

Illinois State University

ISU ReD: Research and eData

Faculty and Staff Publications – Milner Library

Milner Library

5-21-2021

Turning the Key: Unlocking Library Support Through the Syllabus

Mallory Jallas

Illinois State University, mrjalla@ilstu.edu

Allison Rand

Illinois State University, arrand@ilstu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/fpml>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jallas, Mallory and Rand, Allison, "Turning the Key: Unlocking Library Support Through the Syllabus" (2021). *Faculty and Staff Publications – Milner Library*. 134.

<https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/fpml/134>

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Milner Library at ISU ReD: Research and eData. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty and Staff Publications – Milner Library by an authorized administrator of ISU ReD: Research and eData. For more information, please contact ISUReD@ilstu.edu.

TURNING THE KEY: UNLOCKING LIBRARY SUPPORT THROUGH THE SYLLABUS

Mallory Jallas & Allison Rand
Milner Library, Illinois State University



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

Hello all, thank you for joining us today for our presentation, “TURNING THE KEY: UNLOCKING LIBRARY SUPPORT THROUGH THE SYLLABUS.”

ABOUT US

- Mallory Jallas, she/her/hers
- Student Success Librarian
- Allison Rand, she/her/hers
- Instructional Design Librarian



First, we would like to introduce ourselves. I'm Mallory Jallas, Student Success Librarian, and I am joined by my colleague Allison Rand, Instructional Design Librarian – we work together at Milner Library at Illinois State University in Normal.

Our time today is short, so Allison and I want to jump right into telling you about an instructional experience we had this past spring semester with a first-year seminar on our campus. The focus of our presentation is how we centered the syllabus as a framework for introducing library services and support in an instruction session for first-year students. We will provide a little context for the course we worked with, talk about what we did and the tools/resources we used, and give some ideas about adapting this concept for different contexts. So let's get started..

BACKGROUND

- IDS 108: University Success Skills, 2 credit course, 4-6 sections a semester
 - 12-16 first year students/section
 - Select Course Goals:
 - We will help you know the campus academic support resources services available to you and how (why) to use them
 - We will help you build your academic skills
 - We will help you build strategies to meet the expectations of university life

The course we worked with is IDS 108, University Success Skills. This course is offered as a 2-credit course for first-year students by a unit on our campus called University College. As Student Success Librarian at Milner, I am the liaison to University College. The course instructors for IDS 108 are traditionally first-year academic advisors that are part of University College, there are peer instructors for each course, and sections are relatively small – 12-16 students. Not all our first-year students are taking this course- there are a few different seminar options available. This one focuses on preparing students for a successful transition from high school to college. Other first-year seminars have ties to future career plans and some specific majors/fields of study. The IDS 108 course is somewhat unique among the seminars because it doesn't have a research or writing component for the course. A selection of the course learning goals is on the slide to provide more context and highlight key outcomes like building academic skills and identifying campus support services.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A CLASS THAT WANTS LIBRARY CONTENT BUT DOESN'T HAVE A RESEARCH COMPONENT?

- Timeline of IDS 108 & library connections:
 - Pre-Fall 2020:
 - Most sections required students to complete Milner's self-guided library tour; iTour
 - Some instructors would invite a librarian to class to provide instruction
 - Fall 2020:
 - Struggle to find footing for library instruction – new librarian, new curriculum coordinator, & pandemic
 - Spring 2021:
 - 4 IDS 108 sections scheduled library instruction
 - Allison and Mallory brainstorm ideas to reframe instruction

