

Handouts for
“Ten Tips for Getting Started with Teaching”

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Building Rapport and Creating a Positive Classroom Atmosphere

- What is it?
 - Getting to know your learners and working to make the learning experience personal
 - Building respectful relationships between the instructor and the students, and amongst the students themselves
 - Promoting and cultivating a “growth mindset” in your students

- Why do it?
 - It creates a supportive climate.
 - It makes classroom management easier.
 - It increases student motivation when you express the belief that they are capable of succeeding in the course (efficacy expectancy), and when they enjoy coming to class.
 - It makes the semester more pleasant, fun, and meaningful for all involved.
 - It can increase student attention to course material

- Ways to do it?
 - SMILE!
 - Learn your students’ names.
 - Relax and allow for spontaneity.
 - Be conversational and informal—arrive with some time before and after class to interact with and get to know your students; take time to build personal relationships and follow up on life events; learn about your student’s hobbies and interests
 - Begin class with a saying or a joke.
 - Use stories and personal experience/anecdotes to relate the subject matter
 - Relate course concepts to everyday life; make the learning relevant→ discover student talents and interests and make it personal
 - Break up your presentations and interject humor.
 - Talk to the class on a personal level and encourage dialogue between the instructor and the students
 - Make eye contact
 - Try to always be positive, and to frame comments in positive language; recognize the positive behaviors and production by your students; offer praise
 - Let the students make some of the decisions. This can increase the sense of ownership for the students.
 - Use clear communication in their language in terms of humor, tech, etc...
 - Create the sense that the class is a team—students can help each other out in the learning process.
 - Pay attention to the way you come across in written communication. Try to use a constructive tone.
 - Impressions are formed even through writing on the syllabus. Be aware of this and make sure your syllabus communicates the positive tone that you want to set.
 - Speaking negatively about students, even to other colleagues can create a toxic mentality. Refrain from doing so.
 - Reinforce the fact that you know that your students can succeed by giving them plenty of opportunities for practice and offer suggestions for improvement.

A quick overview of midsemester feedback

Benefits of collecting midsemester feedback

- It helps the instructor stay in touch with the class
- It shows the class that the instructor is listening / cares about what they think
- It allows students to vent; defuses their anger – can make SRTes at the end of the semester more constructive
- It can reveal problems in the class the instructor didn't know about *while there is still time to fix them*
- It can identify what help resources the students are actually using, and probe why they are not using others
- It can remind students of all the help resources available

Tips

- Keep it short
- Include at least one open-ended question – because you don't always know what they will say!
- The Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence (SITE) can help you develop questions
- Collect feedback early enough in the semester that it's possible for you to implement changes to the class ...
- ... but wait until after a major assignment or test has been returned with a grade.
- Don't collect feedback on the day a major assignment is due or a test will occur—the feedback might be biased toward negative comments
- Share the feedback with students promptly
- Tell them what you're going to change, and what you're not (or can't), and why
- Caveat: collecting feedback and ignoring the results may be worse than not doing it at all

Additional information

- Customized feedback – on paper or via Canvas' survey functions. The questions can be fixed-response, open-ended, or a mixture. A minimal set of open-ended questions could include:
 - "What helps you learn in this course?"
 - "What changes could help you learn better?"
 - "Are there changes in your study habits that would help you learn better?"
- Consultants from the Schreyer Institute can visit one of your class sessions and collect focus-group data on the three questions listed under the previous bullet (or other questions of interest to you). We then work with you to identify themes in the data
- We can also help you identify themes collected via a Canvas survey.

Worksheet 1: Mentee expectations

Use this worksheet to develop an understanding of what you expect to gain from your mentoring relationships. By clarifying your own expectations, you will be able to communicate them more effectively to your mentors. Add items you deem important.

