

[slide] This video is part of the online seminar on **Designing Courses**, developed by the Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning at Saint Louis University.

[slide] The purpose of this short video is to explore five **Sample Course Goals**. Try to keep in mind what the examples have in common and also how they differ from one another.

[slide] **Sample Goal #1**

This course will introduce students to general concepts of physics.

In this goal, it's important to notice the verb: **introduce**. This verb signals that this is an example of a **course goal** (as opposed to a student learning objective). It's clearly focused on what the **instructor and/or the course** will do, not on what students will be able to do with those "general concepts of physics" after the course ends.

[slide] **Sample Goal #2**

My goal is to help you understand and appreciate Shakespeare's tragedies.

As with the first example, here again, the emphasis is on the **instructor's** actions ("help"). And it states directly that the goal is "mine," the "me" of the teacher.

There's also another tell-tale word in this example, and that's **appreciate**. Any time you see "appreciate," or any form of "appreciation," you are probably looking at a goal, not a learning objective. "Appreciate" is about an **internal state**, something you won't really be able to measure. You may want / hope students will **appreciate** Shakespeare's tragedies, but how would measure that? You could measure the extent to which students **tell you** they "appreciate" Shakespeare, but ... that isn't really the same thing as measuring their learning.

And even the verb "understand" leans more toward goal: what definition of "understand" would you be working from? How would you measure it?

As we will see in the next section of the online seminar, there are multiple specific, measurable ways you can assess "understanding," and you'll rely on those more precise word choices when you start narrowing the specific learning you want students to demonstrate in your course.

[slide] **Sample Goal #3**

This course prepares students to work successfully in the field of marketing.

While this goal begins to gesture toward an actual **outcome** for students – their ability to work successfully in the field of marketing – it still states a goal for the course. The focus on "this course" tips you off to that, as does the verb, "**prepare**."

However, a marketing course that sets this goal could easily be designed to achieve very specific, measurable learning objectives associated with what it means to prepare to work successfully in the field. And this goal provides an overarching framework – a larger meaning –

for those more specific learning objectives and the relationships between them. It helps to convey a sense of payoff for students – that the course is directly tied to future employment.

[slide] Sample Goal #4

In this course, students will engage in multiple reflection activities, service learning projects, and collaborative projects.

This goal is deceptive at first, since it focuses on students, rather than on the instructor. However, notice that the language essentially tells you what students will **do** during the course. This is not the same thing as what they will **learn** and/or **be able to do** at the end of the course. This goal is of the sort that conveys to students what it will be like to be in the course, what kinds of learning experiences they are going to have in the course.

If the goal is later tied to specific skills that will be honed in the course (reflection, teamwork), then it could provide the foundation for excellent learning objectives.

[slide] Sample Goal #5

In this course, you will learn skills for college success, as well as for lifelong learning.

Again, here is a goal that seems to be more about students and their skill development – both of which would seem to suggest that this may be a student learning objective.

However, the goal does not define what those “skills for college” are.

And the focus on developing students as “lifelong learners” is a tip-off that the item is a goal because you can’t possibly measure whether or not students will be learners all their lives (and certainly not in the few weeks or months they are in your class). You will only be able to measure what they have actually learned during the time you are working with them.

[slide] Recap: Course Goals

In Conclusion, let’s recap the key features of course goals. They . . .

- ❖ Express your wishes and hopes
- ❖ State what you / the course will do
- ❖ Often describe internal states or long-term aims
- ❖ May convey what students will do in the course (that is, what the experience will be like for them)
- ❖ Create a sense of purpose or meaning for the course

In the next section of the online seminar, we’ll further explore the differences between course goals and student learning objectives.

Please go back to the online seminar and continue working.