
 - Learning activities & assessments are directly derived from learning goals and outcomes
 - Start by articulating outcomes for learning
 - Then create learning activities (in and out of class time) and assessments that support development of specific skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values



Student Learning Outcomes

- Learner-centered: Specify what students will know, be able to do, feel, or believe
- Holistic, engaged on multiple dimensions
 - Mental (Cognitive), Emotional (Affective), Physical (Psychomotor), and Spiritual Domains
- Verbs for Significant Learning
 - Medicine Wheel Framework (LaFever)
 - Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning (non-hierarchical)
 - Expanded Bloom's Taxonomy



Backwards Design

Traditional Design

Step 1: Identify a topic or chunk of content that needs to be covered

Step 2: Plan a sequence of learning activities to teach that content

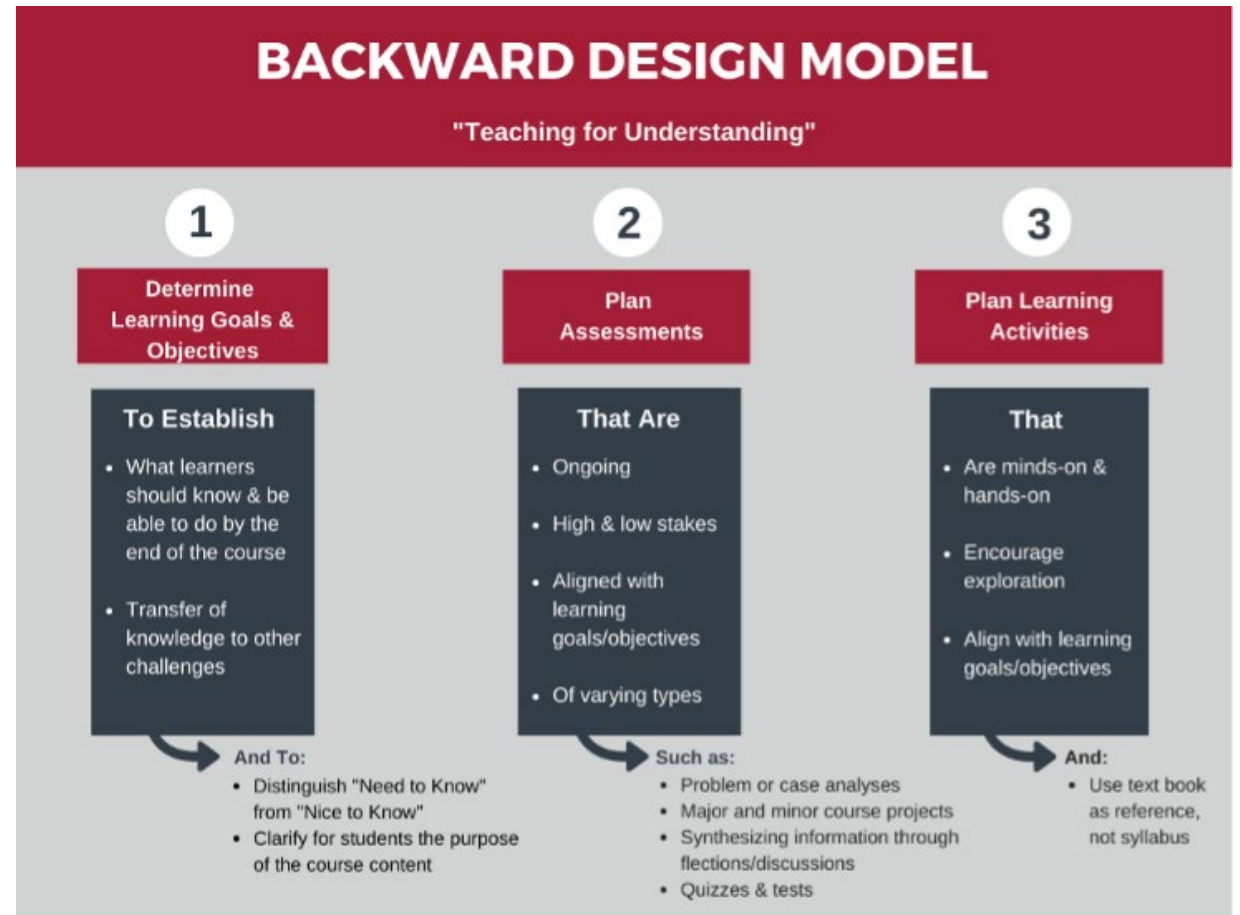
Step 3: Create an assessment to measure the learning that should have been achieved

