Designing Your Syllabi and Assignments to Support Student Success

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KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY

Community

Community

Guiding Principles:

- "All students must experience genuine welcome and deep care"

- "Relationships are a powerful means to inspire all students to learn" (10)

"Relational teaching makes visible the humanity of the teacher and each individual student, as well as the humanity of the class content, subject matter, and text." (63)

➢ Convey our belief in students' ability to succeed

➢ Set high expectations and then cultivate a supportive environment to help students learn, make mistakes, and try again (84)
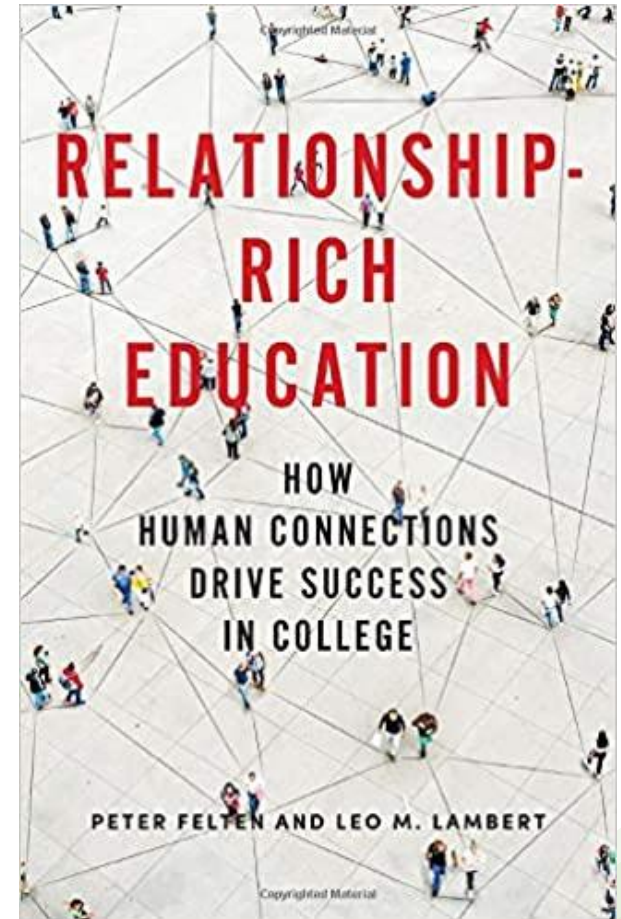
Lessons from the Pandemic (in Teaching and Life)

We are all in this together—for better or worse

Barriers to our success are real—even if invisible

Knowing that someone listens to, cares for, and respects us as a person matters

Syllabi Design: Setting Us Up for Success

- Invites the student to the learning experience
- Establishes a tone for the course and our mutual relationship
- Communicates our expectations

Simple Signals for Establishing a Tone of Mutual Respect

Communication Statement

Use links for KSU policy statements (e.g. academic integrity, grade appeals)

Course policy statements should set expectations rather than anticipate violations

