



EFFECTIVE ONLINE SYLLABI

OSUN Teaching Resources

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Elements of an Effective Online Syllabus

The syllabus is always a crucial document for any class. This is even more the case for online or blended courses. Students look to the syllabus to be the road map, guide, or skeleton for a course. This means that when designing a syllabus for an online course, detail and clarity are key.

An online syllabus should:

- lay out the requirements, schedule, and activities for the entire course;
- be clearly organized and formatted in a user-friendly way;
- present information thoroughly, including instructions that would be shared verbally in a face-to-face class.

Online Syllabus Checklist

- Instructor Information** (name, contact information, virtual office hours)
- Course information** (course title, number, semester, year; course description; prerequisites if needed)
- Learning Outcomes** (what the course will enable students to know or do)
- Course Materials** (textbook(s), required readings, additional readings, online resources)
- Online Learner Support** (course site, contact for technical support, suggested time required to be successful)
- Grading and Assignments** (grading criteria and components of final grade; instructions for how to submit assignments that includes file types accepted;

breakdown of any assessments and forms of class participation with grade percentages; criteria for a passing grade; policies on late work/assignments)

- ❑ **Activities & Participation Expectations** (clear outline of required participation including number of weekly posts and standards for quality of participation; student responsibilities; guide to how the online course is organized)
- ❑ **Course Outline and Weekly Schedule** (weekly schedule that includes topics, readings, assignments, activities, additional resources, and specific due dates for all required work)
- ❑ **Policies** (general class policies, academic integrity, guidelines for online class discussions and netiquette, special needs, diversity and inclusion)

Online Syllabus Design Principles to Keep in Mind:

3 Essential Principles of [Universal Design](#)

- Provide Multiple Means of Engagement (the “why” of learning)
- Provide Multiple Means of Representation (the “what” of learning)
- Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression (the “how” of learning)

Core Relationship Questions:

1. **How will my students interact with the course content?** Beyond reading, listening to/viewing lectures, what will students actually DO with the course content? And how can they do so in their homes?
2. **How will my students interact with other students?** Beyond completing assignments and assessments independently, how will students work together to ensure that they feel like they are part of a learning community and have the opportunity to collaborate, think critically, be intellectually challenged, and make meaning with others? And how can students work with others while they are isolated in their homes?
3. **How will my students interact with me, their instructor?** Now that you aren't in the classroom with your students, how will students be able to interact with you? How might you guide student learning while also being flexible and trying to accommodate different student needs? What assignment expectations do you need to convey? What information do you need to clarify for students?

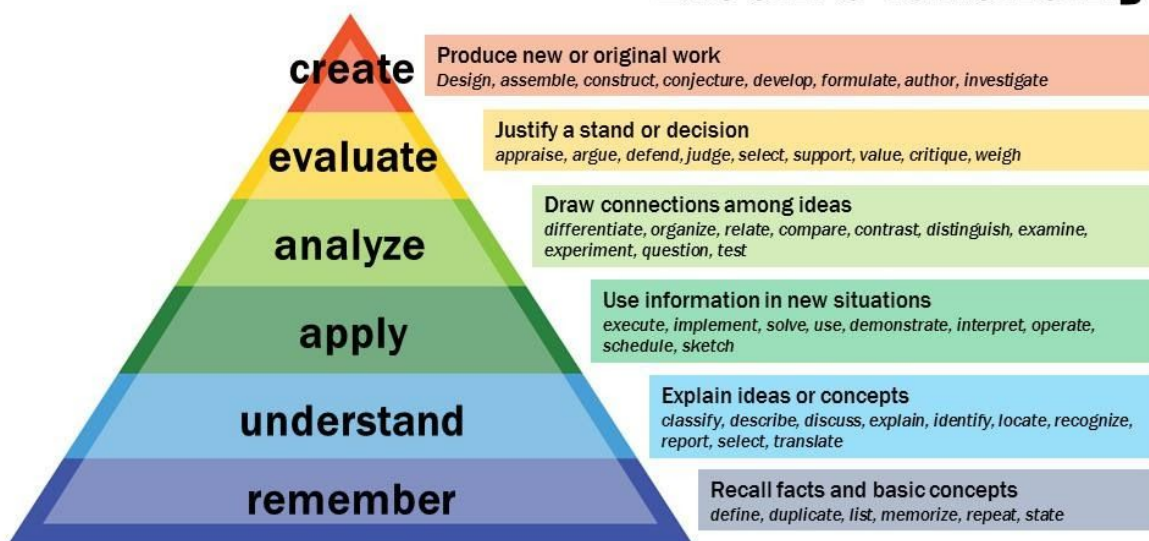
Source: [Educause](#) (“Student-Centered Remote Teaching”)

Helpful Links:

- [Online Course Design Guide](#) (Digital Learning Toolkit)
- [Creating Online Learning Experiences](#) (Matt Crosslin, et al.)
- [Hybrid-Flexible Course Design](#) (Brian J. Beatty)

Bloom's Taxonomy: Active Verbs & Learning Goals

Bloom's Taxonomy



Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching

Benjamin Bloom created a taxonomy of measurable verbs to help us describe and classify observable knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors and abilities. The theory is based upon the idea that there are levels of observable actions that indicate something is happening in the brain (cognitive activity.) By creating learning objectives using measurable verbs, you indicate explicitly what the student must do in order to demonstrate learning.

Verbs that demonstrate **Critical Thinking**

					EVALUATION
					Appraise
				SYNTHESIS	Argue
				Arrange	Assess
		ANALYSIS	Assemble	Collect	Choose
		Analyze	Appraise	Combine	Compare
		APPLICATION	Apply	Categorize	Conclude
		Complete	Compare	Comply	Estimate
	COMPREHENSION	Construct	Compose	Construct	Evaluate
	Compare	Demonstrate	Contrast	Create	Interpret
KNOWLEDGE	Describe	Dramatize	Debate	Design	Judge
List	Discuss	Employ	Diagram	Devise	Justify
Name	Explain	Illustrate	Differentiate	Formulate	Measure
Recall	Express	Interpret	Distinguish	Manage	Rate
Record	Identify	Operate	Examine	Organize	Revise
Relate	Recognize	Practice	Experiment	Plan	Score
Repeat	Restate	Schedule	Inspect	Prepare	Select
State	Tell	Sketch	Inventory	Propose	Support
Tell	Translate	Use	Question	Setup	Value
Underline			Test		

Source: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/>