Backwards Design

Step 1: Identify what students should know, feel, believe, and be able to do by the end of the learning cycle

Step 2: Create assessments to measure that learning

Step 3: Plan a sequence of activities that will prepare students to successfully complete the assessment(s)



Backwards Design Example: The Lunar Cycle

Before/Traditional

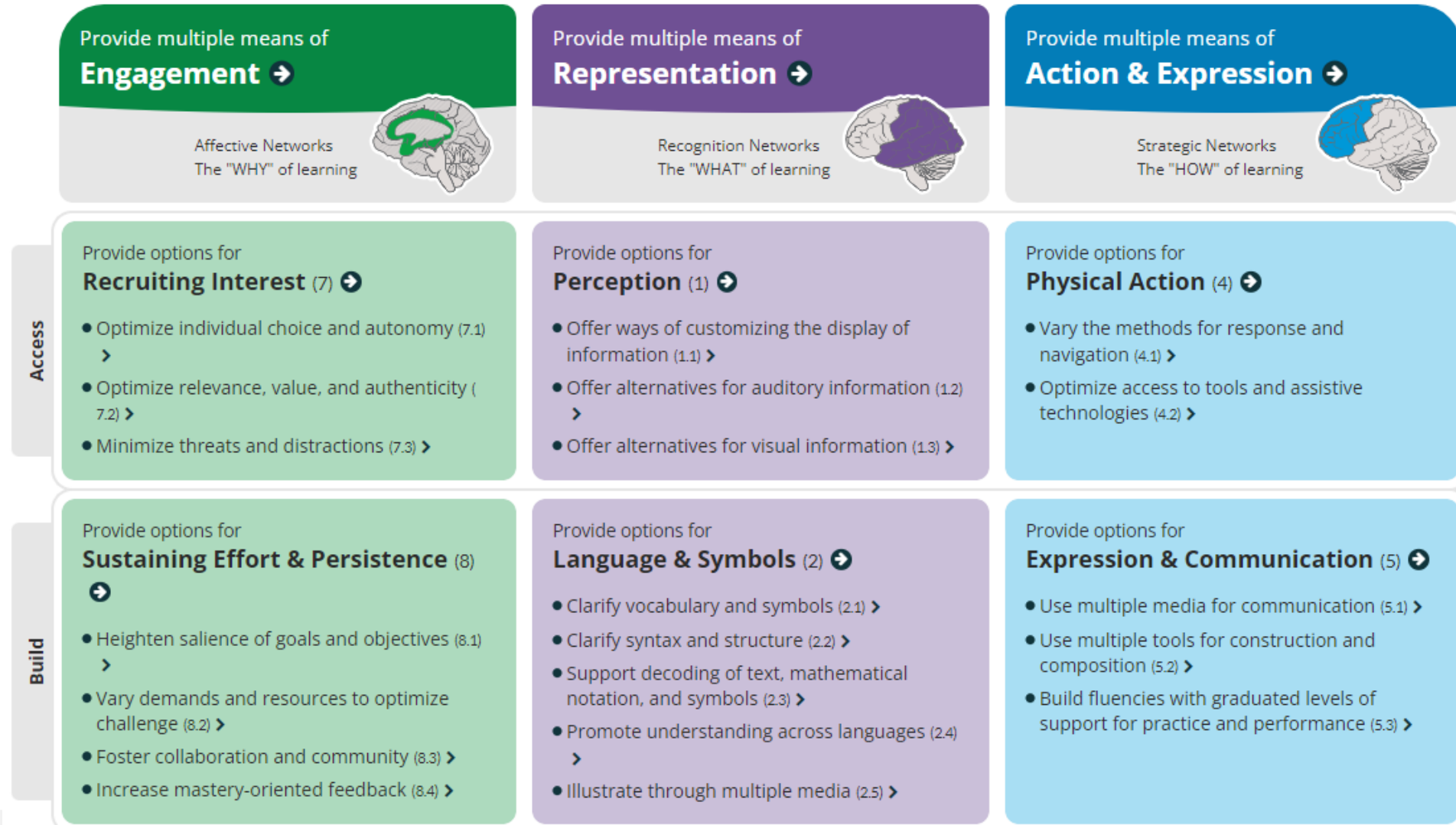
- A lecture or video about the phases of the moon, followed by a worksheet to label the phases
- An interactive activity like scraping the filling out of Oreos to represent the lunar phases
- Following a teacher's sample, create a physical model of the moon phases
- Unit test that requires labeling the phases of the moon from memory and answering multiple-choice questions about the lunar cycle, eclipses, and seasons

