Measuring the Promise: A Valid and Reliable Syllabus Rubric

Guide to Assessing the Focus of Syllabi

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Overview

This rubric was designed to help quantitatively and qualitatively assess the degree to which a syllabus achieves a learning-centered orientation. The development of the rubric was guided by the literature on learning-focused course design (Fink, 2013; Hansen, 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Wulff & Jacobson, 2005), teaching (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010; Biggs & Tang, 2007; Blumberg, 2008; Nilson, 2010), and student motivation (Schunk, et al., 2007; Svinicki, 2004). The rubric design was also influenced by existing literature on syllabus construction and syllabus components (Baecker, 1998; Becker & Calhoon, 1999; Canada, 2013; Doolittle & Siudzinski, 2010; Eberly, Newton, & Wiggins, 2001; Garavalia, Hummel, Wiley, & Huitt, 1999; Habanek, 2005; Harnish & Bridges, 2011; Matejka & Kurke, 1994; O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008; Parkes, Fix, & Harris, 2003; Parkes & Harris, 2002; Singham, 2007; Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Smith & Razzouk, 1993). It accounts for nuances in syllabi while also maintaining widespread relevance to courses in a diverse range of disciplines, levels, and institutions.

The rubric focuses on four criteria typical of learning-centered syllabi: (1) learning goals and objectives, (2) assessment activities, (3) schedule, and (4) overall learning environment. These criteria do not map onto any specific section of a syllabus (with the exception of the Schedule); instead, users are directed to search for evidence of the quality of all criteria across the syllabus.

We break down each criterion into multiple components, and provide a range of options for what evidence of proficiency in those components might look like. For example, the criterion of **Overall Learning Environment** contains components such as positive tone, fostering motivation, and high expectations, each of which syllabi may signal in a variety of ways, from giving students a degree of control over their learning experience, to offering resources to help them succeed, to opening with enthusiastic language that communicates the opportunity to wonder and ask questions about the course material without fear of criticism.

Each of the 16 components—designated as essential, important, or less-important—is scored on the strength of supporting evidence. *Strong* evidence indicates that many (but not necessarily all) of the characteristics of the component are present in the syllabus and match the descriptions closely. *Moderate* evidence indicates that a few of the characteristics of the component are present in the syllabus and/or only partly match the descriptions. *Low* evidence indicates that very few of the characteristics of the component are present in the syllabus and/or don't match the descriptions.

You may use our syllabus rubric for research purposes as long as you provide reference to the following:

> Palmer, M. S., Bach, D. J., & Streifer, A. C. (2014). Measuring the promise: A learning-focused syllabus rubric. *To improve the academy: A journal of educational development, 33 (1),* 14-36.

For the norming process, we recommend users score the reference syllabi first without the aid of our scores and annotations. Then, compare scores, reading the annotations when discrepancies exist.

Questions? Contact Michael Palmer at mpalmer@virginia.edu.

Rubric

"Essential" components are shown in gold, "important" components in silver, and "less-important" components are in white.

Criterion	What the component looks like:	Ideas for where to look and examples of what to look for (not all need to be present):
Learning Goals & Objectives	**Learning goals and objectives are not an "afterthought," but are a central element of the course.**	
	1. Explicitly or implicitly **stated learning goals (i.e. long-range, high-level goals) encompass the full range of Fink's dimensions of significant learning** (i.e. knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring, learning how to learn).	• Learning goals are often found in the course description, especially affective goals. • Implicit goals may appear in other sections of the syllabus (e.g., assessment, schedule, tips for student success).
	2. **Course-level learning objectives are clearly articulated and use specific action verbs** to describe in measurable terms what students will be able to do, value, or know at the end of the course. Like the goals they are derived from, the learning objectives map onto the full range of Fink's taxonomy.	• Course-level learning objectives are in a prominent and easily identifiable location (i.e., labeled section). • Learning objectives with non-quantifiable terms, such as "understand" and "know," are avoided. For examples of strong verbs, see Appendix A: Verbs for Significant Learning. • The syllabus considers the full range of Fink's taxonomic dimensions (including the affective ones). It is not necessary that course objectives list affective dimensions, as long as there is evidence elsewhere in the syllabus that they are being considered. • Typically, 5–8 course-level objectives are appropriate. More or fewer could be problematic.
	3. **Learning objectives are appropriately pitched** to the course level, class size, position of the course within the curriculum, and characteristics of students taking the class.	• This is likely difficult to assess without knowledge of the discipline and curriculum.

