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Welcome to Today's
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Webinar



The Syllabus in 2014: Creating an Effective Academic Agreement

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Panelist

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*The opinions expressed during today's event
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Objectives for the day.....

- Gain awareness of 2014 student
- Design a contractual agreement
- Apply design tips
- Avoid common errors
- Increase engagement with appropriate “tone”
- Benefits and challenges of addressing academic integrity

2014 Student – Most Born in 1992

- Few in the class know how to write in cursive.
- Email is just too slow, and they seldom if ever use snail mail.
- “Caramel macchiato” and “venti half-caf vanilla latte” have always been street corner lingo.
- The world has always been trying harder to accommodate people with disabilities.

Source: BELOIT COLLEGE'S MINDSET LIST® FOR THE CLASS OF 2014

2014 Student – Most Born in 1992

- Had it remained operational, the villainous computer HAL could be their college classmate this fall.
- Entering college this fall in a country where a quarter of young people under 18 have at least one immigrant parent, they aren't afraid of immigration...unless it involves "real" aliens from another planet.

Source: BELOIT COLLEGE'S MINDSET LIST® FOR THE CLASS OF 2014

2014 Student – Most Born in 1992

- The world has always been trying harder to accommodate people with disabilities.
- Colorful lapel ribbons have always been worn to indicate support for a cause.
- Fergie is a pop singer, not a princess.
- They never twisted the coiled handset wire aimlessly around their wrists while chatting on the phone.

Source: BELOIT COLLEGE'S MINDSET LIST® FOR THE CLASS OF 2014

2014 Student – Most Born in 1992

- Unless they found one in their grandparents' closet, they have never seen a carousel of Kodachrome slides.
- “Viewer Discretion” has always been an available warning on TV shows.
- The first home computer they probably touched was an Apple II or Mac II; they are now in a museum.

Source: BELOIT COLLEGE'S MINDSET LIST® FOR THE CLASS OF 2014

What the 2014 Student Expects of Course Syllabi

- Everything to be online and available on mobile devices
- Objective grading practices spelled out
- Outlines of daily/weekly course content
- When/where/how to contact instructors and immediate/constant communication
- Course objectives?
- Instructor expectations

What the 2014 Student Expects of Course Syllabi

- Class policies:
 - Attendance
 - Withdrawal
 - Academic Integrity
 - Cell phones/Social Media
 - Parents and FERPA
- Supportive Services
- Emergency procedures

Designing a Contractual Agreement

- How long should it be?
- Should it be a learning objective of the course?
 - Assessment
- Should you have them sign the syllabus?
- Educating on what it means to have a contractual agreement.
- Universal Design Principles

Tips and Tricks for Syllabus Design

- Avoid creating a “software license agreement.”
- Prioritize what’s most important for you and what’s most important for them.
- Check institutional requirements.
- Emphasize that things can and probably will change – the syllabus is not in stone.

Tips and Tricks for Syllabus Design

- Present the syllabus to students prior to first class if possible.
- Dedicate class time.
- Outline consequences whenever possible.
- Location of course documents, PowerPoint slides, rubrics, multi-media, etc.

Sample Syllabi Content

- Course title
- Course description
- Credit hours
- Prerequisites/Co-requisites
- Course purpose
- Course objectives

Needed for Course Transfer in Many Cases

Sample Syllabi Content

- Instructor Information
 - Name
 - Office location
 - Office hours (in office or virtual)
 - Contact information (telephone, email, Skype, etc.)
 - Timing on instructor responses
 - Policy on instructor absence or tardiness

Sample Syllabi Content

- Detailed Course Outline
 - Assessments & Grading
 - What is worth what?
 - Math
 - Posting Grades
 - Assignments/Projects
 - Rubrics
 - Due Dates

Sample Syllabi Content

- Required Materials
 - Textbook
 - Equipment
 - Supplies and tools
 - Costs associated if possible

Sample Syllabi Content

- Class/College Policies
 - Attendance
 - Withdrawal
 - Academic Honesty
 - Special Needs/Disabilities statement
 - Cell phones/Social Media

Sample Syllabi Content

- Attendance
 - Classroom versus virtual environment
 - Grading on attendance
 - Does policy allow for this?
 - Is it something that you want to do?

Sample Syllabi Content

- Course Withdrawal
 - Tied to refund of tuition and/or fees
 - Include policy and specific dates (or a link)
 - Require students to meet with you
 - Grants often require success rates tied to course completion

Sample Syllabi Content

- Academic Integrity
 - Review actual college policy
 - Make expectations abundantly clear
 - Share how you'll check
 - Plagiarism
 - Group Work/Projects
 - Testing/Assessments

Sample Syllabi Content

- Special needs services
 - College support systems
 - Process for seeking services
 - Defining “reasonable” accommodations

Sample Syllabi Content

- Cellular Telephones/iPods/Computers/Social Media/Virtual Discussion Boards
 - Define what can be used when and how
 - Define your expectations of use
 - If you don't know.....

Sample Syllabi Content

- Support Services
 - Tutoring
 - Writing Center
 - Library Services
 - Online Resources
 - Define how you can help versus what other resources they should use for help

Understanding “Tone” of Syllabi

- Written versus oral presentation of syllabi information
- Communicating tone through written presentation

Understanding “Tone” of Syllabi

- Example Disabilities Statement:

“Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at xxx-xxx-xxxx in room xxx John Doe Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.”

Source: Ohio State University Syllabus Disability Statement

Understanding “Tone” of Syllabi

- What if it looked like this?

“I know that many students suffer from disabilities and here at XX College, we want you to be successful. If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability please meet with me privately to discuss your specific needs. I’ll work with you in conjunction with our Office for Disability Services to coordinate reasonable accommodations for your documented disability.”