Some of you may have faced this predicament before- what instruction can you provide for a class that wants to interact with the library but doesn't have an immediate research need? I wanted to give a snapshot of what the library's connection with this IDS course has looked like and how we evolved to where we are now. IDS 108 is not a new course at our University. Before fall 2020, some instructors required their students to participate in a self-guided tour of Milner called the iTour. Other instructors invited a librarian to their class to share about library services- the approach varied. This past fall was a collision course if you will- I was new in my role as Student Success Librarian, there was a new curriculum coordinator for the IDS first-year seminars, we were in the midst of the pandemic, and the library was not open for walk-in visitors shortly after the semester started- so activities like the iTour, weren't a possibility during our closure. Needless to say, we struggled to make a meaningful connection in fall 2020. When the fall semester wrapped up, I connected with the curriculum coordinator, and we lamented about the fall and started considering how spring 2021 could be different. After our conversation, the curriculum coordinator asked all IDS 108 instructors to schedule a session with me for their students to learn about Milner. From there, I asked Allison to join me in creating a plan for these sessions & instruction.

USING THE SYLLABUS AS A LEARNING OBJECT

- Students will continue to encounter the syllabus throughout college
- Uncovering the hidden curriculum in academia
- Focus on concepts that map directly to the library, but which may not be immediately clear

In our early brainstorming, Allison and I tried to figure out what approach we wanted to take with IDS 108- we started talking through some of our goals which centered on connecting students with library services and collections and addressing the idea of how the library can support them in their classes and throughout their academic life. With our goals in mind, we started circling this idea of utilizing a syllabus as a framework for the session. One of the key ideas here is that students have and will continue to encounter syllabi throughout their coursework – so there is some level of familiarity and continued application. Another consideration is that there are consistent trends in most syllabi, and we wanted students to observe those and make connections with library services. Our hope here was to break down some of the hidden curriculum that first-time in college students might encounter during their early semesters on campus. To that end, we started making some explicit connections between the library and the syllabus, and this was at the core of our instruction sessions for IDS 108. We utilized a generic syllabus we found online for reuse and started pulling out pieces to integrate into the session.

Syllabus Examples

Texts and Readings

You are required to do all of the readings listed on the course calendar – both the readings in the texts that you purchase as well as the readings on e-reserve.

Texts: There are two textbooks for this course that you will need to purchase, and both of these books can be found at the bookstore:

- *Mind Myths: Exploring Popular Assumptions About the Mind and Brain* (1999), edited by Sergio Della Salla
- *The Myth of the First Three Years: A New Understanding of Early Brain Development and Lifelong Learning* (1999), written by John T. Bruer

Plagiarism:

If you a) use someone else's phrases, paragraphs, or EVEN THEIR IDEAS WRITTEN IN YOUR OWN WORDS and b) fail to provide a reference, then you have plagiarized that person's work. There are two ways to ensure that you don't plagiarize:

- 1) present your own ideas, and
- 2) when you present someone else's ideas or phrases, **give them credit by providing a reference.**

Plagiarism is a serious problem across college campuses today and I will actively check your work to ensure that you have not taken credit for someone else's ideas and writing. If I discover that you've plagiarized, you will fail the assignment and I will report the incident to the Dean of H&SS, to your advisor, and to the Academic Affairs Office where it will go in your file, as specified by the procedures in the student handbook.

Writing (30% total). You will have several writing assignments in this class. The goal of each assignment is to help you develop critical thinking skills and to improve your ability to write clearly and concisely as you compare popular opinions to scientific evidence. Your last writing assignment will involve proposing a brief research study, based on what you've learned about applying different scientific methods to test the validity of people's beliefs. Additional details for each homework and writing assignment will be provided in advance.

Homework Assignments	September 10 October 24	5% 7%
Research Proposal		
Hypothesis	November 5	3%
Proposal & Rationale	November 21	15%

Assessment

Because there are several course objectives, I will assess your performance on several measures.

Exams. (40% total) You will have two exams in this course, one in the 6th week of classes and one during finals. On the exams, you will show how well you can identify suspicious beliefs about human behavior and hypothesize as to why these beliefs are treasured, believed, and propagated. The exams will also provide an opportunity for you to show what you've learned about the basic scientific evidence, and you'll be asked to argue whether certain beliefs are well-supported or challenged by the evidence. Exam 1 will cover all of the chapter readings, outside readings, and discussions from the first 5 weeks of class and the Final Exam will be cumulative, although the bulk of the exam will cover material from the last 10 weeks of class. I will provide more detailed information about the format and content of the exams as they approach. We will decide the format of the final exam as a class.