Criterion	What the component looks like:	Ideas for where to look and examples of what to look for (not all need to be present):
Assessment Activities	**All major assessment activities positively support the learning objectives.**	
	4. It is clear that the **objectives and assessments are aligned**. In other words, the major assessment activities map onto the full range of learning objectives and the degree of mapping correlates with the weighting of the assignment.	• Though a complete mapping may not be possible without input from the instructor, connections between the objectives and major assessments should exist (i.e., the each major assessment activity should map to one or more learning objectives).
	5. The basic features of the **major *summative* assessment activities are clearly defined**. The assessment instructions provide students with a rationale and, whenever possible, with an authentic task.	• Course-level assessments are in a prominent and easily identifiable location (i.e. labeled section). Grading percentages may be included in assessment descriptions, but there should be a distinct section detailing grading (see component 8).

		• Major assignments are described briefly (i.e., a paragraph or two). Though complete descriptions of assessment activities may not be part of the syllabus, they should be made available at the time the assessment activity is formally introduced. • If not present, it is clear that rubrics or assessment criteria will be made available.
	6. There is **evidence of plans for frequent *formative* assessments with immediate feedback** from a variety of sources (e.g., self, peer, instructor, computer generated, community.) These low-stakes, formative assessments allow students to "practice" before high-stakes summative assessments.	• Examples of formative assessments might include use of clickers, informal writing assignments, group discussions or moderated discussion board, and ungraded or lightly-graded homework assignments. • Source of feedback may not always be evident. • While the syllabus might not describe all forms of formative assessments in detail, the syllabus makes clear that such activities will occur throughout the course. Evidence of formative assessment might depend on a fully articulated schedule.
	7. The **assessments are adequately paced and scaffolded** (i.e., increasing in complexity) throughout the course, and at least one is scheduled early in the semester.	• There should be evidence in the assessment descriptions or in the schedule that complex assignments build slowly over the semester or are continually re-examined with the introduction of new material. • Evidence of pace and scaffolding may depend on disciplinary knowledge. • Without a fully articulated schedule, it may not be possible to fully determine the pace and degree of scaffolding.
	8. Grading or **student evaluation information is included in the syllabus but clearly separated from information about assessment of learning** (with the possible exception of the weight or percentage of the assessment in the overall course grade). Importantly, **the grading scheme aligns with the learning objectives and supporting assessments.**	• The grading scheme should clearly reflect the importance of each learning objective. For example, if learning to write in the discipline is a key learning objective, writing assignments should dominate the grading scheme.

Criterion	What the component looks like:	Ideas for where to look and examples of what to look for (not all need to be present):
Schedule	**The course schedule is a learning tool that guides students through the learning environment.**	
	9. **Syllabus offers fully articulated and logically sequenced course schedule**, listing topics/readings/questions in chronological order along with assignment due dates. Thus structured, the schedule allows for flexibility where appropriate. A schedule is necessary in order to fully evaluate the syllabus. A missing schedule may lead to low scores on components 6 and 7.	• The schedule is not merely a list of content topics. It contains enough information (e.g., topics, context, questions, dates) to guide students through the course. It also clearly indicates when additional information will be provided at a later date.

