

Activity: Analyzing a Course Syllabus

Learning skills: *clarifying expectations, inquiring, prioritizing*

Why

A well-written syllabus provides you with important information about a course including learning objectives, benefits to the student, content to be covered, important dates, and the basis for determining your grade. The syllabus involves an understood agreement between you and the instructor about what you will be expected to learn, the processes utilized to help you learn, and how you will be evaluated. By reading and analyzing the syllabus for a course, you know what to expect and where to concentrate your efforts to gain the most from that course.

Learning Objectives

1. Get a complete picture of this course including what your instructor expects from you.
2. Determine what you want from this course and how you are going to get it.

Performance Criteria

Criterion #1: the inquiry questions produced concerning the syllabus

Attributes:

- a. formulation of at least three questions
- b. the answers to the formulated questions cannot be found in the syllabus
- c. answers to the questions are relevant to this course and have significant value to other students

Criterion #2: a plan of action for the course

Attributes:

- a. includes clear obtainable goals to achieve from the course
- b. includes tasks and associated hourly efforts required to meet goals
- c. lists the top five priorities for success

Plan

1. Obtain a copy of the syllabus for this course.
2. Answer the Critical Thinking Questions.
3. Write three inquiry questions that you would like answered about this course.
4. After your instructor decides how to address these questions (either through an in-class or online discussion or a consulting session), record the answers to the questions.
5. Write a plan of action for how you will be a successful student in this course.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. What are the main sections of the syllabus?
2. List all the resources that you will use in this course.
3. What are the prerequisites (background knowledge, required skills, qualities, or attitudes) for this course?
4. Of the main topics covered in this course, which ones are of most interest to you? Why?
5. How will your grade be determined in this course?
6. What are the four most important things you believe a successful student must do to learn the most and to earn the best possible grade in this course?
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Inquiry questions about the syllabus

Plan of action for the course
