As part of the ongoing assessment of our General Education Program, course syllabi were collected for all Tier one and Tier Two courses offered in Fall 16 and Spring 17 semesters. All syllabi were submitted electronically by instructor, not course, in order to review multiple course sections or offerings. A rubric was used to score the syllabi for three areas: Learning outcomes, Assessment of learning and Writing requirement. A total of 340 syllabi were collected for Fall, and 357 for Spring semesters. A summary of the data is in the following graphs:

A score of 4 on the rubric means the “Syllabus has clear, measurable learning outcomes, objectives or goals and they are aligned with the general education program learning outcomes.” Likewise, a score of 1 meant that the “Syllabus does not include any version of student learning outcomes, objectives, or goals for the class, nor is there any mention of the four general education program learning outcomes.” These data indicate that the majority of the faculty teaching GE have some level of learning outcomes listed or embedded in the syllabus, as evidenced by a 2 or 3 rubric score; however, very few actually mention or align them with the overall GE program learning outcomes. Note: In some syllabi, it took quite a bit of hunting to find some semblance of outcomes.

A score of 4 on the rubric means the “Assessment activities are aligned with both course and program learning outcomes. (These activities may be embedded in course assignments and/or exams.)” The data reflecting assessment of learning indicate that although most GE instructors have assessments (assignments, exams, etc.) listed in their syllabi, very few are explicitly aligned with course or program learning outcomes.

A score of 4 on the rubric means the “Writing assignments, both formal and informal, are integrated in the course requirements through more than one means.” It appears that most faculty are fulfilling the GE writing requirement in some fashion. There was a very large increase in the number of faculty completely fulfilling the writing requirement from fall to spring semester, as indicated by the increase from 24% to 62% receiving a score of 4 on the rubric. This increase may be a result of some programs in place, such as the GE Newsletter and OIA Writing workshops, which not only help to remind the instructors of the policies, but also provide assistance in implementing the policy in their classes.

D2L Did you know?
Course Style Templates
The D2L team has put together some style templates that instructors may use in their courses to create an easy to navigate course site with a consistent look. They are aimed at instructors who are not working with ODL instructional designers (UA Online), which have their own templates for fully online degree programs. These templates are best used for brand new courses that have not yet been developed, but with a little work can be adapted to work in any D2L course site. Along with the templates, there is a comprehensive self-registration course site with instructions on how to use them. Included templates:
- Course Home
- Course Overview
- A Getting Started Module
- A Syllabus module
- Module descriptions
- HTML pages

To access the templates and the instructions, from your D2L home page, click on Self Registration and select the course Instructor Resource Site: User Guide for the instructions and Instructor Resource Site Templates to access the templates. If you would like to work with a D2L team member to implement these templates in your course, please contact us via e-mail (D2L@email.arizona.edu) or phone (520.621.7788).
Writing Tip of the Month

Guiding different kinds of student reading

Getting students to “do the reading” presents a perennial challenge for instructors and encountering an academic text for the first time is often overwhelming, especially without insight as to why the reading matters. Instructors can help clarify the purpose of a text by pairing reading with informal writing activities that ask students to read for different types of information. Here are three writing tasks that emphasize different kinds of reading:

Reading for content: If your goal is for students to understand a position or learn new information, this kind of summary assignment might be helpful.

- *Read [the assigned text] in its entirety and write a one paragraph summary of what you read. The paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that includes the author’s name and her/his main argument. You should include at least three main points the author makes to support the argument. The paragraph should close with an answer to the “So what?” question, or, why does this text matter?*

References


A BIT OF UA HISTORY

In October 1926, "Button" Salmon, one of the most popular players on the football team and president of the Student Body, was critically injured in an automobile accident on the Phoenix highway. Shortly before his death on October 18, 1926, Athletic Director J. F. McKale visited him, and asked if he had any message for the team. Whether truth or legend, "Button" is reported to have said, "Tell them . . . tell them to bear down."

A year later, in December 1927, the men’s junior honorary organization, Chain Gang, sponsored a fund-raising dance to paint "Bear Down" on the roof of the gymnasium. A professional sign painter was hired to outline the letters, and the Chain Gang members filled them in early in 1928.
Conserving Your Teaching Energy

Neil Baldwin is a professor in the department of theatre & dance at Montclair State University.
- See more at: Chronicle Vitae

What does it actually take to teach a college class nowadays in our age of distraction?