Criterion	What the component looks like:	Ideas for where to look and examples of what to look for (not all need to be present):
Overall Learning Environment: Promise, Tone, Inclusivity	**The learning environment is supportive and invites students to engage in and take ownership of their own learning.**	
	10. **The tone of the document is positive, respectful, inviting,** and directly addresses the student as a competent, engaged learner.	• The positive, respectful, inviting tone is conveyed throughout the document. • Personal pronouns (e.g., you, we, us) are used, rather than "the students," "the course," or "they." • The focus of the document is on learning and possibilities and not policies and punishments. • The syllabus contains a "promise" that will be fulfilled through mutual effort by instructor and students if the learning goals and objectives are met. Evidence for "promise" could include the following: language that emphasizes collaborative spirit; verbs that focus on what students and instructors do, not what the course, or some other abstract entity, does; clear statement of connections between course content and paths to answering "big questions."
	11. The syllabus signposts a **learning environment that fosters positive motivation**, one that promotes a learning orientation rather than a performance one. The document **describes the potential value of the course in the learner's current and post-course life** (cognitive, personal, social, civic, and/or professional) in a clear and dynamic way. It clearly communicates **that content is used primarily as a vehicle for learning**, to understand core principles in the discipline and promote critical thinking and other significant learning objectives.	• The course description makes clear that students will have opportunities to *wonder* and connect it in meaningful ways to things potentially important to them. The instructor encourages students to "discover" value in the course by giving them choices along the way, such as choices in project topics, reading assignments, grading schemes. • Various course components—description, objectives, schedule—frame the content through compelling, beautiful questions or big ideas. • The instructor uses information from pre-course questionnaires, background checks, pre-course exams, etc., to tailor the learning environment. In other words, he/she considers students' backgrounds in designing course activities and assignments and takes steps to reach out to students who might struggle in class. • The student is left in control of his/her learning. For example, mastery-based grading mechanisms (e.g., criterion-referenced, task-based, and absolute grading schemes) are used rather than performance ones (e.g., grading curves and other relative or group-referenced grading schemes). • The instructor also provides resources or instruction related to becoming a lifelong learner, either in general or in ways specific to the discipline. • The syllabus de-emphasizes course policies by positioning them late in the syllabus or in a separate document and connecting them to

		clear pedagogical purposes. The syllabus frames policies in positive ways, as opposed to lists of "do nots."
	12. Syllabus clearly **communicates high expectations and projects confidence that students can meet them** through hard work.	• The learning objectives, assessments, activities, and grading scheme all indicate a high level of academic rigor (e.g. objectives that promote high-order thinking and skills development, challenging assignments, appropriate amounts of reading/writing). • The syllabus communicates that the instructor cares about students and believes each student can succeed. The syllabus communicates these beliefs by offering tips and strategies for how to meet and exceed expectations, through review sessions, appropriate office hours, additional background material, etc.
	13. The **syllabus is well organized and easy to navigate**. It is clear that **students will need to continually interact with the document** and the resources it provides throughout the course.	• The document is readable, meaning the organization is clear, whether it contains major section headings or not, and ordered in a way that re-enforces the focus on learning. • The document clearly requires students to interact with it frequently to get reading assignments and other information.

Validity

To accurately score syllabi, the rubric assumes raters have three pieces of prior knowledge: 1) fluency with Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning (Fink, 2013a), 2) clarity on our definitions of learning goals and objectives, and 3) familiarity with alignment as a course design construct.

Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning. Our rubric is based on Fink's notion that for significant learning to occur learners need to be engaged on multiple dimensions, including the cognitive, affective, and self-directed learning domains (2013a). Repackaging and expanding on Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Anderson, et al., 2001; Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956), Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning identifies "six kinds of significant learning" (Foundational Knowledge, Application, Integration, Human Dimension, Caring, and Learning How to Learn) and organizes them in a non-hierarchical fashion. Each of these six broad categories encompasses many types of modes of thought, skills, and intellectual and affective processes that reinforce each other and contribute to learning. Syllabi that score highly on our rubric attend to all six kinds of significant learning in Fink's taxonomy.