The reasons I want a mentor are to:

- Receive encouragement and support
- Increase my confidence when dealing with professionals
- Challenge myself to achieve new goals and explore alternatives
- Gain a realistic perspective of the workplace
- Get advice on how to balance work and other responsibilities, and set priorities
- Gain knowledge of “dos and don’ts”
- Learn how to operate in a network of talented peers
- Other _____

I hope that my mentor and I will:

- Tour my mentor’s workplace/explore various teaching or work sites
- Go to formal mentoring events together
- Meet over coffee, lunch, or dinner
- Go to educational events such as lectures, conferences, talks, or other university events together
- Go to local, regional, and national professional meetings together
- Other _____

I hope that my mentor and I will discuss:

- Academic subjects that will benefit my future career
- Career options and job preparation
- The realities of the workplace
- My mentor’s work
- Technical and related field issues
- How to network
- How to manage work and family life
- Personal dreams and life circumstances
- Other _____

The things I feel are off limits in my mentoring relationship include:

- Disclosing our conversations to others
- Sharing intimate aspects of our lives
- Using public places for meetings
- Meeting behind closed doors
- Other _____

I hope that my mentor will help me with job opportunities by:

- Opening doors for me to job possibilities
- Introducing me to people who might be interested in hiring me
- Helping me practice for job interviews
- Suggesting potential work contacts for me to pursue on my own
- Teaching me about networking
- Critiquing my resume or curriculum vitae
- Other _____

The amount of time I can spend with my mentor is likely to be, on average:

_____ hours each week /every other week /per month

“What do I want students to be able to do?”

Learning Goals vs. Objectives

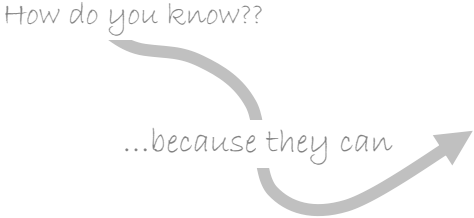
One of the most important questions to ask as you plan a class session, course, or project is to ask yourself: “*What do I want students to be able to do by the end of ...?*” [... today’s class, my course, this activity, our project, etc.]

In answering this question, most of us use general verbs that loosely define the learning, but that are difficult to observe. For example, “I want my students to understand key events in late 20th c. European history” or “I want my students to know the principle factors of soil formation.” These goals are a great place to start and they are extremely useful when thinking about the purpose and importance of a course, topic, or project.

Phrasing your expectations only in general terms creates challenges for you and for students. How will students know what is sufficient for demonstrating mastery and or achievement? What evidence is sufficient to demonstrate that students *know, understand, or have learned?*

Writing clear objectives not only makes assessment easier they can also help ensure that students reach course goals. Documenting change and achievement is easier if you first consider what you want students to do (behavior), to what extent and under what conditions. In a course, ask yourself what you expect students to *do* with the course content. In the right column below are examples of verbs that involve specific actions, observable behaviors, and products.

I want students to be able to:

General Goals		Specific Objectives
Know	<i>How do you know??</i>  <i>...because they can</i>	Analyze
Learn		Solve
Understand		Compare
Appreciate		Critique
Value		Respect
Perform		Diagnose
Create		Evaluate

Once you have a list of 4-6 primary objectives, you can use them to guide decisions about course content, activities, assignments, and grading. The next two pages provide an extensive collection of verbs that are specific, observable, or measurable.

Modified from original by Linse 2017, 2016, 2011, 2007, 2004, 2000

Original: Walvoord, B., 1998, Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Knowledge Domain Action Verbs

Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Acquire	Arrange	Apply	Analyze	Appraise	Alter
Attend	Categorize	Calculate	Appraise	Argue	Calculate
Choose	Chart	Change	Breakdown	Assess	Categorize
Collect	Cite	Choose	Categorize	Compare	Change
Complete	Classify	Classify	Classify	Conclude	Classify
Copy	Compile	Compute	Combine	Consider	Combine
Define	Conduct	Conduct	Compare	Contrast	Compile
Describe	Convert	Construct	Conclude	Critique	Compose
Detect	Demonstrate	Demonstrate	Contrast	Decide	Conduct
Differentiate	Determine	Develop	Criticize	Defend	Constitute
Distinguish	Diagram	Discover	Deduce	Discriminate	Construct
Duplicate	Differentiate	Employ	Defend	Explain	Create
Find	Distinguish	Generalize	Detect	Interpret	Deduce
Identify	Document	Manipulate	Diagram	Judge	Derive
Imitate	Draw	Modify	Differentiate	Justify	Design
Indicate	Edit	Operate	Discriminate	Recommend	Devise
Isolate	Estimate	Organize	Distinguish	Relate	Develop
Label	Explain	Predict	Evaluate	Standardize	Discover
List	Extend	Prepare	Formulate	Summarize	Discuss
Mark	Extrapolate	Produce	Generate	Validate	Document
Match	Fill in	Relate	Identify		Expand
Name	Follow	Restructure	Illustrate		Explain
Order	Formulate	Show	Induce		Formulate
Outline	Gather	Solve	Infer		Generalize
Place	Generalize	Transfer	Outline		Generate
Recall	Give an example	Use	Paraphrase		Modify
Recognize	Illustrate		Plan		Organize
Reproduce	Infer		Point out		Originate
Select	Interpolate		Present		Paraphrase
State	Interpret		Question		Plan
Underline	Itemize		Recognize		Predict
	Locate		Relate		Produce
	Make		Save		Propose
	Organize		Select		Rearrange
	Paraphrase		Separate		Reconstruct
	Predict		Shorten		Relate
	Prepare		Structure		Reorganize
	Quote		Subdivide		Revise
	Read				Rewrite
	Rearrange				Signify
	Record				Simplify
	Relate				Specify
	Rephrase				Summarize
	Represent				Synthesize
	Restate				
	Summarize				
	Translate				
	Update				

Attitudinal Domain

Receive	Respond	Value	Organize	Characterize
Listen to	Reply	Attain	Organize	Believe
Perceive	Answer	Assume	Select	Practice
Be alert to	Follow along	Support	Judge	Continue to
Show tolerance of	Approve	Participate	Decide	Carry out
Obey	Continue		Identify with	

Skills Domain

Each objective under the skills domain can be assessed at different levels of mastery. For example:
Level 1: Imitation Level 2: Manipulation Level 3: Precision Level 4: Articulation Level 5: Naturalization

Assemble	Attach	Balance	Build	Bundle	Calibrate
Care for	Clean	Code	Collate	Collect	Conduct
Conserve	Construct	Control	Design	Diagram	Dictate
Direct	Dismantle	Document	Draw	Duplicate	Edit
Execute	Fix	Format	Gather	Grade	Grid
Harvest	Highlight	Implement	Inspect	Instruct	Interview
Lift	Line	Load/reload	Locate	Log	Make
Manage	Measure	Mix	Mount	Operate	Organize
Package	Perform	Plant	Portion	Position	Prepare
Press	Process	Program	Proofread	Propagate	Prove
Provide	Prune	Raise	Recheck	Refill	Regulate
Renovate	Repair	Replace	Reproduce	Retrieve	Route
Save	Search	Secure	Select	Separate	Sharpen
Simplify	Simulate	Sketch	Sort	Splice	Stratify
Sterilize	Tape	Terminate	Transfer	Transplant	Treat
Trim	Troubleshoot	Verify	Wash	Write	



Teaching InSITEs: Lesson Planning

Schreyer Institute
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DEFINITION

Lesson planning is the process an instructor undertakes to plan a single lesson or class. When done well, it organizes instruction, focuses on student learning, and explicitly targets the course learning objectives.

RATIONALE

A lesson plan gives purpose and structure to a block of instructional time. The key is to find a lesson plan format that works for you. The goal of your plan should be to **organize instruction** in a way that sets up expectations, outlines teacher and student activities, and establishes a means of assessing whether students learned what you intended. It should also be a reminder that the lesson is not all about you as the instructor—it should **focus on the student**. Perhaps most importantly, it allows you to **assure alignment** among the learning objectives, learning activities, and assessments. The bonus for the instructor is that when class time arrives a well-conceived plan for instruction is in place! While there are innumerable formats to use, researchers agree on some key *components*.