Understanding “Tone” of Syllabi

- Example Cellular Telephone Statement:

“The use of cell phones, smart phones, or other mobile communication devices is disruptive, and is therefore prohibited during class. Except in emergencies, those using such devices must leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period.”

Understanding “Tone” of Syllabi

- Example Cellular Telephone Statement:

“As a member of the learning community, each student has a responsibility to other students who are members of the community. When cell phones or pagers ring and students respond in class or leave class to respond, it disrupts the class. Therefore, the Office of the Provost prohibits the use by students of cell phones, pagers, PDAs, or similar communication devices during scheduled classes. All such devices must be turned off or put in a silent (vibrate) mode and ordinarily should not be taken out during class. Given the fact that these same communication devices are an integral part of the University’s emergency notification system, an exception to this policy would occur when numerous devices activate simultaneously. When this occurs, students may consult their devices to determine if a university emergency exists. If that is not the case, the devices should be immediately returned to silent mode and put away. Other exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the instructor.”

Source: Office of the Provost – Missouri State University

Understanding “Tone” of Syllabi

- What if it sounded like this?

“Just about everyone has a cell phone these days, and they can be disruptive if they go off in class. I’d appreciate everyone turning off their cell phones during class sessions. If one happens to go off, the instructor reserves the right to answer your phone and publicly humiliate you. If you do have a legitimate need to have the phone on because of a possible emergency, please let me know prior to class and exit quietly if necessary.”

Understanding “Tone” of Syllabi

- Example Attendance/Tardiness Statement:

“Students are expected to attend every class and remain in class for the duration of the session. Failure to attend class or arriving late may impact your ability to achieve course objectives which could affect your course grade. An absence, excused or unexcused, does not relieve a student of any course requirement. Regular class attendance is a student’s obligation, as is a responsibility for all the work of class meetings, including tests and written tasks. Any unexcused absence or excessive tardiness may result in a loss of participation points.”

Source: Office of Legal Affairs – UNC Charlotte

Understanding “Tone” of Syllabi

- What if it sounded like this?

“I promise that I will work hard to make class sessions as interesting as possible. My expectation is that you will work hard to attend every class and remain in class for the duration of the session. It’s best for you and for other students because a great deal of learning occurs during class time. At the same time, I recognize that life can get in the way at times. Just remember that if you miss class, you are still responsible for all the work of class meetings, including tests, participation exercises and written tasks. Excessive course absences or tardiness may really affect your ability to be successful.”

Understanding “Tone” of Syllabi

- Or if you’ re more playful.....

“I am anal retentive about students being on time for class. If you’ re late and you want to attend class, you will be required to sing a verse of a song in front of the class. If that is too scary for you, you will not be allowed to come into the class until there is a break. If you believe that you have a legitimate reason to be late, then you may present this reason to the students in the classroom. They will have final say as to whether or not you must sing.”

Understanding “Tone” of Syllabi

- Example Academic Integrity Statement:

“Consider this your one and only warning concerning academic dishonestly (cheating) & plagiarism. Plagiarism means using words, ideas, or arguments from another person or source without citation. Cite all sources consulted to any extent (including material from the internet), whether or not assigned and whether or not quoted directly. For quotations, four or more words used in sequence must be set off in quotation marks, with the source identified. Any form of cheating will immediately earn you a failing grade for the entire course. By remaining enrolled, you consent to this policy. I will seek the harshest penalties under college policy against you.”

Source: Withheld to protect the anonymity of the instructor.

Understanding “Tone” of Syllabi

- What if it sounded like this?

“At XX College, we place a high value on academic integrity. Plagiarizing and cheating are in conflict with our values and are an affront to our high standards of academic excellence. Please review the college’s policy (available at this link:). Violations of this policy could result in penalties up to and including course failure, academic suspension, or expulsion. Don’t go down this road! Ultimately you could harm your personal integrity and tarnish the reputation of our college.”

Summary

- Students in 2014 **ARE** different!
- Designing a syllabus as a contractual agreement can be positive.
- Applying the tips provided here can help you get “off on the right foot.”
- The “tone” of your syllabus can increase student engagement.

Helpful Resources:

- http://www.ehow.com/how_7859587_create-syllabus-template.html
- <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/syllabus-TC101885864.aspx>
- <http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/CourseDesign/Syllabus/templates/index.php>
- <http://myexceltemplates.com/syllabus-template/>
- <http://www.csus.edu/atcs/tools/instructional/templates.stm>
- <http://www.bluelayouts.org/template/762.html>
- <http://teach.ufl.edu/resources/syllabus-templates/>
- <http://www.udi.uconn.edu/index.php?q=content/syllabus-template>

Q/A

How Do I Call-in with a Question?

If you would like to ask a question of our panelist(s) please press *1 and you will be put in a call queue until it is your turn to ask your question.

OR

You can write in a question or comment anytime during the event by clicking on the “**Chat**” **Bubble** in the left hand corner of your screen.

For Questions that Arise After the Conference

If you have a question that you were unable to ask of our presenter(s), please feel free to email us at:

Info@paper-clip.com

...and we will be happy to forward it to our panelists!

Feedback

We want your feedback on today's event!

If you would like to provide suggestions for improvement and/or ideas for future event topics, please email Laura Betti at:

laura@paper-clip.com

and she will send you the link to our brief online survey.

Thank you for your participation,
PaperClip Communications

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- ADA in the Classroom: How & When to Make Accommodations – 3/19/14
- Student Conduct in the Online Environment – 4/16/14
- Distance Learning Regulations: UPDATE 2014 – 4/17/14
- Academic Integrity: Educating & Holding Students Accountable – 4/24/14
- Adjunct Unions: Trends and Implications – 4/30/14