Definitions of Learning Goals and Objectives. Accurate scoring also depends on understanding the distinction we make between learning "goals" and "objectives." Though in common parlance, goals and objectives may be used interchangeably as synonyms for desired outcomes, in course design settings it is useful to distinguish between a course's longer-ranging, but perhaps less tangible goals, and the shorter-term, measureable objectives of a course.

Learning goals are high-level and long-term. Educational developers can provoke instructors to envision goals for their students by asking them what they hope students will remember or be able to do three or

more years after taking the course (Fink, 2013). Setting goals gives instructors the opportunity to think about how their courses contribute to students' learning as a whole, whether that be developing skills that will be used in subsequent courses or careers, introducing or honing discipline-specific modes of thinking, or inspiring student interest in a field that is new to them. Because they are long-ranging and more holistic in nature, goals are frequently articulated in aspirational and inspirational language in course descriptions or sections that communicate the course's long-term value for the learner.

By contrast, a syllabus's objectives are always concrete and measurable. They translate high-level goals into measurable course-level outcomes in such a way that students understand what the course intends for them to achieve. Students practice course objectives through a variety of formative, scaffolded learning activities. Course assessments then measure student mastery of those objectives.

Alignment. The last of our assumptions is that rubric users are familiar with alignment as a conceptual tool in the course development process. In a well aligned course, assessments and learning activities are directly derived from learning goals and objectives (Biggs & Tang, 2007; Fink, 2013; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Wulff & Jacobson 2005). Following the process of backward design, instructors begin by articulating objectives for student learning and then create learning activities (for both in and out of class time) and assessments that support the development of specific skills, attitudes, knowledge and values articulated in the objectives. Another way to think of alignment is for instructors to ask themselves if their in-class activities and homework assignments allow students to practice the knowledge and skills they value and if their assessments actually measure mastery of those skills.

Alignment is absolutely necessary in any learning-focused syllabus, but it is insufficient on its own to create a learning-focused document. For example, a math instructor who wishes students to memorize formulae could design a perfectly aligned course if the assessments measured memorization with multiple choice exams. The course would be aligned, but it wouldn't score well according to our rubric because it fails to address multiple dimensions of significant learning across a wide range of learning objectives. The importance of designing assessments and learning activities with an eye toward alignment, and the insufficiency of alignment as a principle on its own, explains why alignment features prominently in several components of the syllabus assessment rubric, but does not count as its own criterion.

It is worth noting that even with a lack of fluency in Fink's taxonomy or a lack of understanding of the distinction between goals and objectives or the nuances of alignment we have found that scoring tends to be quite consistent, across all components and among multiple raters, for syllabi that fall on the content end of the spectrum. But, this is not true of learning-focused syllabi, where scores vary wildly when raters do not have a clear understanding of our underlying conception of learner-centeredness.

Scoring

A sample scoring sheet is shown below. Each essential component (gold) is awarded three points, important components (silver) two, and less-important components (white) one, regardless of the strength of evidence. In other words, a rater would place a 3 in the appropriate strength-of-evidence column for component #1 and a 2 in the appropriate column for component #10. After scoring all components, each column is summed and scaled by the appropriate factor: the strong evidence sub-total is multiplied by 2, the moderate evidence sub-total is multiplied by 1, and the low evidence sub-total is multiplied by 0. This multi-directional weighting scheme is used in order to ensure that the final score reflects the presence and quality of essential components. A syllabus will not score high if, for example, it does not include meaningful objectives or fails to align the objectives with

the assessments. It could, however, score high if it exhibited strong evidence for most of the essential and important components but lacked evidence for the less-important ones, such as regular formative feedback opportunities or organization.

