TWO KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL COURSE LAUNCH

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Agenda

Key 1: Syllabi That Work For You and your Students
  • Syllabus essentials (requirements)
  • Enhanced syllabus (recommendations)

Key 2: Make The Most Of The First Day
  • Engage students with you
  • Engage with your students
  • Engage students with course content
Key 1: Syllabus essentials

- Academic Senate requirements *(see handout)*
  - Essential content list
  - Learning outcomes
  - Procedure for distributing

- Check department expectations!
Key 1: Enhancing Your Syllabi

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• Personal vs. impersonal
• Informal vs. formal
• 2\textsuperscript{nd} person vs. 3\textsuperscript{rd} person
• Warm vs. cold
• Vivid vs. drab
• Enthusiastic vs. uninterested
• Faculty interest centered vs. student relevance
Effects of Syllabus Immediacy Language on Student Perceptions

Response Positivity

- Immediacy
- Instructor
- Competence
- Perceived Caring
- Trustworthiness

Lower Immediacy

Higher Immediacy

4.7
4.4
4.3
3.8
3.7

5.0
4.7
4.5
4.2
1.0
2.0
3.0
4.0
5.0
6.0
7.0
Key 1: Enhancing Your Syllabi

A Promising Syllabus
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A Promising Syllabus ...

1. Explains what students will learn/gain (not what teacher will cover)
2. Describes the learning activities students will do to grow (readings, assignments, projects)
3. Explains how students will know what progress they are making (feedback, tests, grades)
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See “Promising Syllabus” handout …
Key 1: Enhancing Your Syllabi

Syllabus statements

- Disabilities Support
- Mental health support
- Cheating/plagiarism/academic integrity expectations
- Inclusivity/diversity/equity commitments
Key 1: Enhancing Your Syllabi

Syllabus statements: Disabilities

“If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Disability Resource Center, Building 124, Room 119, at (805) 756-1395, as early as possible in the term.”
Key 1: Enhancing Your Syllabi

Syllabus statements: Mental health

“A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, death of a significant other and alcohol use are among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. Students experiencing personal problems or situational crises during the quarter are encouraged to contact Counseling Services (805-756-2511) for assistance, support and advocacy. This service is free and confidential.”
Key 1: Enhancing Your Syllabi

Syllabus statements: Cheating

“Cal Poly will not tolerate academic cheating or plagiarism in any form. Academic dishonesty is addressed both as an academic issue and as a disciplinary incident under the CSU Standards for Student Conduct. Cases of class cheating or plagiarism shall be handled by faculty members under established procedures that include written notice to the student of the incident and the consequent grade.”
Syllabus statements: Respect

“Students in this class are encouraged to speak up and participate during class meetings. Because the class will represent a diversity of individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences, every member of this class must show respect for every other member of this class.”
Key 1: Enhancing Your Syllabi

Syllabus statements: Inclusivity

“I am firmly committed to diversity and equality in all areas of campus life, including specifically members of the LGBTQ community. In this class I will work to promote an anti-discriminatory environment where everyone feels safe and welcome. I am committed to providing equality of opportunity for all. We all have a responsibility not to be offensive to each other, or to participate in, or condone harassment or discrimination of any kind.”
Key 2: Make Day 1 count!

What happens on a typical Day 1?

1. Hand out syllabus
2. Read syllabus to them
3. Dismiss class early
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HUGE missed opportunity!
Key 2: Make Day 1 count!

• Follow Academic Senate rules:
  • Provide syllabus
  • Discuss syllabus

• Then, accomplish much, much more ...
  • Build students’ relationship with you
  • Build your relationship with students
  • Motivate and excite them about course
Key 2: Make Day 1 count!

Build students’ relationship with you:

- Why are you teaching this class?
- What are your background and interests?
- Why do you find subject so interesting?
- What are your scholarly interests?
- What are your personal interests?
- What is your approach to teaching?
Key 2: Make Day 1 count!

Build students’ relationship with you:

How have you done this?
Key 2: Make Day 1 count!

Build your relationship with students:

- 3x5 cards with name, major, reason for taking course, “fun fact” about themselves
- Prior knowledge quick write: “What do you already know about this topic?”
- Group discussion about best ways to learn in college classes: share, compile, critique
Key 2: Make Day 1 count!

Build your relationship with students:

*How have you done this?*
Key 2: Make Day 1 count!

Build students’ relationship with course:

- Paired syllabus review
  - Identify three questions that it prompts
  - Pairs share out; class answers
- Share intriguing story (history or current events) and ask for personal experiences
- Group work reviewing article/concept relevant to course content
- Knowledge survey
Key 2: Make Day 1 count!

Build students’ relationship with course

*How have you done this?*
Get ready to launch!
CTLT: We’re here to help!

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