"The syllabus becomes an invitation to share responsibility for successful learning"
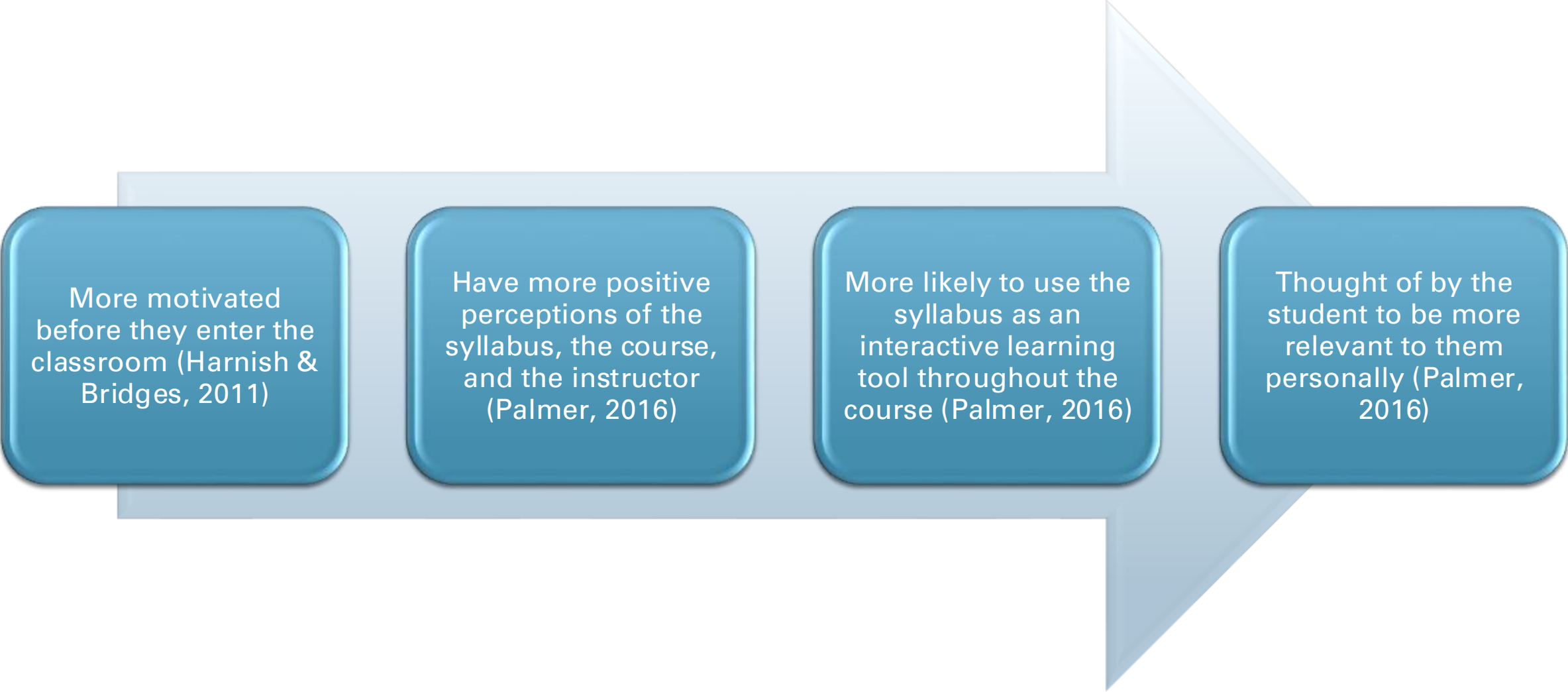
(Grunert, O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008, p.22)

YOUR SYLLABUS . . .

- Sets the tone for your course
- Conveys expectations
- Outlines the course learning objectives
- Describes how student learning will be assessed
- Explains your long-term goals for the course

Students who read a learning-centered syllabus might be:

More motivated before they enter the classroom (Harnish & Bridges, 2011)

Have more positive perceptions of the syllabus, the course, and the instructor (Palmer, 2016)