Criterion	Component	Strength of Evidence		
		Strong	Moderate	Low
Learning Goals & Objectives	1. Learning goals encompass full range of Fink's dimensions of significant learning		3	
	2. Course level learning objectives are clearly articulated and use specific action verbs	3		
	3. Learning objectives are appropriately pitched[1]			
Assessment Activities	4. Objectives and assessments are aligned		3	
	5. Major summative assessment activities are clearly defined		2	
	6. Plans for frequent formative assessment with immediate feedback	1		
	7. Assessments are adequately paced and scaffolded	1		
	8. Grading information is included but separate from assessment; it is aligned with objectives		1	
Schedule	9. Course schedule is fully articulated and logically sequenced			3
Classroom Environment	10. Tone is positive, respectful, inviting		2	
	11. Fosters positive motivation, describes value of course, promotes content as a vehicle for learning		2	
	12. Communicates high expectations, projects confidence of success		1	
	13. Syllabus is well organized, easy to navigate, requires interaction	1		
	subtotals	6x2 =12	14x1 = 14	3x0 = 0
			TOTAL	26/46

The maximum score possible is 46; content-focused syllabi might fall in the range 0–16, transitional 17–30, and learning-focused 31–46. The sample scoring sheet illustrates a syllabus that falls in the transitional range. If used formatively, the instructor of this particular syllabus would quickly see that by developing more meaningful learning objectives, improving alignment, and articulating a schedule, he or she could move the syllabus toward the learning-focused end of the continuum. (A blank scoring sheet is shown in Appendix B).

Inter-rater Reliability

When used for research purposes, we recommend the following process to ensure inter-rater reliability:

1. Each syllabus should be initially scored against the syllabus rubric independently by at least two researchers.

[1] This component, though important, goes unscored in the rubric, in recognition of the fact that the correct pitching of learning objectives would be difficult to assess without intimate knowledge of the discipline and curriculum.

2. Component-level and overall scores should then be compared between raters. All components defined as essential in the rubric having a rater difference greater than 0 and all other components having a rater difference greater than 1 should be re-scored by the researchers.
3. Rescoring should be done collaboratively, without knowledge of the original scores, until consensus is reached.

This process should produce differences in the total scores between raters less than or equal to 4 points (or less than 10% of the total score possible). The total score for each syllabus should then be determined to be the average of the raters' total scores.

Data Analysis for Pre-Post Pairs

To analyze the data for pre-post pairs, we recommend calculating normalized gains (<g>) for each instructor as described by Hake (1998): <g> = 100*(post total score – pre total score)/(46 – pre total score), where 46 is the maximum score possible. This number takes into account the possible gain between pre- and post-scores for each instructor. We define the region of low gain to be less than or equal to 0.3, moderate gain between 0.3 and 0.7, and high gain greater than or equal to 0.7. The overall normalized gain (<<g>>) should be calculated by averaging the normalized gains for all instructors. This calculation allows one to predict the gain in syllabus score an average instructor would expect to achieve after redesigning their syllabus regardless of where he/she started on the content- to learning-focused continuum.

Supplemental Rubric

We have also developed a supplemental rubric to assess the quality of learning activities. Because day-to-day classroom activities are often not evident in syllabi, we have chosen to parse this criterion out of the main rubric and leave it to the discretion of the rater—whether faculty developer or instructor—to decide if and when to apply these components.

Criterion	What the component looks like:	Ideas for where to look and examples of what to look for (not all need to be present):
Learning Activities	**The "classroom" is a dynamic place and takes advantage of evidence-based practices.**	
	14. It is clear that **classroom activities, assessments, and learning objectives are aligned**. In other words, the classroom learning activities directly support the assessments and help prepare students for them.	• Not all classroom activities may be evident in the syllabus but there is some indication of the day-to-day structure of the learning environments. Red flags might include: exclusive use of a traditional lecture format when critical thinking is an objective; little reflective writing when self-discovery is an objective; canned homework assignments or multiple-choice tests when problem solving is an objective.
	15. The **learning activities are derived from evidence-based practices.**	• The instructor relies on pedagogical strategies and classroom activities that have some basis in the literature to support their efficacy.
	16. The **learning activities are likely to actively**	• Students have opportunities, for example,

	engage students in a variety of ways.	to discuss course material, work individually and in groups, teach each other, solve problems, debate concepts, simulate scenarios, and/or reflect—individually and collectively—about the meaning of their learning experiences. Individual class periods involve multiple modes of instruction and varied activities.