After/Backwards Design

- NGSS: “Develop and use a model of the Earth-sun-moon system to describe the cyclic patterns of lunar phases, eclipses of the sun and moon, and seasons”
- Develop assessment to measure success with above outcome
 - Present a student-developed model to explain phases, etc
 - Craft a rubric that clearly outlines specific criteria for both model and the presentation
- Works backwards to determine what activities are needed for students to practice and be successful on the assessment
 - Instruction: Keep lecture or video
 - Worksheet or online practice: Keep, but ungraded
 - Active processing with models, working in groups
 - Presentation practice: explain to peers
 - Model development: offer choice (physical, hand-drawn, slideshow, animated video, children's book, skit)
 - Model presentations: “live” or allow students to record presentation or present one-on-one while other students work on something else

Inclusive Learning & Universal Design

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines



Essential Syllabus Components

Learning Goals & Outcomes: Not an “afterthought” but a central component of the course

- Explicitly or implicitly stated learning goals, encompass holistic range of learning dimensions
- Clearly articulated course learning outcomes (CLOs) with specific action verbs
- Learning outcomes appropriate to course-level, class size, program, and students/learners

Assessments: All major assessment activities support the learning outcomes

- Learning outcomes and assessments are aligned
 - Major assessments (high-stakes) map onto full range of learning outcomes and weighted accordingly
- Major summative assessments are clearly defined, and whenever possible, include an authentic task
- Plans for frequent formative assessments with immediate feedback from variety of sources, not all graded
- Assessments are adequately paced and scaffolded
- Grading information is distinct from information about assessment of learning
- Allow students to revise and redo assignments

Schedule & Learning Activities: A learning tool that guides students through the learning environment

- Course schedule is fully articulated (topics/readings/questions) in a logical sequence
- Rationale for assignments, activities is included and tied to learning outcomes
- Dynamic classroom through culturally-relevant activities & assessments and evidence-based practices
 - Authentic, real-world
 - Hands-on
 - Holistic
 - Group-based
 - Outdoor, place-based

Example

(a)

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

1. Become a critical consumer of developmental research by understanding a variety of methodological issues.
2. Be able to read, understand, and integrate research in human development.
3. Understand the importance of scientifically studying issues pertaining to human development.
4. Be able to apply varying research methods to study people of all developmental periods.
5. Understand the ethical considerations involved when conducting research, especially with those under 18.
6. Learn about the research process by conducting a literature review, formulating a developmental research question and hypothesis, designing and carrying out methodology to test hypothesis, analyzing data, and writing APA-formatted research paper.

(b)

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

1. Become a critical consumer of developmental research by understanding a variety of methodological issues (assessed by MythBusters analysis and exams).
2. Be able to read, understand, and integrate research in human development (assessed by journal article assignment and exams).
3. Understand the importance of scientifically studying issues pertaining to human development (research proposals 1 & 2 and exams).
4. Be able to apply varying research methods to study people of all developmental periods (assessed by team-based research project).
5. Understand the ethical considerations involved when conducting research, especially with those under 18 (assessed by human subjects research training and research presentation).
6. Learn about the research process by conducting a literature review, formulating a developmental research question and hypothesis, designing and carrying out methodology to test hypothesis, analyzing data, and writing APA-formatted research paper (assessed by exams and APA style & format assignment).

Note: Syllabus element “a” is an example of teacher-centered SLOs, and “b” is an example of learner-centered SLOs.

Example

Assessments				Grading Scale	
Assignment	Points	% of Total	SLOs	Total Points	Letter Grade Equivalent
Human Subjects Research	50	5%	5	1000-900	A
APA Style & Format	50	5%	6	899-800	B
MythBusters Analysis	50	5%	1	799-700	C
Journal Article Evaluation	50	5%	1 & 2	699-600	D
Research Proposal Part 1	50	5%	1-3	599 or less	F
Research Proposal Part 2	50	5%	1-3		
Draft of Introduction & Method	NG	NG	4-6		
Introduction & Method Paper	100	10%	4-6		
Draft of Results & Discussion Paper	NG	NG	4-6		
Results & Discussion Paper	100	10%	4-6		
Draft of Final Research Paper	NG	NG	4-6		
Final Research Paper	100	10%	4-6		
Research Presentation	100	10%	4-5		
Mid Term Exam	150	15%	1-6		
Comprehensive Exam	150	15%	1-6		
TOTAL	1000	100%			

Note. NG stands for Not Graded. On the NG assignments, I will give you feedback and suggestions on how to improve your work.