COMPONENTS

Learning objectives/lesson goals: Set clear expectations for yourself and for your students. Avoid the temptation to just list content to cover!

Gain attention and tap into prior knowledge: Right away, get the students focused on the task at hand. This is often effective when it's novel, but brief. Also, new knowledge is best built upon foundational knowledge. Activating what learners already know about the day's topic (e.g., ask a question, brief activity) will prime them for the lesson.

Input/teaching: This is the point where students are provided new information, often by means of instructor lecture, demonstration, or modeling. Find varying and novel ways to do this. Chunk content into meaningful pieces and organize it in ways that give consideration to novice learners. Remember...you're an expert; your students are not. But that doesn't mean you should do all the talking!

Guided practice with feedback: Practice is important. But practice with feedback from you and/or students' peers is even more important. Devise ways for students to refine their thinking or skills, experience non-examples of concepts as well as examples, ask questions, and create alternative representations of content.

Independent practice/assessment: This may come before or after the wrap-up. Learners need opportunities to practice and to feel that they can successfully demonstrate their learning. Activities should be diagnostic, designed to help you and the students figure out what they have learned and where they need to continue thinking, studying, working, practicing.

Closure/wrap-up: Don't abruptly stop teaching. Bring some sort of closure to the lesson. Frame the day's content and experiences.

Optional lesson plan components:

- Materials/technology set-up
- Descriptive documentation (e.g., course name, semester, module/unit/lab)
- Estimated time for specific parts of the lesson
- Key terms/concepts; Central questions/big ideas; Requisite skills
- Instructor reflection/notes after the lesson (e.g., "Devise a way to include more students in discussion next time"; Or, "Turn large group Q & A into small group exercise")

What if...? If you are a more experienced instructor, or if you prefer more flexibility in your lesson flow, you can still devise a useful lesson plan. A plan should not constrain your teaching, it should enhance it! Consider reading Billie Hara's (2010) post in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*: <http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/lesson-planning-for-the-university-classroom/22899>. She recommends an intentional, yet flexible, approach to lesson planning.

References:

- Gagné, R. M. (1977). *The conditions of learning*, 3rd ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Hunter, M. (1994). *Planning for effective instruction: Lesson design*. In *Enhancing Teaching*, pp. 87-95. New York: Macmillan College Publishing Company. (Madeline Hunter's model has been criticized at times. Mainly, it is not intended as a prescriptive order of events but a set of planning elements to be considered. See Wolfe's short thoughts on this below.)
- Rosenshine, B., & Stevens, R. (1986). Teaching functions. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Training* (3rd ed., pp. 375-391). New York: Macmillan.
- Wolfe, P. (1987). What the "seven-step lesson plan" isn't. *Educational Leadership*, 44(5), pp. 70-71.

See also the following links for additional information and lesson plan templates designed for faculty:

A nice resource from BYU-Idaho:

http://www.byui.edu/Documents/instructional_development/Instructional%20Tools%20Page%20PDFs/Lesson%20Plans.pdf

A fairly extensive—but searchable—resource

http://www.wvcc.wy.edu/facres/tfs/focalites/LessonPlan_Focalite.pdf

One possible format for a lesson plan

Session date:

Materials needed:

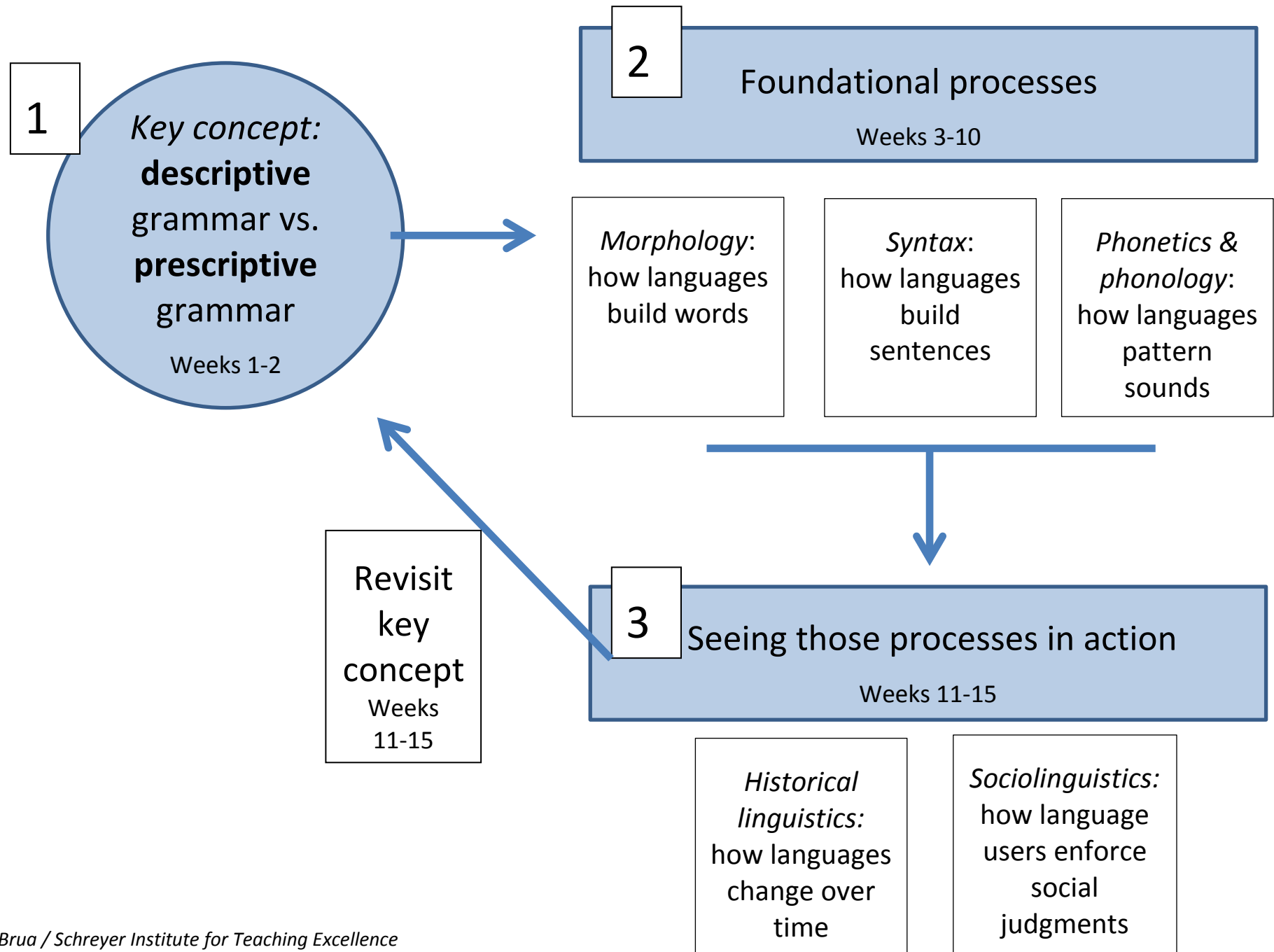
Learning objectives:

Students should be able to....

- _____
- _____

When?	What?	Why?	Comments
11:15-11:20	Project an example problem on the screen, probe students' familiarity	To gain students' attention or tap into prior knowledge	Ask students whether this problem looks familiar to anything they've encountered before in "real world" or previous classes.
11:20-11:35	Mini-lecture or demonstration	To provide overview of unfamiliar concepts related to _____	
11:35-11:50	Hands-on practice by students (small groups)	Students need to apply the concepts, identify where they get stuck, try to get unstuck.	I will circulate around the room while the groups work to see what questions they have.
11:50-12:05	Groups report-out to whole class (I will facilitate)	To give feedback, help students fine-tune	Check students' understanding, answer questions, suggest/construct optimal process.
Class ends at 12:05!			

