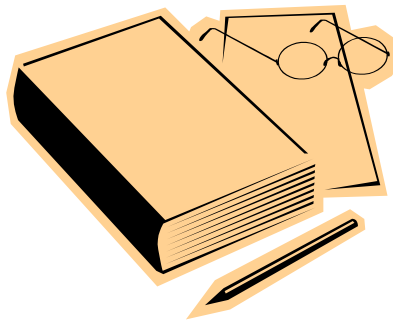


**WORKBOOK
FOR
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PLANNING**



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WORKBOOK FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PLANNING

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I. Defining the Educational Problem or Need

Many different factors come into play to prompt the development of new educational programs or curricula. These factors may be intellectual (e.g., discovery or creation of new knowledge), technological (e.g., availability of new diagnostic or therapeutic technologies), sociocultural (e.g., demographic changes), economic (i.e., changing fiscal realities), political (e.g., public policy mandates), organizational (e.g., shifts in health care delivery and management), professional (i.e., demands for interdisciplinary teamwork, changes in scopes of practice, etc.), or a combination of these and other influences.

Program Planning Questions

What educational problem or need have you chosen as the focus of program planning?

What evidence is there that a gap exists between what learners (learners may be students, residents, faculty, staff, and/or practitioners) are currently learning and what they *should* be learning? If no evidence currently exists, how can you establish that there is a need?

What is your primary aim in developing an instructional program on this topic? (For example, “To help residents gain the necessary competencies to work effectively in the changing environments of health care organization, delivery, and financing.”)

II. Program Context

Characteristics of the learning environment can facilitate or constrain the implementation of an educational program. In the chart below, for each category, describe the resources and constraints that may affect the development of the program that you're planning.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Resource</i>	<i>Constraint</i>
Human resources (staff support; number, types and qualifications of teachers, facilitators, group leaders)		
Fiscal resources (e.g., grant support, program or registration fees, voluntary contributions)		
Physical space and facilities (classroom or meeting space, food service, breakout rooms, business support services)		
Technology resources (software and hardware, Internet access, technology support)		
Geographic location (on site or off site, distance)		
Time (length of program, synchronous or asynchronous, stand alone or integrated, season- or event-dependent)		
Administrative and regulatory policies and procedures (continuing education, licensure, accreditation)		
Human factors (motivation and readiness of learners and teachers, resistance to change, individual variables)		

III. Outcomes for Learners

After completing the first steps in program planning (describing the educational need that the curriculum is designed to address, specifying the overall or primary aim, and identifying resources and constraints in the environment), the next task is to specify the outcomes that you would like learners to achieve through participation in the program. Harden (1999) provides examples of questions that one might ask to develop statements of desired outcomes for a medical education program:

- What kind of doctor will the program produce?
- What competencies will program participants possess?
- What basic skills will these doctors have?
- Will the doctors be oriented to community-based health care as well as hospital-based care?
- Will they have training in health promotion?
- Will they have the competencies necessary to carry out research?
- Will they be committed to certain ethical principles?

List below the specific outcomes you would like your program to produce.

Desired Outcomes for Learners

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IV. Strategies for Assessing Learners' Achievement of Outcomes

What will be your strategies for assessing whether a learner has achieved the intended outcomes? That is, how will you measure learner performance or knowledge or attitudes? A wide range of methods can be used, including written tests (multiple choice, essay, short answer, etc.), performance tests (simulations, work samples), observation (structured or unstructured), reflective writing (e.g., journals), interviews (structured, unstructured, or semi-structured), questionnaires, portfolio review, and others. For descriptions of various methods, refer to the following:

Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)/American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Joint Initiative. A toolbox of assessment methods, Version 1.1, 2000. Available at <http://www.acgme.org/outcome/assess/toolbox.asp>.

In the space below, describe appropriate assessment methods for each of the outcomes you have specified.

Outcomes

Learner Assessment Methods

V. Program Content and Organization

In planning and organizing the content for the program, first determine the content areas encompassed by each of the outcomes that you have specified, and then decide the best order in which to have learners encounter these areas. Some approaches to sequencing are as follows:

- conduct a general survey of the topic and follow with an exploration of problems
- begin with foundation or prerequisite knowledge and build from there
- move from simple to complex or less difficult to more difficult
- proceed from familiar to unfamiliar
- begin with an area most likely to arouse interest or establish the relevance of the topic

List the program outcomes and their associated content areas in the order in which the learners will encounter them. Then develop a more detailed description of the program's organization. How many sessions will be devoted to each outcome or content area? How will they be sequenced?

Outcomes

Content Areas

VI. Developing Instructional Strategies and Media

In the table below, indicate the instructional formats and media that you will use for each outcome or content area or session, taking into consideration the methods best suited to helping learners achieve the desired outcomes associated with each content area. Bransford and colleagues (2000) provide useful background information about contemporary understandings of how people learn most effectively. Also refer to the handout, “Choosing Instructional Formats” (Office of Educational Development, 1999).

<i>Outcome/Content Area</i>	<i>Instructional Strategies</i>	<i>Instructional Media</i>
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VII. Evaluating the Program’s Processes and Outcomes

“Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming” (Patton, 1997, p. 23).

Program evaluations often focus on both *processes* and *outcomes*. Program planners examine program *processes* to determine whether and how program administration and activities can be improved. Evaluation of *outcomes* aims to discover whether the outcomes that were intended have actually been achieved. What questions do you have about the effectiveness of program processes and the achievement of outcomes? What methods will you use to find the answers? How will you use the data to plan program improvements? Useful methods include questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, structured observation, performance review, examination of program databases, review of learners’ work, review of results of learner assessments, etc. Input can be gathered from learners, colleagues, associates, and various written records. Choices should be made based on the needs of the specific situation and in light of available resources, personal judgments, and the perspectives of stakeholders.

<i>Evaluation Questions</i>	<i>Methods for Answering the Questions</i>
<i>Questions about program processes</i>	
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
<i>Questions about program outcomes</i>	
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

VIII. References

Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)/American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Joint Initiative. A toolbox of assessment methods, Version 1.1, 2000. Available at <http://www.acgme.org/outcome/assess/toolbox.asp>.

Bransford JD, Brown AL, Cocking RR, eds. How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000.

Harden RM, Crosby JR, Davis MH. AMEE Guide No. 14: Outcome-based education: Part 1—An introduction to outcome-based education. *Medical Teacher* 1999, 21(1):7-14.

Patton MQ. What is program evaluation? In *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, pp. 23-32. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997.

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