

## Goal-centered syllabus hand-out - Rebecca Ericson – GMU Innovations Conference 2017

A list of resources I used when I built this presentation, listed here in no particular order!

Noyd, R. (2001). A primer on writing effective learning-centered course goals. Retrieved from <http://www.xavier.edu/cte/Teaching-Resources-at-Xavier.cfm>

GMU's course redesign workshop pointed me to this resource. A down to earth approach to course goals with examples. The main ideas are to write goals that are at the proper level, but high level (think Bloom's top of the pyramid), are understandable, not too broad or specific, and "actionable" leading to something the students do that is motivating.

From Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship – Janet Russell, A workshop on articulating instructional goals

A key point here is distinguishing teaching goals and learning goals. Teaching goals can help the instructor build course structure and content, but are different than learning goals which describe what you hope students will learn – the "take-aways" from your course. Learning goals are specific and measurable, rather than broad and vague.

Structure around the "Big Ideas" – what do you want to stick with students? Then move to what they need to know to understand the ideas. Finally, what should they be able to do with what they understand? Some words to use for what students might be expected to do:

Write, recite, identify, sort, solve, construct, build, compare, contrast

Eberly, M. B., Newton, S. E., & Wiggins, R. A. (2001). The Syllabus as a Tool for Student-Centered Learning. *The Journal of General Education*, 50(1), 56-74. doi:10.1353/jge.2001.0003

The article outlines some of the varied uses of syllabi, public description often used to determine course equivalency and evaluation of courses and programs. It describes responsibilities of instructor and students and gives a direction and timeline for the course. It can be a motivational tool, sets a tone and provides some insight for students into instructor expectations.

Perspectives on the role of the syllabus include – legal document, organizational tool, and means of communication.

Hirsch, C. C. (2010). The Promising Syllabus Enacted: One Teachers Experience. *Communication Teacher*, 24(2), 78-90. doi:10.1080/17404621003680880

Description of the syllabus as much more a two way street....the basic outline of what is promised comes from the teacher, how to carry through and achieve the promises comes from the student, and the two together work through what that means in terms of assessment.

Biktimirov, E. N., & Nilson, L. B. (2003). Mapping Your Course: Designing a Graphic Syllabus for Introductory Finance. *Journal of Education for Business*, 78(6), 308-312. doi:10.1080/08832320309598618

A graphic syllabus, concept map style showing big picture elements of the course and flow between various elements. The advantages? Communicating in a visual manner, easy to read and retain, making visible the course organization, and perhaps making the syllabus more personalized to the instructor and more memorable for the student. It might make a good approach to presenting goals for the course, along with skill and concept building exercises.

Slattery, J. M., & Carlson, J. F. (2005). Preparing An Effective Syllabus: Current Best Practices. *College Teaching*, 53(4), 159-164. doi:10.3200/ctch.53.4.159-164

This is a nice comprehensive view of what should be in a syllabus and why. The authors recommend adopting a warm tone, organizing and designing for readability and including information about goals and outcomes. This is a great overview of both the construction of a syllabus and its possible uses.