

Course Planning Worksheet and Assignment

This worksheet explains outline form for designing courses and curricula. You may want to explore other ways to brainstorm ideas before setting them into outline form. Outlines provides an organized way show on paper what we will do in a course, workshop or training. Outline form allows us to organize what will we do to meet our teaching goals by providing a structure within which to separate out the necessary elements and then write out the actions necessary to achieve these elements. The assignment is part of the advanced year requirements.

COURSE PLANNING WORKSHEET

Course Title

The overall aim or purpose of the course should be reflected in the course title. Your course can be general such as a course for general back wellness titled “Back Care”. Or the course purpose may be more specific.

“Back Pain” for example is a condition, but as a title it doesn’t clearly specify enough about the approach or point of view of the course (even though the topic is given.) “Yoga Solutions for Non-acute Back Pain” would be better, as would “Easy Yoga for your Bad Back” or something else along these lines. You can also use a tag line or subheading to specifically qualify a general title. This might look like, “Back Care: Exercises and Lifestyle Solutions to Care for your Back.”

Now You Try It

Brainstorm some course titles.

To do so ask yourself:

1. Do I want this to be preventative well-care and more general?
2. Do I want this course to have a specific focus?

Write down some drafts of possible titles. You can edit them later.

Writing Course Goals

Course goals are broad statements of what you want to achieve in meeting your aim for the course. They are components of your purpose in offering the course and are usually longer-term achievements requiring some effort by students. Various contributing actions may be required to attain them. Goals describe the destination - what you want the students to be able to do, know or understand as aspects of your overall purpose for the course.

Using your course title, brain storm *broad general things* you would like your students to be able to experience, know, explore, or do. For example, if I use the course title above, “Back Care: Exercises and Lifestyle Solutions to Care for your Back,” I begin to think about what I want my students to know how to do, like safely picking up something heavy. Also, I ask myself “what would I like them to understand?” I decide they should know something about precautions - what not to do and why. I also want them to experience and know some safe exercises for their own condition. Thinking about what these might be, I decide there is at least one that all can do safely and then there are others that are condition-specific.

I also consider that exercise is for strength, but there are also exercises in the larger sense for relaxation as well for stretching.

Then I go on to think about the lifestyle suggestions and what they may entail. Lifting things and getting down and up from a chair both seem to be something worth discussing and training them to do. (I may then decide to do an Internet search to see what other people think is important as well.) But from just my brainstorming above, I have come up with these general goals for my course:

- Safe helpful strengthening exercise for everyone’s back
- Strengthening exercise for your back needs (which I would teach individually)
- Back Care Precautions
- Relaxation Exercise
- Stretching Exercise
- General Lifestyle Tips and Pointers
- Healthy Back Lifting
- Healthy Back Level Change (sitting and standing up)

*Please note for the sake of brevity in the assignment below, we’ll condense the final three bullet points above to one goal with two objectives. General Lifestyle Tips and Pointers will be the goal and Healthy Back Lifting and Healthy Back Level Change (sitting and standing up) will become two objectives under it.

Now You Try It

Brainstorm some general things you want your students to get and/or be able to do from your course.

Writing Learning Objectives

Learning objectives or simply “objectives” are more concrete and more specific than goals. Think of objectives as implementation steps or elements that add up allowing you to achieve each goal. As objectives support the attainment of each goal, there are usually several of them.

Taking a look my first goal, “Safe helpful strengthening exercise for everyone’s back”, I ask myself, “what are the most important aspects I need to get across to students, so they can perform safe helpful strengthening back exercises?”

I reason they need to know the exercise itself. They need to know how to progress it. I may want them to know it is universally safe for back care but that there may be other precautions. I may want them to know other things of interest about it; perhaps learn some of the anatomy so they can have accurate imagery to help them perform effectively.