For some faculty, the answer is technology — PowerPoints, laptops, visual aids. But technology is itself a distraction. And what if you are the kind of teacher who likes chalk and blackboards, discussions around a table, and hard-copy texts and handouts. How do you get, and keep, their attention?

Entering the room to the obligatory unsettledness at the beginning of every class period, you wonder: How long would it take them to settle down if you didn’t say anything?

Once they are quiet, the question becomes: How to start? The existential silence is profound. It is all on you to achieve lift-off, and get the ball rolling against their natural predispositions — to not pay attention, not be ready, and not be poised to learn. It rests upon your shoulders to effect the transition from their natural state of noisiness and disconnection to class-ready mode. Your pedagogical engine is fueled to the brim with instinct and endorphins. You must think on your feet mind racing a mile a minute.

Their proclivity to hover a hair’s breadth away from distraction — their default position — requires your vigilance. From moment to moment, teaching your subject, you make a myriad of improvisational, gut-level decisions that affect how you come across. Which students should you call on (and when, and why) in order to be fair and give everyone a chance to be heard? With whom should you establish eye contact? What are you going to say — or not say — when students get up to go to the bathroom, sneak in a copy texts and handouts.

Your credentials and what you know about your field don’t matter much in this moment. Your expertise remains subordinate to your humor, good-naturedness, and equanimity. Students want to feel safe in your classroom. They want reassurance that you care about them and respect their thoughts — that you will listen to what they have to say — before anything comparable to learning a subject will occur.

Their faces will remain blank when they are thinking, and so, you must pretend you do not have peripheral vision and cannot see the students who keep their hands raised while someone else is speaking; they are marking time, waiting their turn.

The volatile emotional climate of the classroom is always in danger of becoming unmoored at the slightest provocation. In your heart of hearts, you know that when you look down at your notes, or read aloud from the book, somebody out there will seize the moment to text. When someone sneezes, everybody in the class is compelled to say "bless you!” if there is the slightest sound from next door or in the corridor, all heads will turn. If it starts raining, if the window shades make a noise from the wind, if the air conditioner blows too cold and someone complains — the fragile narrative content you’ve been building will threaten to collapse.

You need to become accustomed to subtle resistance when you call upon someone to speak: “Who me?” or “My hand wasn’t raised, I was just scratching my head” or “She already said what I was going to say,” or, when they haven’t been listening, “Could you repeat the question?” or “I lost my train of thought.” You must pretend you do not have peripheral vision and cannot see the students who keep their hands raised while someone else is speaking; they are marking time, waiting their turn.

Because of the latent anxiety that is let loose whenever you take a few minutes to itemize the writing prompts for a forthcoming essay, or discuss what’s going to be on the next exam, you feel the imperative to speak slowly, crank up your voice, invest an additional jolt of energy into putting your advice across. You must "sell" your main points, rather than just "make" them. Their faces will remain blank when they are thinking, and so, you won’t have sufficient visual feedback to tell if they get what you are saying. Every 10 minutes or so, you will need to summarize what you have been talking about and hit a refresh button in their minds.

They will start packing up backpacks and glancing at phones by the one-hour mark, with 15 minutes remaining in the period. At that point, you will tell everybody to just "chill" and keep focused. Some 15 or 20 minutes later, you will leave the classroom — your heart pounding, pulse accelerated — and retreat to your office, close the door, and pause to regain your equilibrium and breathe.

And so, to return to my initial question: What does it take to be a college professor in the second decade of the 21st century? It takes a lot of energy, much of which you must expend monitoring your student’s emotions before the learning can begin. Dear colleagues, your responsibilities are as follows:

- Get a good night’s sleep, and eat a hearty breakfast.
- I know it is tempting, but don’t drink too much coffee, because you will get over hyped before class and risk crashing from that fake caffeine high.
- Pace yourself doing whatever you have to do (meetings, errands, paperwork) before class starts.
- Remain mindful of your finite energy reserves, and mediate your outflow during class time so you don’t expend all your strength too early in the period.

And at the end of your long day on campus, even when you are tired and strung out, the teaching body must be attended to. Make yourself head over to the gym for cardio and weight training, to keep your vital signs in decent working order. Commit to developing the imperative physical stamina required to capture — and hold — your students’ attention.

All of that will prepare you for the challenge of nurturing their voracious hunger for well-being — before you can begin teaching them how to learn what you know.
WHY DO MULTISECTION GE CLASSES REQUIRE ONE COMMON SET OF LEARNING OUTCOMES?