When using the Supplemental Rubric, Component #14 is designated essential, #15 important, and #16 less-important; each is scored similarly to the scheme used for the main rubric. When applied, the maximum total score possible is 58 (46 for the main rubric and 12 for the supplemental one). In this scenario, content-focused syllabi might fall in the range 0–18, transitional 19–40, and learning-focused 41–58.

Learning Activities	4. Classroom activities, assessments, and objectives are aligned			
	5. Learning activities are derived from evidence-based practices			
	6. Learning activities likely to actively engage students			
	Subtotal	x2 =	x1 =	x0 = 0
			Total	/12

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Appendix A: Verbs for Significant Learning[2]

Dimension	*Action Verbs*				
FOUNDATION KNOWLEDGE—WHAT KEY INFORMATION, IDEAS, PERSPECTIVES ARE IMPORTANT FOR LEARNERS TO KNOW?					
Understanding and Remembering – developing a full understanding of concepts to a degree that allows explanations, predictions, etc.	Associate Compare Contrast Define	Describe Explain Give example Identify	Illustrate Indicate List Name	Paraphrase Predict Recite Recognize	Repeat Restate Tell
APPLICATION—WHAT KINDS OF THINKING, COMPLEX PROJECTS AND SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT FOR LEARNERS TO BE ABLE TO DO/MANAGE?					
Critical Thinking – analyzing and critiquing issues and situations	Analyze Assess Audit Catalog Categorize Classify	Compare Contrast Decipher Deduce Derive Determine	Diagram Differentiate Dissect Distinguish Examine Formulate	Hypothesize Infer Interpret Label Locate Measure	Organize Query Separate Trace
Practical Thinking – developing problem-solving and decision-making capabilities	Advise Answer Apply Calculate Certify	Choose Consult Debate Decide Determine	Diagnose Evaluate Give evidence Judge Justify	Predict Prescribe Propose Prove Rank	Select Solve Suggest Test
Creative Thinking – creating new ideas, products, and perspectives	Abstract Adapt Amend Author Compose	Construct Convert Create Design Develop	Devise Discover Draw Envision Experiment	Fabricate Imagine Improve Refine Reform	Sketch Theorize Transform Write
Managing Complex Projects – being able to coordinate and sequence multiple tasks in a single project/case and/or multiple projects/cases)	Administer Assign Coach Communicate Complete	Conduct Coordinate Delegate Develop Evaluate	Facilitate Follow up Guide Implement Manage	Organize Plan Prioritize Strategize Supervise	Summarize Teach Time-line Train
Performance Skills – developing capabilities in carrying out psychomotor activities	Conduct Demonstrate Do	Employ Execute Exhibit	Operate Perform Produce	Set up Use	
INTEGRATION—WHAT CONNECTIONS SHOULD LEARNERS BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE AND MAKE WITHIN AND BEYOND THIS LEARNING EXPERIENCE?					
Interdisciplinary Learning – connecting ideas, disciplines, perspectives, contexts **Learning Communities** – connecting people **Learning and Living/Working** – connecting different realms of life	Associate Combine	Concept map Contrast/ compare	Connect Correlate	Differentiate Link	Relate Synthesize

[2] Adapted from Teacher & Educational Development, University of New Mexico School of Medicine. (2005). *Example Action Verbs for Each Dimension of Learning*. Retrieved from http://ccoe.rbhs.rutgers.edu/forms/EffectiveUseofLearningObjectives.pdf.