So, my objective-writing will look something like this:

Goal I: Safe helpful strengthening exercise for everyone’s back

Objective A: Know how to do Basic Agni Sara for abdominal strength

Objective B: Know the exercises up to the Basic Agni Sara and how to judge how many repetitions to do

Objective C: Know precautions for each version of the practice

Objective D: Be exposed to lore about the practice putting it in cultural context

Objective E: Be able to visualize the basic muscular anatomy of the abdominal wall as it

activates in the practice

Now You Try It

Choose one of your course goals. Think about things within that goal that will help your students be able to attain that goal. List them.

Writing Methods or Learning Activities

Methods or learning activities are the things you will teach such as the actual yoga practices. These activities can also be experiences you give your students. For example, you may ask them to look at simple schemata of the abdominal muscles while feeling them contract. If you are teaching a *bona fide* course, you may give them homework or ask them to practice or explore something on their own that you discuss in the next class. As you teach, you may design further activities that arise out of what you and your students have done, or questions they may have (like this worksheet. ☺)

If I continue with choosing the first example above, I have:

Goal I: Safe helpful strengthening exercise for everyone's back

Objective A: Know how to do Basic Agni Sara for abdominal strength

To meet Objective A, my methods could be:

Method 1: Teach Aswini Mudra

Method 2: Teach A & P

Method 3: Teach Mula Bandha

Method 4: Teach Basic Agni Sara which is Mula Bandha with A & P

And to give a further example, let's take Objective B: Know the exercises up to the Basic Agni Sara and how to judge how many repetitions to do.

Reading this, you might comment, "Jaime, you covered all of these already in Objective A." You are correct. Sometimes the methods you use will overlap. So to meet Objective B., some of my work is already done. But since I want them as well to be able to know how to do the exercises (on their own and not to just follow in class) and also judge the number or repetitions, I continue on like this:

Objective B: Know the exercises up to the Basic Agni Sara and how to judge how many repetitions to do

Method 1: Ask individual students to demonstrate and talk the class through each one of the Agni Sara progression exercises (I'll help them review and can do this more than once!)

Method 2: Advise them to begin with 5-10 repetitions and tune in to how their abdominals feel the next day. Ask them to adjust and see. (It's a circle ☺)

The work thus far outlined would not all be done in one class. I may repeat and review as I notice how things are going with the students. What I am creating in this course outline is my overview of all the things I want to get across to my students. It's what I want them to take away either as information or as something they can do, something they have been exposed to or experienced.

Now You Try It

Choose one of your objectives. Think about things you will do in class or assign as homework that will help students obtain that objective. List them.

Assessment

Assessment is how you, as the teacher, know how well students have learned what you've taught. In formal education this usually takes the form of tests of some sort - written or verbal evaluation of knowledge, skills or practice. In an informal setting you may assess students more casually. You may invite them to verbally share how practices you've taught have helped. Or you may give class time to write 1-2 sentence answers to a few written questions. Sometimes indicating a lessening of pain using a simple scale of 1-5 can be enough.

Now You Try It

Choose one of your goals, objectives or methods. In one or two sentences describe how you will assess or check in on whether your students have "gotten" what you were teaching.

Writing the Course Description

Once you spell out your course outline, it becomes easy to write a course description based on the title, subheading and goals. For instance, from the list of goals for "Back Care: Exercises and Lifestyle Solutions to Care for your Back:

- Safe helpful strengthening exercise for everyone's back
- Strengthening exercise for your back needs (which I would teach individually)
- Back Care Precautions
- Relaxation Exercise
- Stretching Exercise
- General Lifestyle Tips and Pointers
- Healthy Back Lifting
- Healthy Back Level Change (sitting and standing up),

we can write:

Course Description: *In this course you will learn safe strengthening exercises to support your back, back care precautions for your condition, helpful relaxation and back stretching exercises along with lifestyle tips and pointers. Focus will also be on correct lifting as well as pain-free sitting and standing.*

COURSE PLANNING ASSIGNMENT

The Assignment: Using the Course Outline example below, design a course.