When a class is approved by the University Wide General Education Committee, it is approved with one set of student learning outcomes. These outcomes, should also be aligned with the four GE outcomes: Think Critically, Communicate Effectively, Understand and Value Differences, and Use Information Effectively. No matter who is teaching the course, the learning outcomes should remain the same. Each section of the class may have its own set of course objectives that each instructor sets for their students, but they should also align with the common set of learning outcomes with which the course was originally approved and granted GE status.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROGRAM AND COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES?

Program Student Learning Outcomes

Are overarching learning outcomes that describe learning obtained across multiple courses in the curriculum.

Program student learning outcomes are broad descriptions of what students will know, what they will be able to do, or how they will think about the discipline or approach problem solving after they finish your program. Although these outcomes are broad and general, they must still be written in language that clearly implies a measurable behavior or quality of work.

UA GE Program Outcomes

* Think Critically
* Communicate Effectively
* Use Information Effectively
* Understand and Value Differences

Course Student Learning Outcomes

Are more specific learning outcomes that identify learning in an individual course.

Course SLOs describe what students should know, think, or be able to do when they finish the course.

Course SLOs will be more detailed and specific than program SLOs because they describe the unique skills and knowledge associated with a specific course. However, they should be general enough to provide flexibility and accommodate variation in specific content as the field evolves over time. For example, a course SLO might state that students will be able to describe contemporary models and theories without rewriting the SLOs for the course.

Course student learning outcomes should be clearly related to course topics, assignments, exams, and other graded work, as well as being aligned with any or all of the Program Outcomes.

Verb Wheel Based on Bloom's Taxonomy

http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_337G569lHIRySmpjpezu5I/AAAAAAAABmU/UFiQn59gIT8/s1600-h/bloomwheel.png
“Authentic” professors are preferred by students, many of whom learn more from them as a result, according to a new study in Communication Education, the journal of the National Communication Association. The authors questioned some 300 college students on their perceptions of professors’ authentic and inauthentic behavior and communication, and found that authentic instructors were perceived as approachable, passionate, attentive, capable and knowledgeable. Inauthentic professors, meanwhile, were perceived as unapproachable, disrespectful, inattentive, lacking passion and not capable. Students also reported higher levels of learning and deeper understanding in learning experiences they described as authentic, and at-risk students are positively impacted by teachers whose communication is perceived as authentic, according to the study.

The paper says that professors may work to seem more authentic -- only to the degree that it feels natural -- by conversing with students before and after class, and sharing experiences and really interacting with them as part of teaching. “‘Authentic’ Teachers Are Better at Engaging With Their Students” was written by Zac Johnson, assistant professor of communication at California State University at Fullerton, and Sara LaBelle, assistant professor of communication at Chapman University.

Instructors perceived as authentic were willing to share details about their lives, told personal stories, made jokes and admitted mistakes, according to the study. They also showed concern for their students as individuals, such as by emailing sick students to see how they were doing. “Our participants made it clear that a teacher’s efforts to view themselves and their students as individuals had a lasting impact,” Johnson and LaBelle say. “The process of teaching authentically need not be more complicated than making simple and direct statements regarding the level of concern and care that a teacher holds for their students. ... Our implication is not simply that teachers should engage in limitless amounts of self-disclosure. Rather, by making efforts to engage with students beyond their expected roles in the classroom, teachers can greatly impact students’ perceptions of them and their course.”

https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2017/05/26/study-students-and-authenticity-classroom

**The FLC groups focus their discussions and projects on learning about and experimenting with evidence-based teaching practices.**

**HOW TO JOIN A FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITY**

Prior to each semester, a group of committed faculty members, led by Zoe Cohen, Physiology, establish plans for the upcoming semester.

We are forming nine FLCs for Fall 2017, each at a different time, guided by one or two outstanding faculty members who volunteer their time to act as Facilitators. The Facilitators have suggested some potential topics of interest, but the members will ultimately decide on the focus for their group.

Registration for Fall 2017 is underway. To register, please complete the registration form at the link below.

[FLC Registration - Fall 2017](#)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning in small classroom settings (less than 50 students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning in large collaborative classroom settings (greater than 50 students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning in large traditional classroom settings (greater than 50 students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning in online/hybrid settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning with the help of Learning Assistants (how to utilize best for student learning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning of soft skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning with technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning with an eye towards inclusivity/diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Assess Student Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>