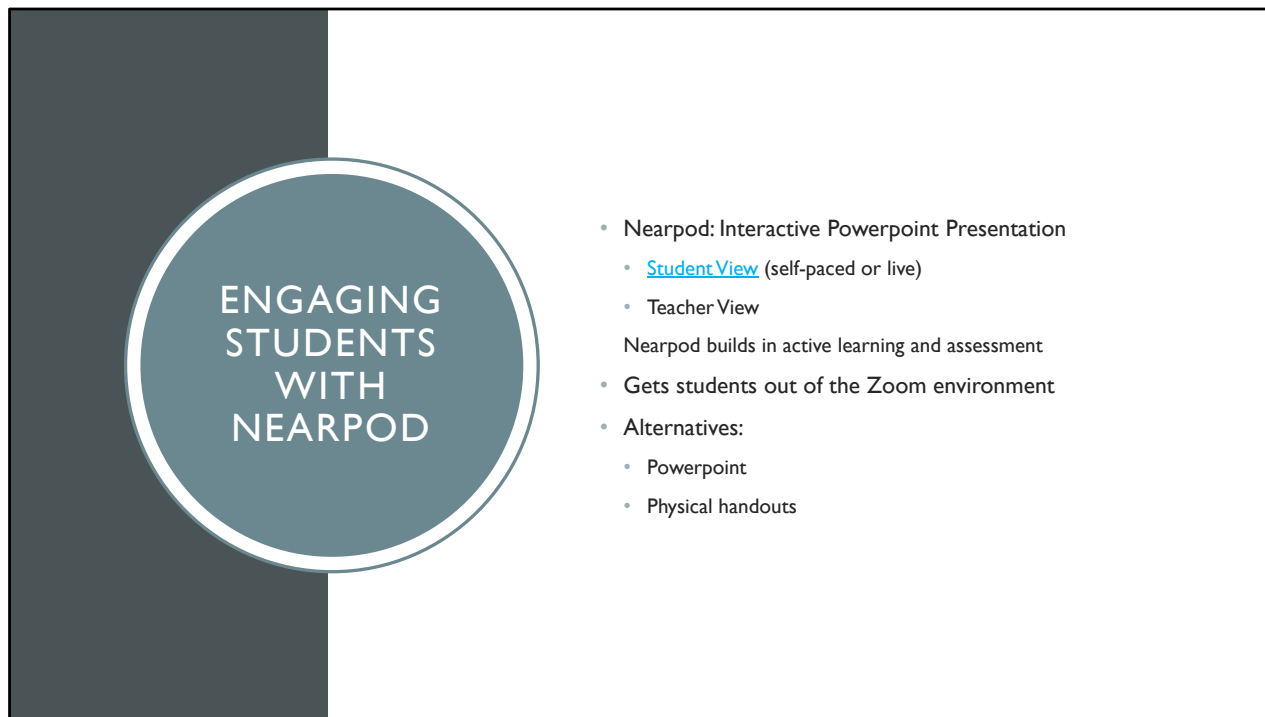
Exam 1	October 1	20%
Final Exam	Finals period	20%

So on this slide, you will see some examples from the syllabus, and I will outline the connections to the library we made during the class:

In the upper left-hand corner is a syllabus excerpt talking about course textbooks and readings. We used this as a launching pad to discuss that the library might have access to your textbook or reading materials, depending on the course. We focused on Milner's course reserves system and how it can provide access to course material. Next, in the upper right-hand corner, is some language addressing plagiarism and academic integrity from the syllabus. We've highlighted a section that asks students to "give credit and provide a reference" for their sources. With this in mind, we shared that the library provides various resources to support the citation needs that students have- we showed off some of our research guides relating to citation and avoiding plagiarism. Next, we have a section presenting a writing assignment with research proposal requirements in the lower left-hand corner. In connection with this section, we shared information about getting research help from librarians through our virtual reference desk. We highlighted some of the primary ways to get started with your research from the library's website. Finally, in the bottom right-hand corner of the slide, we have a syllabus section about tests and exams for the course. From here, we provided information about the variety of study spaces available in the library. Since our library was back open after a semester limiting access for all users, this was a critical message to share with students, so we highlighted some library spaces

and our current hours.