Example

Learning rationale for assignments/assessments

Journal Article Evaluation: You will be required to read three separate articles that demonstrate different research designs discussed in class. You will then be asked to answer several questions that pertain to one of the three articles.

Journal Article Evaluation (tied to SLOs 1 and 2): This assignment is designed to assess your skills as a critical reader and to apply the concepts taught in class to published research. Becoming a critical reader will help you in your future career by enabling you to be accurate in your assumptions and predictions. You will be required to read three separate articles that demonstrate different research designs discussed in class. You will then be asked to answer several questions that pertain to one of the three articles.

Promoting collaboration, cooperation

Team Research Project (SLOs 4, 5, and 6): To help you become good scientists and proper consumers of research, this project will give you firsthand experience in designing and carrying out a research project in developmental psychology. You and your group will collaboratively develop a research topic, review relevant literature, develop methodology to investigate the topic, collect and analyze data, and present your findings to the class and in a final paper.

Essential Syllabus Components

Learning Environment & Community: Supportive and invites students to engage in and take ownership of their learning

- Tone is positive, respectful, inviting and addresses student as a competent, engaged learner
- Reflects a learning environment that fosters positive motivation, describes the value of the course in terms of the student's life, and communicates that content is used as a vehicle for learning
- Communicates high expectations and projects confidence in students
- Well-organized and easy to navigate. It makes clear that students will need to continually interact with syllabus throughout course
- Accessibility: Available for multiple office hours, by multiple means of access, at locations other than offices
- Collaboration included through group-work, team projects, or encouraging students to learn from one another
- Share key student resources, supports, and policies

Shared Power

- Incorporate student input in policies and procedures, grading, due dates, and assignments; co-construct with students
- Describe both student and teacher roles; include student *and* instructor expectations
- Include outside resource information; expect students to contribute
- Syllabus weighted toward student learning outcomes and means of assessment

Example

Syllabus Element	Warm and Friendly Language
Learning resources for students	Each class is different. Sometimes we need a little help from one another to learn how to study for a test or complete an assignment. If you need help, please do not hesitate to come and talk to me
Office hours	Student Hours Plaza 220 AB MF 9:00–10:00 a.m. TR 10:30–11:30 a.m. arichmo3@msudenver.edu If these hours do not work with your schedule, please let me know and I will try to work out a time to meet you. Or, if my door is open, just stop on by, I would love to see you.
Teaching Philosophy	I truly believe in your success as a student and adapting my instruction to ensure your success. Below you will find several different instructional methods to help me accomplish my goal: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I vary my teaching methods to ensure that our courses are accessible to all students . . .2. I believe in transparency, meaning I have nothing to hide from you and you have nothing to hide from me . . .3. Everyone has the right and ability to be successful in this course . . .4. In my courses I promote a safe climate where we examine content from multiple cultural perspectives . . .5. Foremost, I believe in student-centered active learning . . .

To establish a rewarding and friendly tone, use words such as *should* instead of *must* and avoid punitive statements (Ishiyama & Hartlaub, 2002). Harnish and Bridges (2011) also suggest using welcoming and warm language, such as that shown in Table 1.

Example

(a)

Instructor: Dr. Aaron S. Richmond
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday
9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. by appointment only
Office Location: Plaza Building 220-AB
E-mail: arichmo3@msudenver.edu

(b)

Instructor: Dr. Aaron S. Richmond
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday
9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. walk-in
OR JUST COME ON BY. If I am here, my door is always open. Also, remember there are participation points for coming by 😊
Office Location: Plaza Building 220-AB
E-mail: arichmo3@msudenver.edu
Phone: 303-556-3085
Text via CELLY: 4573 @PSY4550
Twitter: @AaronSRichmond

Note: Syllabus element “a” is an example of teacher-centered accessibility, and “b” is an example of learner-centered accessibility.

Example

(a)

Student Expectations

- a. PLEASE BE ACTIVE AND PARTICIPATE IN CLASS.
- b. Listen and respect others.
- c. Be comfortable taking risks.
- d. Complete all assignments.
- e. Turn off your cell phones and/or pagers.
- f. Be punctual for all classes.
- g. Discuss class concerns either after class or during designated office hours.
- h. Be prepared for class by reading chapter prior to lesson.

(b)

Expectations for Students & Instructor

Student Expectations

- a. PLEASE BE ACTIVE AND PARTICIPATE IN CLASS.
- b. Listen and respect others.
- c. Be comfortable taking risks.
- d. Complete all assignments.
- e. Turn off your cell phones and/or pagers.
- f. Be punctual for all classes.
- g. Discuss class concerns either after class or during designated office hours.
- h. Be prepared for class by reading chapter prior to lesson.