Include:

1. The course title.

2. Logistics: length, hours per week, format, student limit, props or supplies needed, what students need to bring, any restrictions (age, fitness level, women only, etc.), any other details (ex. estimated cost, proposed location, etc.)
3. The course outline. For the outline:
 - Include at least 3 goals
 - Write objectives for each goal (2 minimum)
 - Write Methods/Learning experiences for each objective (2 minimum)
4. Using your title and outline, compose a course description
5. Give one assessment sample.

This assignment is due December 15, 2018. Feel free to schedule a call with Dr. Schmitt and/or send (email) your work for comment at any point prior to this deadline. ☺ Use one another, go over each other's work and comment. Do Zoom or Skype calls.

Helpful Hints

Use the Outline Template as a guide. I've included two templates below. One has the examples above filled in to get you started. You might choose this one if you are working to figure out how to go about organizing your thinking in this type of format. The second template is simply the outline. Use it if you prefer to make up a therapeutically-oriented course for a purpose of your own choosing, or for the back care title we did not pursue above.

Once you complete your outlines, please write a course description based on your goals. Add a timeframe, estimated cost and location along with any other details you like. Note any restrictions to entry, such as this course is open to everyone, or this course requires some past yoga experience. For instance, "This course meets for 2 hours one time a week for six weeks and is open to everyone with a doctor's note if having had a back injury within the past six months."

Write one Assessment. Depending on the course you design your assessment may be a simple scale with one or more questions for students, or more complex. For a more extensive course design you will have several assessments. For our purposes, only include one.

Example of Outline Form and Outline "Template"

Course Title: Back Care: Exercises and Lifestyle Solutions for Caring for your Back

Course Time Frame: Meets two hours over 6 weeks

Course Description: In this course you will learn safe strengthening exercises to support your back, back care precautions for your condition, helpful relaxation and back stretching exercises along with lifestyle tips and pointers. Focus will also be on correct lifting as well as pain-free sitting and standing.

- I. Goal One: Safe helpful strengthening exercise for everyone's back
 - Objective A: Know how to do Basic Agni Sara for abdominal strength
 - Method 1: Teach Aswini Mudra
 - Method 2: Teach A & P
 - Method 3: Teach Mula Bandha
 - Method 4: Teach Basic Agni Sara which is Mula Bandha with A & P
 - Objective B: Know the exercises up to the Basic Agni Sara and how to judge how many repetitions to do

Method 1: Ask individual students to demonstrate and talk the class through each one of the Agni Sara progression exercises

Method 2: Advise them to begin with 5-10 repetitions and tune in to how their abdominals feel the next day.

Objective C: Know the precautions of all the practices

Objective D: Share lore or stories about the practice, things of interest

Objective E: Be able to visualize the basic muscular anatomy of abdominal wall

II. Goal Two: Strengthening exercise for your back needs (which I would teach individually)

Objective A.

Method 1:

Method 2:

Method 3:

Objective B.

Method 1:

Method 2:

Method 3:

Method 4:

III. Goal Three: Back Care Precautions

IV. Goal Four: Relaxation Exercise

V. Goal Five: Stretching Exercise

VI. Goal Six: General Lifestyle Tips and Pointer

Objective A: Healthy Back Lifting

Objective B: Healthy Back Level Change (sitting and standing up)

Blank Outline Template for Course Design

The outline below has varying numbers of Objectives and Methods shown. You may, of course, fill in any number of Objectives or Methods for each goal.

Course Title:

Course Time Frame:

Course Description:

Goal I.

Objective A.

Method 1:

Method 2:

Method 3:

Method 4:

Method 5:

Objective B.

Method 1:

Method 2:

Method 3:

Objective C.

Method 1:

Method 2:

Goal II.

Objective A.

Method 1:

Method 2:

Method 3:

Objective B.

Method 1:

Method 2:

Method 3:

Method 4:

Goal III. Etc....