This breakdown of the syllabus was the core of our instruction session. We knew that we wanted to engage students throughout the session. Allison will address how we utilized the program Nearpod to facilitate the session and build in engagement points.



ENGAGING
STUDENTS
WITH
NEARPOD

- Nearpod: Interactive Powerpoint Presentation
 - [Student View](#) (self-paced or live)
 - Teacher View
- Nearpod builds in active learning and assessment
- Gets students out of the Zoom environment
- Alternatives:
 - Powerpoint
 - Physical handouts

In addition to using the syllabus as a learning object, we decided to engage students in the online environment using Nearpod

Nearpod is basically an interactive slide deck that combines all the best features of things like Padlet and Poll Everywhere into one software. ISU has an institutional license for Nearpod, but there is also a free version available.

There are multiple benefits to using Nearpod over a traditional powerpoint; the first and most important is that it puts you as the instructor entirely in charge of what students are seeing, and there are no clumsy links to send. Once students have opened your Nearpod lesson, they don't need to do anything else besides participate when prompted.

When you build a Nearpod module, it includes a live version and a self-paced version; synchronous and asynchronous basically. For this class, we opted to use the live version, so we just sent one link to the class and they all joined the module. In the live version, when I advance the slides, the students slides also advance. One thing to note is that Nearpod's live participation does not use screensharing; students open the link in a browser and view the content there. We really like this because it allowed students to get a little break from the normal Zoom classes and we let them turn their cameras off during the lesson. (Demo teacher view and student view)

I'm going to show you quickly what Nearpod looks like from the student side of things by going through the self-paced asynchronous version of our lesson. While some of the slides are typical powerpoint style slides, some prompt an activity or poll, and some even open new browser windows specifically to the library website.

When we got elements of the class about connecting the library to the syllabus, this meant that rather than us sending students links or screensharing, students were sent directly to the pages of our website that connected to that aspect of the syllabus, which then stayed open for them to explore at their own pace.

From a student point of view, Nearpod is a nice change from what they typically experience in class, and it lets them use their natural web browsing habits during the presentation rather than sitting and watching a screenshare.

The screenshot displays a Nearpod interface. On the left, a 'Student List' panel shows the names of three students: Becky, Delaney, and Lindsey. On the right, a discussion board titled 'Have you used Milner Library in the past year?' is visible. The board contains several student posts, each with a blue header and a white body. The posts include: 'Good, quiet spaces to study', 'Have met with librarians at my previous college to help me with finding sources for papers', 'Used the library in the past since an instructor made us go for a consultation.', 'I participated in summer reading programs at my public library', and 'I've gone in to Milner to print'. At the bottom of the board, there is a text input field with the placeholder 'Share thoughts and/or images here', a character count '250', and a 'Post' button.

TRACKING STUDENT PARTICIPATION

From an instructor point of view, Nearpod is really great because it allows you to track student progress and do formative assessment during the session. Using Nearpod, you can see when students have joined the session and see how many of them have participated in the activities. This means you don't have to just guess to know if students need more time, and it lets you see which students are engaged and which aren't.

You can also build in quizzes or polls to assess student learning during the session, which was good in our case to know which connection we might need to more strongly emphasize with students. Nearpod also will send a full assessment report to the instructor at the end of the session, so if you need to keep track of who has completed the materials, you can easily do that.