Instructor Expectations

- a. BE ACTIVE AND ENTHUSIASTIC TO FACILITATE STUDENT LEARNING.
- b. Listen and respect students' views.
- c. Be in class at least 5 minutes before and after class.
- d. Respond swiftly and effectively to student concerns.
- e. Turn off cell phone.
- f. Grade objectively, consistently, and in a timely manner.
- g. Be prepared for class.
- h. Accommodate differences in students' learning.

Please remember, if you have any questions, concerns, or comments, to let me know right away. I welcome any feedback you're willing to offer.

Note: Syllabus element "a" is an example of a teacher-centered syllabus showing only student roles, and "b" is an example of a learner-centered syllabus showing both teacher and student roles.

Example

Outside resources & Success Tips (how to be successful)

Required Textbooks

Brown, K. W., Cozby, P. C., Kee, D. W., & Worden, P. E. (1999). *Research methods in human development* (2nd ed.). Mountain View, CA: McGraw Hill.

Schwartz, B. M., Landrum, R. E., & Gurung, R. A. (2014). *An easyguide to APA style* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. ISBN: 978-1-4522-6839-2

Outside Resources

- In addition to the required textbooks above, I will be using YouTube videos, online articles from sources such as blogs, ScienceDaily, the Onion, Slate Magazine, CNN, and Fox News. I will also have guest lecturers or show TEDx clips in class.
- However, I am not the only one who will be responsible for resources in this course. You will be assigned specific class days on which you are asked to bring in current events (from any media source) that are relevant to that class period's discussion.

- *Develop effective study habits.* It is just as essential to develop your test-taking strategies and study habits as it is to learn core material. This may involve establishing a study schedule, learning about new homework approaches, and evaluating your current study techniques. You can find plenty of new ideas on the Internet, but it is better to consult with your school counselor or academic advisor in order to get the most out of your psychology courses.
- *Develop your writing skills.* Good writing skills are crucial in college. From finishing essay-exam questions to writing a formal research paper, it is very important to communicate effectively. Students who are unsure of how to structure their papers, conduct research, and identify topics will find classes difficult. Check to see if your school offers a writing lab where you can get constructive criticism, editorial reviews, and advice.
- *Dig deeper into the course.* You will learn more about different topics as the semester progresses. When you begin to study new lessons, concentrate on learning as much as you can. You will certainly gain a richer and deeper understanding of the course by reinforcing the readings and class lectures with supplemental information.

KBOCC Syllabus Template (Rev. Spring 2023)

Course Description and Overview

Course Description:

Course Learning Outcomes:

[List the approved student learning outcomes specific for this course. Designate by () or **Bold text** which course learning outcomes will be measured for assessment and continuous improvement purposes this semester (at least 2 CLOs from each course must be assessed and reported each semester).]*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Program Learning Outcomes:

[List any program learning outcomes (PLOs) and/or General Education learning outcomes (GELOs) that this course addresses.]

Anishinaabe Content/Cultural Relevancy:

[Describe how the learning goals are relevant and/or responsive to Anishinaabe culture, traditions, and/or beliefs. Describe how content will be provided]

Course Outline/Schedule

[If reasonable, indicate date(s) for each course topic. Include dates for assignments such as tests, papers, special projects, oral presentations, etc. including those that will provide evidence of student learning. Link your activities to measurable course learning outcomes.]

Week	Topic/ Activity	Assignment/ Assessment	Learning Outcome
Week 1 January 9			
Week 2 January 16			
Week 3 January 23			
Week 4 January 30			
Week 5 February 6			
Week 6 February 13			
Week 7 February 20			
Week 8 February 27			
Week 9 March 6			
Week 10 March 13			

Assessment and Evaluation

Grading:

Assessments			Learning Outcomes
Assignment:	Points	% <u>of</u> Total	CLOs

Note: NG stands for Not Graded. On NG assignments, I will give you feedback and suggestions on how to improve your work.

Potential Activities

- Take 5 minutes to:
 - Identify 2 ways to make your syllabus more learner-centered
 - Identify 1 strategy to use active learning and engagement to encourage students to interact with syllabus before or during first day of class
- Consider the following to help students demonstrate understanding of essential syllabus items and/or build rapport with your class:
 - Syllabus quiz
 - Active learning and syllabus speed dating
 - Active learning and first day graffiti
 - Boards/paper with prompts (I learn best in classes where the teacher ____; I am most likely to participate in classes when ____)
 - Students grab a marker and graffiti their responses to the prompts

Miigwech!