More likely to use the syllabus as an interactive learning tool throughout the course (Palmer, 2016)
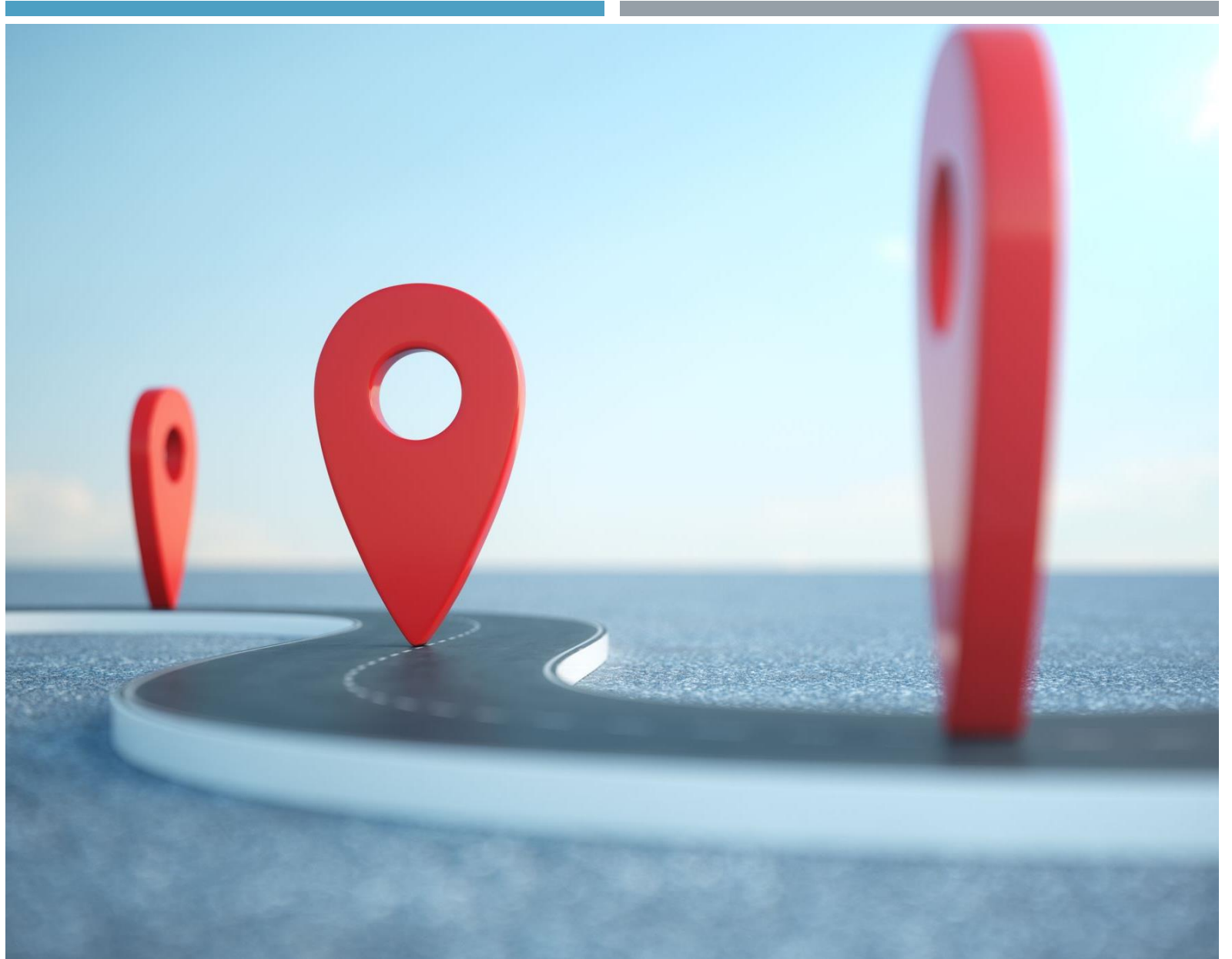
Thought of by the student to be more relevant to them personally (Palmer, 2016)

KSU'S SYLLABUS TEMPLATE LINK

- Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- Access the syllabus template here: https://cia.kennesaw.edu/index.php

KSU SYLLABUS REQUIREMENTS

- **Does the syllabus contain the elements required by the university?**

- **Instructor contact information**

- **Course description from catalog, including prerequisites**

- **Learning outcomes (Gen Ed courses in areas A-E have standard language to insert in addition to course outcomes).**

- **Grading policy, including evaluation scale**

- **Attendance policy**

- **Institutional policies (included in this link): https://cia.kennesaw.edu/instructional-resources/syllabus-policy.php**

- **Course schedule, including dates of assignments and exams**

- **RECOMMENDED link to student resources: https://cia.kennesaw.edu/instructional-resources/syllabus-resources.php**