Sample course map: LING 100 (foundations of linguistics)



1. Preparing a class meeting

- a) Define your main goal/s for the lesson.
- b) Outline tasks you need to accomplish in the lesson.
- c) Define tasks in the form of activities and attach a time frame to each activity.
- d) Prepare more than you will need, but plan where to cut it down.
- e) Be sure that your student have all needed instructions and materials for class preparation well ahead of time.

2. Being on time

- a) Always be in class several minutes before it starts.
- b) Make it a habit to start on time; do not wait for stragglers.
- c) Let students know that being late will affect their performance.

3. Learning students' names

- a) Have students introduce themselves in the first class.
- b) Memorize names while taking attendance or returning materials.
- c) Use students' names frequently.

4. Taking attendance

- a) In lower-level classes: Unless you want to use a roll call to learn students' names in the first few weeks, take attendance by passing around a name list for them to sign.
- b) In upper-level classes: Find other forms of reminding students of the importance of regular class attendance (e.g., phone or e-mail them if they miss two sessions in a row).

5. Giving instructions before group work

- a) Plan the necessary instructions for group work ahead of time.
- b) Be explicit and concise.
- c) Give all the necessary instructions before students break into groups.
- d) Whenever appropriate, provide a brief rationale with your instructions.
- e) Repeat instructions for typical classroom procedures until students have internalized them.

6. Dividing students into groups

- a) Plan when and how to divide students into groups during a given class period.
- b) Give specific instructions regarding the goal of the group, expected products, the roles of group members, physical arrangements, and specific timeframes.

7. Concluding a class meeting

- a) Allow enough time to summarize.
- b) If possible, briefly preview what's coming up next time.
- c) End your class meetings on time.

Course policies

- a) From the first day of class, be clear about your course policies.
- b) If you want to include students in the development of certain policies (this helps with buy-in), set aside time for negotiating, but avoid making negotiation an ongoing process.
- c) Talk to students privately who tend to step over the line (whether they are late for class, come irregularly, hand in assignments late, are disruptive or disinterested in class, etc.).
- d) Don't let yourself be intimidated by students arguing for better grades.
- e) Always justify your grading through clear feedback.

SYLLABUS CHECKLIST

A course syllabus is a written document that summarizes the topical focus of a course, learning expectations for students, grading, materials and a course outline.

At Penn State, all course syllabi must adhere to Faculty Senate [Syllabus Policy 43-00](#)¹, which describes what the syllabus must include and how it should be distributed, including that students must be notified of changes.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

A written syllabus (paper or electronic) must be distributed to students in each course before or during the first class meeting.

- Course content
A course offered at any Penn State location, in any format, must include a minimum of 80% of the core content and learning objectives approved by the Faculty Senate in the most current course proposal².
- Expectations (i.e. course goals and student learning objectives)
 - Course Goals describe the broad knowledge domains and expectations for the course.
 - Course Objectives align with course goals, but are more explicit and represent behaviors, skills, or attitudes that students will learn and demonstrate in the course; objectives are assessed through class activities, assignments, examinations, and/or projects.
- Contact information for all course instructors (including undergraduate or graduate assistants)
- Examination policy
The course exam policy should include the dates, times, and locations of all exams. The syllabus should also note if exams will be administered outside of class time, in the evening³ or in the Pollock Testing Center at University Park.
- Grade breakdown by assessment type and percentage
- Required course materials
- Academic integrity statement
The Faculty Senate has provided an [example syllabus statement](#)⁴ on academic integrity, but your college, campus, or department may have its own academic integrity statement⁵.
- Academic adjustment/accommodation statement.
[example syllabus statement](#)
- Educational Equity Statement
[example syllabus statement](#)
- Information about Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
[sample syllabus statement](#)

RECOMMENDED

Notification of Changes

Although not required, consider adding a “subject to change” statement to your syllabus because it may be viewed as a binding contract between instructor and student.

Basic Course Information

- Course name, ID and number, and section (e.g. ENGL 15, Section 12)
- Course location(s) and meeting times; include lab or discussion section information
- Office hours and how to arrange a meeting at other times
- Website
- Prerequisites (courses, skills, experience)

Methods for Learning and Teaching

- Method(s) of course delivery (e.g., face-to-face, synchronous/asynchronous online, hybrid)
- Teaching methods (e.g. group work, online discussions, lecture)
- Student responsibilities (e.g., student will need to use Canvas to post assignments).