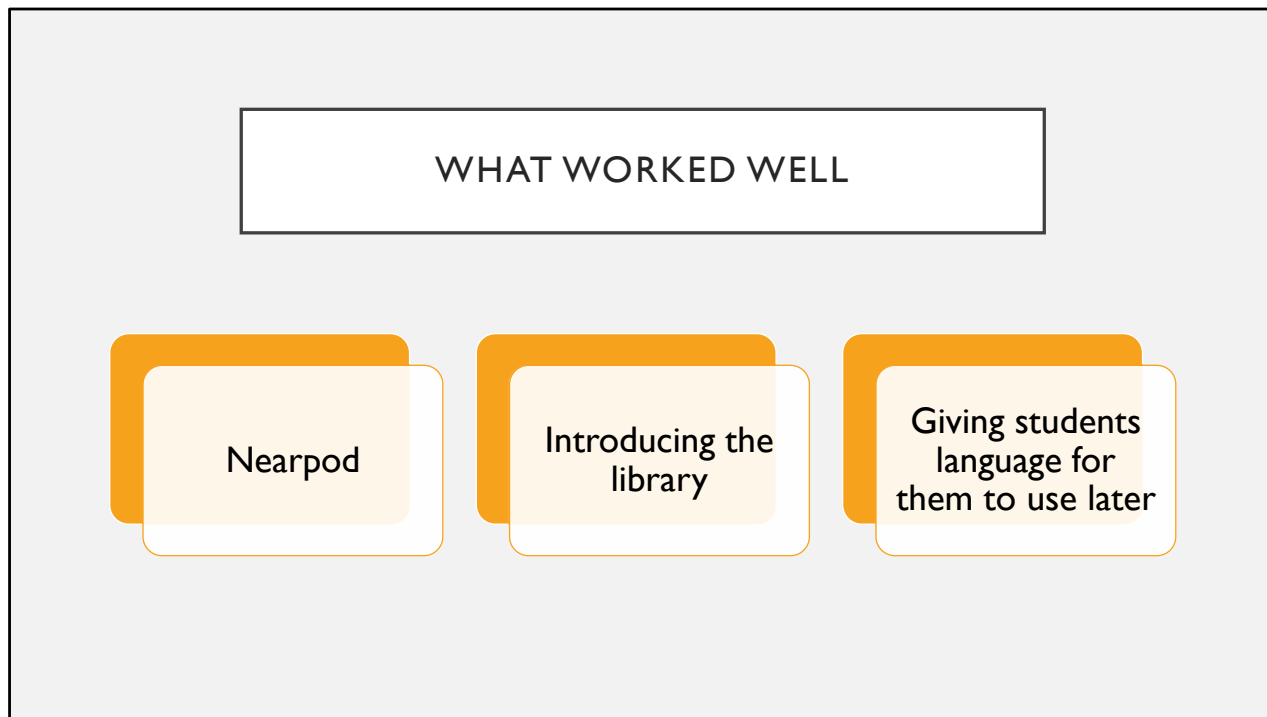
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Which of these questions can you ask a librarian?



- 12 D | HOW DO I CITE THIS BOO...
- 12 C | HOW DO I FIND/USE A LIB...
- 12 B | I HAVE A RESEARCH ASSIG...
- 12 A | DOES THE LIBRARY HAVE ...
- 8 H | WHERE CAN I FIND A QUI...
- 8 F | HOW CAN I CONTACT FIN...

