**Seamless Learning: Connecting to Educational Opportunities Outside of the Classroom**

*Tuesday, November 27, 11 - 12 pm, 167 LOH or Friday November 30, 1 - 2pm 117E DEV*

**Diana Pace, Michelle Burke, Eric Klingensmith, Student Services**

Faculty can enhance students’ learning by recommending or assigning out-of-class experiences. This workshop will provide information about the wide array of co-curricular programs offered through the Division of Student Services’ “Academics Beyond the Classroom” (ABC). The workshop will also give participants step-by-step instructions on how to use the ABC website, which is organized according to desired learning outcomes. The dates of this workshop allow sufficient time to integrate co-curricular opportunities into Winter semester syllabi.

**Planning Your SWS or Writing Intensive Class**

*Friday, December 7, 3 - 4:30pm, 0042 KC*

**Kay Losey, SWS Director**

Are you teaching a writing intensive or SWS class next semester? Would you like help conceptualizing (or re-conceptualizing) your class so that the writing assignments, feedback, and evaluation components better serve your course goals? Would you like suggestions for making writing an integral part of the course rather than just an “add-on”? This interactive workshop is designed to help you think through the content and timing of assignments, feedback, and evaluation throughout the semester, particularly with regard to how they serve your goals and expectations for student learning in the course. You will leave this workshop with a draft semester plan for your SWS or writing intensive class. Bring all relevant course materials, including your major course goals and any aspects of the course required by your department.

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**CREATING A SYLLABUS FOR A NEW COURSE**

Thinking ahead to next semester... whether you are creating a syllabus for a new course or refreshing an existing syllabus, here are four best practices, or fresh ideas to consider. As always, contact us if you would like additional, more in-depth resources or would like a fresh pair of eyes and feedback on your syllabus.

**What Do Students First See?**

Consider how to draw students into not only your subject, the class, but the syllabus document itself. What is this course really about? Why is what they will learn important? Even for a course that is part of a well-defined major or minor program, we can’t always assume that students understand why a course is required. The opening section of a syllabus is one good place to start this conversation. How can you convey your enthusiasm for the course content and for student learning?

The promising syllabus framework described by Ken Bain (the author of *What the Best College Teachers Do*) addresses (a) what students will learn (as opposed to what the instructor will teach), (b) how they will get there, and (c) shared expectations of what success looks like. To learn more:

- [http://chronicle.com/article/The-Promising-Syllabus/46748](http://chronicle.com/article/The-Promising-Syllabus/46748)
- [http://www.bestteachersinstitute.org/id36.html](http://www.bestteachersinstitute.org/id36.html)

Consider the tone and energy of your syllabus. Consider the ratio of “students can do” to “students cannot do” statements. Are there choices that students can make about the types of assignments they complete? Choice and autonomy are highly motivating. How might you build in some flexibility to the nature or timing of projects?
**Essential Components**

In addition to giving thought and attention to engaging the (student) reader of your syllabus, review the following list of items to make sure that your syllabus conveys the information that students need about your course. While many faculty provide supplemental materials on a Blackboard site or website, these items cover the basics of the course. Check also with your department for further guidance or standards regarding syllabus content.

- The title, department, and number of the course
- Instructor name, office location, contact information, and office hours
- Statement of objectives*
- Prerequisites to (if any) and requirements of the course
- Required texts and/or supplies
- An explanation of the policy relative to student absences
- The basis for grading the course
- Date and time of final examination

Students also appreciate these items to be included with the syllabus or posted as additional documents:

- An outline of topics to be covered or reading schedule, whether broad or specific, even if tentative
- Schedule of exams, assignment due dates, project deadlines
- Special class procedures (web-based components, collaborative projects)
- Advice and information about how to study for the class

*Are you familiar with Objective 4.2 of the GV Strategic Plan 2010-2015? By 2012, all courses identify student learning outcomes linked to appropriate pedagogies.

**Policy statements**

Looking for examples of common policy statements?

**Writing Center**
http://www.gvsu.edu/wc/syllabus-blurb-8.htm

**Disabilities Support Resources**
Any student who requires accommodation because of a physical or learning disability must contact Disability Support Resources (http://www.gvsu.edu/dss) at 616-331-2490 as soon as possible. After you have documented your disability, please make an appointment or see me to discuss your specific needs.

**General Education**
A syllabus attachment is distributed by the General Education program at the beginning of each semester to all general education course instructors.

**Supplemental Writing Skills (SWS)**
http://www.gvsu.edu/sws/index.cfm?id=708EA139-DAB3-9D21-B4962401E31BFBC9

**Plagiarism**
http://www.gvsu.edu/clas/academic-integrity-294.htm

**Netiquette (Emails, laptops, cellphones)**

**Graphics**

Text-heavy syllabi are the norm. To convey information to students in an alternative way, consider using graphic organizers as part of your syllabus. Images, flow charts, mindmaps, maps, and tables all contribute to the readability and ease of learning more about the course. The places to start:

**Using graphic organizers to improve teaching and learning, IDEA Paper #51, 2012.**


Universal Design for Learning is an educational framework that supports individual learning differences. The UDL community provides fabulous suggestions for crafting a syllabus. Learn more at these two places. On the first site, you will find a rubric for syllabi that compares “traditional” syllabi to “enhanced” and “exemplary” syllabi.

**EnACT Project,** Sonoma State University
http://enact.sonoma.edu/content.php?bid=218878&sid=2032318

**UDL Online Training Module,** San Francisco State University
http://ctfd.sfsu.edu/universal-design-for-learning-online-training-module.htm

Simple UDL changes to consider: add a picture of yourself and include a simple campus map showing the location of the classroom and your office. Many students will review course syllabi ahead of the first day of class, if they are posted. Are there discrete units or topic groups in your course? Can these units be represented as a simple flow chart or diagram, possibly showing the relationship of one unit to another?

**Engaging students with the syllabus on the first day of class**

Looking for ideas for first-day activities? Here are four resources: three articles and a set of video case studies to consider.

**Taking a look at the whole picture of the first day:**
http://www.cm.edu/teaching/design/teach/firstday.html

**First-Day Questions for the Learner-Centered Classroom**


**Merlot Elixir Case Stories: Goals for First Day of Class**
http://elixir.merlot.org/case-stories/course-preparation-design/first-day-of-class/goals-for-first-day-of-class7