REVISING SYLLABUS STATEMENTS
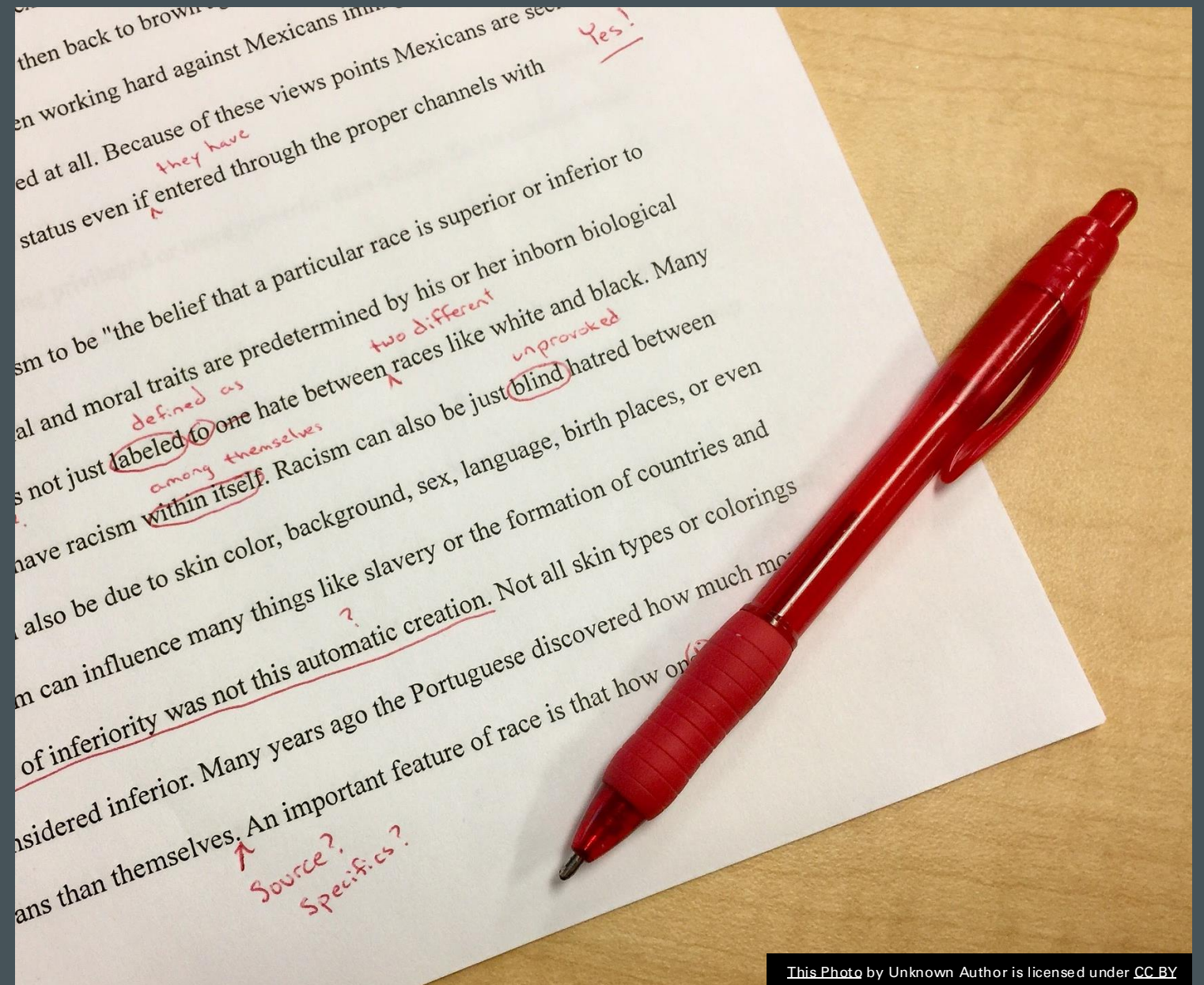
EXAMPLE: COMMUNICATION STATEMENT

Original:

I will reply to emails sent to my KSU campus email address within 48 hours Monday-Friday. On the weekends, I'll be watching Netflix or spending time with my family. I rarely check D2L, and I will NOT respond to emails sent to that account.

Revised:

If you have questions or concerns about our course, please send your messages to sampleprof@kennesaw.edu. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours Monday-Friday. While I will also respond to messages sent through the D2L email client, it may take longer for me to respond. If you prefer to communicate in person, you may visit me during our regularly scheduled office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-3pm.

EXAMPLE: CLASSROOM "RULES"

Original:

Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Such behaviors include: failing to complete the assigned work, arriving late, talking during class, gaming during class, or leaving early.

Revised:

Students are expected to complete all assignments; to use professional, respectful behavior and communication; to arrive on time and to remain until class concludes.

EXAMPLE: ATTENDANCE POLICY

Original:

You will be marked absent for the following reasons: you forget to sign in; you arrive after attendance is taken; you leave early.

Revised:

Your active, engaged participation in each class period contributes to the learning experience. To ensure that you receive credit for your attendance, please arrive on time and prepared, remaining until class is over.

EXAMPLE: GRADE APPEALS

Original:

Once I have posted final grades, I will not change your grade. You can tell me a sob story, but it will not change the outcome. There is no extra credit in this class. DO NOT ask me to change your grade.

Revised:

Link to university's grade appeal policy (included in Student Resources link on syllabus template) <https://cia.kennesaw.edu/instructional-resources/syllabus-resources.php>

Clarity

"The Expert Blindspot"

Kevin Tumlinson

Dunning-Kruger Effect

A Framework for Learning

Shoshin – the beginner's mind

Seek Mid-Semester Feedback

Stop – Start – Continue

CIQ: Critical Incident Questionnaire

Anonymous Survey or Discussion Board Opportunity

SGID: Small Group Instructional Diagnosis

Visit CETL for more information

Q&A