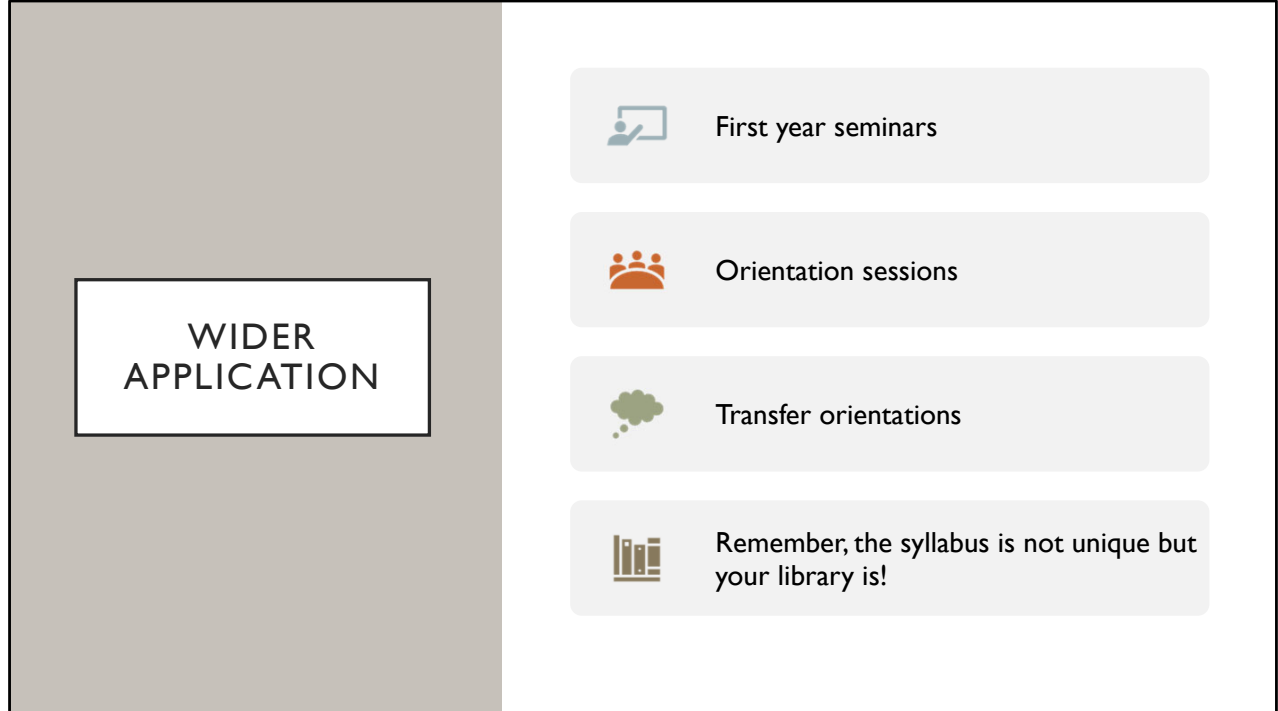
Student	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Delaney	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•
Becky	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Lindsey	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•



We felt like Nearpod worked well with this activity because it kept students engaged and participating but doesn't require a ton of effort or sending links back and forth. We had a lot of positive feedback from both students and instructors about using Nearpod, as well as feedback about this method of introducing the library.

By using the syllabus as a learning tool, we were able to give students a "library orientation" that was more concrete and meaningful than just telling them about our resources.

We also included questions in our Nearpod slides about "what can you can ask a librarian" and "what can librarians helps with" to really give students the language they'll need to get help in the future. We know that students often come in to the library and get help and then say "I didn't even know the library did this," so by connecting their syllabus to our materials and giving them specific questions they can ask librarians, we've prepared them for a lot of situations they'll encounter throughout college.



The last thing I want to mention is how you can incorporate this kind of activity. This is a great fit for first year seminar classes, which is what we used it for, but also for orientation sessions or transfer orientations, or any time when you're asked to give an "into to the library" when the class doesn't have a research assignment. We found it to be a valuable exercise for helping to create mental connections from what students see in class to what is available in the library.

And even though the syllabus may not necessarily be a unique document or genre, your library *is* unique! We articulated the connections we thought were most valuable in our library right now, but those connections might be different in your library and might evolve over time, so it's important to think about what you want to students to take away from this exercise.

QUESTIONS?

Contact us:

mjalla@ilstu.edu

arrand@ilstu.edu

That wraps up our presentation on using the syllabus as a learning object, are there any questions?