HUMAN DIMENSION—WHAT SHOULD LEARNERS LEARN ABOUT THEMSELVES AND ABOUT INTERACTING WITH OTHERS?					
Interpersonal Relationships – with peers, patients, others **Self-Authorship** – learning to create and take responsibility for one's own life **Leadership** – becoming an effective leader **Ethics, Character Building** – living by ethical principles **Multicultural Education** – being culturally sensitive **Working as a Member of a Team** – knowing how to contribute to a team **Citizenship** in one's profession, community, nation state, other political entity **Environmental Ethics** – having ethical principles in relation to nonhuman world	Acquire Advise Advocate Balance Be aware of Behave Collaborate Communicate Comply Cooperate Decide to	Describe Demonstrate Educate Embody Empathize Express Feel confident Give feedback Help Influence Initiate	Inspire Interact with Involve Lead Mediate Mobilize Motivate Negotiate Nurture Offer Promote	Protect Reconcile Reform Respect See oneself as Settle Share Show Suggest Support Sustain	Unite Critically reflect Resolve conflict Respond sensitively Serve as role model Suspend judgment Take responsibility
CARING—WHAT CHANGES IN LEARNERS' FEELINGS, INTERESTS, VALUES ARE IMPORTANT?					
– Wanting to Be a Good Learner – Becoming Excited About a Particular Activity/Subject – Developing a Commitment to Live Right (i.e., deciding to take care of one's health/ well-being, live by a certain code)	Agree to Be ready to Commit to Decide to	Demonstrate Develop Discover Explore	Express Identify Pledge Revitalize	Share State Take time to Value	Get excited about Recognize value of Renew interest
LEARNING HOW TO LEARN—WHAT SHOULD LEARNERS LEARN ABOUT LEARNING, ENGAGING IN INQUIRY, AND BECOMING SELF-DIRECTED?					
How to Be a Better Learner – engaging in self-regulated or deep learning **How to Inquire and Construct Knowledge** – how to engage discipline-specific inquiry **How to Pursue Self-Directed or Intentional Learning** – becoming an intentional learner, being a reflective practitioner, developing a learning agenda or plan	Describe how to Research Inquire Reflect Self-assess Self-regulate Self-monitor	Construct knowledge about Develop a learning plan Frame useful questions Generalize knowledge	Identify sources and resources Identify what you need to know Predict performance Set a learning agenda	Take responsibility for Transfer knowledge	

Appendix B: Blank Scoring Sheet

Award each essential component (gold) three points, important components (silver) two, and less-important components (white) one, regardless of the strength of evidence. For example, raters should place a 3 in the appropriate strength-of-evidence column for component #1 and a 2 in the appropriate column for component #10. After scoring all components, sum and scale each column by the appropriate factor: multiple the strong evidence subtotal by 2, the moderate evidence subtotal by 1, and the low evidence subtotal by 0.

Criterion	Component	Strength of Evidence		
		Strong	Moderate	Low
Learning Goals & Objectives	1. Learning goals encompass full range of Fink's dimensions of significant learning			
	2. Course level learning objectives are clearly articulated and use specific action verbs			
	3. Learning objectives are appropriately pitched			
Assessment Activities	4. Objectives and assessments are aligned			
	5. Major summative assessment activities are clearly defined			
	6. Plans for frequent formative assessment with immediate feedback			
	7. Assessments are adequately paced and scaffolded			
	8. Grading information is included but separate from assessment; it is aligned with objectives			
Schedule	9. Course schedule is fully articulated and logically sequenced			
Classroom Environment	10. Tone is positive, respectful, inviting			
	11. Fosters positive motivation, describes value of course, promotes content as a vehicle for learning			
	12. Communicates high expectations, projects confidence of success			
	13. Syllabus is well organized, easy to navigate, requires interaction			
	subtotals	x2 =	x1 =	x0 = 0
			TOTAL	/46

Learning Activities	14. Classroom activities, assessments, and objectives are aligned			
	15. Learning activities are derived from evidence-based practices			
	16. Learning activities likely to actively engage students			
	Subtotal	x2 =	x1 =	x0 = 0
			Total	/12

Content-focused syllabi typically fall in the range 0–16, transitional 17–30, and learning-focused 31–46 (or 0–18, 19–40, and 41–58, respectively, when using the supplemental rubric).