Course Calendar and Schedule

The calendar/schedule clearly illustrates the time and date requirements for topics, readings, assignments, exams, projects, special activities, etc.

Course Requirements

- Required activities (e.g., assignments, projects, class attendance, in-class participation, etc.)
- Required technology (e.g., clicker, software)

Course Policies

- Attendance, missed classes, lateness
- Late projects/assignments
- Make-up quizzes or exams
- Extra credit
- Labs or discussion sessions

Course Resources

- Location and full descriptions of any additional or optional materials

¹ <http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/43-00-syllabus/>

² <http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/42-00-acquisition-of-credit/#42-10>

³ <http://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/44-00-examinations/#44-30>

⁴ <http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/syllabus-statement-examples/>

⁵ <http://hhd.psu.edu/Policies-and-Procedures/procedures#statement>

http://facdev.e-education.psu.edu/teach/residentsyllabus#Required_Policy

<http://agsci.psu.edu/students/advising/academic-integrity>

<http://berks.psu.edu/sample-statement-course-syllabus>

https://onlinecourses.science.psu.edu/statprogram/academic_integrity

Checklist for Evaluating Use of New Technologies in the Classroom

Learning Objectives & Methods

- Will the new technology help my students reach objectives?
- Will the new technology empower students (e.g., make them more active learners)? Make learning more equitable?
- If the new technology provides me with data (i.e. clickers, blogs), do I have the time and knowledge to handle /manage/use the data generated?
- Is the new approach 'better' than the current approach? How or why is it better?

Class Context

- Is this technology appropriate for my class size? (e.g., large vs. small classes) Class context in general—will it fit?

Accessibility

- Can students access the technology?
- Will students incur additional cost to use new technology?
- How steep is the learning curve? For me? For students? Is prior knowledge necessary? Do my students have it?

Time

- Bang for your buck? Can it apply across times/contexts?
- Do the students need to know how to use it in the future (i.e. PowerPoint as essential tool)? Is it applicable to their future employment/use in the field?
- Is there time to invest in learning, testing, using?
- What's the evidence that new technology works? Are there examples available for how to use it successfully?

Troubleshooting & Support

- What is the stability of the platform (i.e., ANGEL or Blackboard); is it generalizable to other places/contexts (i.e. Prezi)?
- Do I know how to troubleshoot?
- Do I need a back-up? Plan B?
- Will I need support in order to use this technology? Is there support available? What is the quality of the support?

Teaching and Learning “Getting Started” Reading List

Available for free online through PSU Libraries

- [How Learning Works](#) is a good place to start.
Ambrose, S. A., Lovett, M., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., & Norman, M. K. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*.
- [How to Teach What you Don't Actually Know](#) (Huston; article version)
Huston, T. (July 01, 2009). How to Teach What You Don't Actually Know. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 55, 42.)
- [Effective Grading](#)
Walvoord, B. E., & Anderson, V. J. (2013). *Effective grading: A tool for learning and assessment in college*. San Francisco, Calif: Jossey-Bass.
- [7 Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education](#) (Chickering and Gamson)
Chickering, A. W., Gamson, Z. F., Poulsen, S. J., & Johnson Foundation (Racine, Wis.). (1987). *Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education*. Racine, Wis: Johnson Foundation.
- Faculty Focus online newsletter
www.facultyfocus.com
- Teaching Professor online newsletter
<https://www.magnapubs.com/newsletter/the-teaching-professor/>

Other Titles of Potential Interest

- [McKeachie's Teaching Tips](#)
Svinicki, M. D., McKeachie, W. J., & McKeachie, W. J. (2014). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- [Teach Students How to Learn](#)
McGuire, S. Y., & McGuire, S. (2015). *Teach students how to learn: Strategies you can incorporate into any course to improve student metacognition, study skills, and motivation*.