



Self-Reflection on Course Content

Overview

For this aspect of your portfolio, you have the opportunity to analyze your syllabus and/or a specific lesson plan in regards to their pedagogical innovations and inclusive practices.

QuickStart guide for using this document:

- Read the instructions and the glossary
- Answer yes/no to the guiding questions
- Use comments to annotate within the document

Instructions

The purpose of self-reflection on your courses' documents is to illuminate your thought-process behind the design choices you have made. These considerations are not readily apparent when reading syllabi and reviewing instructional strategies; providing an explication of your rationale and the context you have created them in will give insight into your course design process and the specific components of your course. The documents you can review are your syllabi or your lesson plans. When reviewing these documents, we recommend that you annotate directly in your documents to connect the components with your reflections and rationale.

The questions that follow are all yes/no questions. First, go through the list of questions below to determine whether or not your documents have these components. Feel free to check the boxes next to the questions to keep track of your answers. If you answer yes to a question, think about why you answered yes. Once you have the reasoning behind your choice, we recommend you annotate your course documents about where the evidence of your answer is located.

Annotations can also speak to how a particular practice has changed over time. For example, how has your practice evolved? What was the impetus for the changes? Was the impetus related to expectations about student performance that were not met? Do you have any plans to make changes in the future?

If you answer no to any of the questions below, think about why not and reflect on those. Answering no to a particular question does not mean that a course is poorly designed; each course is different, and your particular teaching style is unique. Feel free to annotate those as well if you wish.

How to Annotate

Microsoft Word (recommended): highlight the words or sentences that point towards each question you answered yes to. Then, add a comment (either by right-clicking or through the Insert menu).

Apple Pages: highlight the words or sentences that point towards each question you answered yes to. In the toolbar, click on the sticky note icon. Or, in the review toolbar, click on the plus sign.





Glossary

We have provided a glossary for you. The terms defined in the glossary are bolded when they first appear in the document. We recommend that you read the glossary to establish a common understanding of the terminology used in this guide.

Alignment: when assessments assess the learning outcomes.

Assessment: any measure of a student's work or performance in a course (i.e. paper, presentation, participation, etc.).

Competency: a generalized goal that aligns with academic and professional skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

Instructional strategy: any course activity that helps students complete the assessments and achieve the course's learning outcomes.

Learning outcome: goal that outline what students should be able to do by the end of the course. They are specific, measurable, and written from the students' perspective (i.e. Students should be able to define the parts of a cell).

Lesson plan: learning outcomes, assessments, and instructional strategies that occur on a specific day (i.e. in-class activities); can include Powerpoints, facilitation notes, etc.

Measurable: related to learning outcomes; the learning outcome includes an observable action.

Open Educational Resources (OER): course materials that are openly licensed and often free to use. [Creative Commons](#) has more information about OER.

Pedagogical approach: how you structure your courses based upon specific theories about learning and the practices that relate to said theories.

Scaffold: breaking assessments into smaller chunks with checkpoints to monitor student progress.

Specific: related to learning outcomes; the observable action is clearly defined.

Student engagement: Manifestation or outward demonstration of students' involvement in the course. This could include speaking but also nonverbal behaviors such as maintaining eye contact, taking or typing notes, submitting an exit slip, etc.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): a framework that encourages designing courses without barriers so that all students have the opportunity to succeed.

Written from the students' perspective: related to learning outcomes; learning outcomes that relate the students' actions, not the professor's.





Guiding Questions for Syllabus and Course Design Reflection

In order to guide your self-reflection for your annotated syllabus, we have provided you with several guiding questions. Pick the questions that refer to the components of your course syllabus you wish to highlight. You do not have to answer all of these questions.

Learning Outcomes

- Are the [learning outcomes specific](#) and [measurable](#)?
- Are the learning outcomes [written from the students' perspective](#)?
- Are the learning outcomes skills, knowledge, attitudes, and/or interpersonal skills that your students can use after your course?
- Do the learning outcomes reflect common [competencies](#) for professionals/scholars in your field?
- Do the learning outcomes reflect the departmental learning outcomes?
- If teaching an AU Core course, do the learning outcomes relate to AU Core learning outcomes?

Assessments

- Are the [assessments aligned](#) to the learning outcomes?
- Are the assessments relevant to their future academic and/or professional work? Or their personal lives (i.e. critical examination of bias in advertisements)?
- Do the assessments reflect possible projects or work they will be doing in the future?
- Are any of the assessments [scaffolded](#)?
- Do any of the assessments involve work outside of class in the community? Will the students' work impact the community involved?
- Are there opportunities for the students to choose the delivery method of their work (i.e. paper, podcast, presentation, video, website, etc.)?
- In accordance with [Universal Design for Learning](#), do the students have choices for either the delivery method or the topic?

Course Content

- Does the course content support the students' achievement of the course's learning outcomes?
- Do the readings reflect a diversity of authors, topics, and/or viewpoints?
- Are the assigned readings and resources presented in a variety of formats, like journal articles, videos, screencasts, podcasts, online periodicals, etc.?
- Are there any openly licensed materials in the course, like [Open Educational Resources](#)?

Course Policies

- Is there are policy that you have crafted that is innovative, thoughtful, or inclusive?
- Do you intend to foster a specific type of classroom with the policies you have created?
- Do the course's policies support the students in the classroom and outside of it?
- Do the students have multiple ways to participate and show their [engagement](#) in the course?

Overall Syllabus

- Are there components within in the syllabus that have changed?





- Is a particular [pedagogical approach](#) employed to guide the syllabus creation process (i.e. constructivism, connectivism, etc.)?
- Is your teaching philosophy reflected in the syllabus?

Guiding Questions for Lesson Plans

In order to guide your self-reflection for your [instructional strategies](#), we have provided you with several guiding questions. Pick the questions that refer to the components of your class you wish to highlight.

Learning Outcomes

- Are there learning outcomes listed in the [lesson plan](#)? If so, do they relate to the course's learning outcomes?
- Do the learning outcomes for the class reflect skills, knowledge, attitudes, and/or interpersonal skills that the students can use after the course?

Assessments

- Do you know if students are making progress towards or are achieving the class' learning outcomes?
- Does the lesson plan employ a variety of assessment methods, i.e. diagnostic, formative, and/or summative assessments?
- Do this particular class session's assessments relate to and/or build upon previous assessments?

Student Engagement

- What are the components that encourage a high level of interaction between the students?
- Is there a high level of interaction between yourself, content, and/or themselves (i.e. self-reflection)?
- What kinds of in-class activities are in the lesson plan (i.e. group work, individual work, reflection, peer review, etc.)?
- What are the instructional strategies that are used in the class (i.e. lecture, live polling, discussion, exit tickets, etc.)?
- Are any technology tools? used Do they enhance the class?
- Are there multiple ways for students to interact with the content, in accordance with Universal Design for Learning?

Facilitation Notes

- Are there any facilitation notes? If so, does your role in the classroom affect your students' work?

