



Public Health Collaboration in South Eastern Europe (PH-SEE)

Programmes for Training and Research in Public Health

DIDACTIC GUIDELINESS FOR AUTHORS

Ten tips for planning and writing a PH-SEE Curriculum teaching module

Tip 1. SETTING THE STAGE

1.1. Copyright claimed

All texts prepared for the PH-SEE Curriculum are **an original work** of the author(s). Copyright is claimed (ISBN 953-6255-23-5). Authors themselves are responsible for obtaining permission to reproduce copyright material from other sources.

Author(s) may use the texts elsewhere after publication with prior permission obtained from the publisher (Andrija Stampar School of Public Health, Zagreb).

Authorized persons could use modules without permission for training programmes within PH-SEE members, with reference to the source.

1.2. Stand-alone training modules

The texts in the PH-SEE Curriculum are not scientific papers – they should be a training modules prepared for postgraduate training programmes and/or education for public health professionals.

Modules should be stand-alone or such that could be incorporated within a PH-SEE topic.

Tips for distance learning materials should be used not for postgraduate students but for lecturers.

Although in the present phase the developed materials are primarily designed to support the lecturers at South Eastern European training institutions, later on these may be published as hard-copy teaching books or CD-ROM and also be used for Distance Learning.

Tip 2. CONTENT AND CONTEXT

2.1. Content relevant to Public Health

In planning what and why to choose as a teaching module content, the author(s) are strongly advised to bear in mind that the materials will be based on the purpose and the particular objectives of the PH-SEE programme for training and research in public health, reflecting on the experience and anticipating future development.

Content should be:

- oriented to the particular conditions and priority health problems in SEE countries;
- related to the Health for All policy and Health21;

- evidence based in terms of the best available knowledge;
- relevant to postgraduate training in public health.

2.2. Postgraduate students as a target audience

It is expected that the training process will qualify the learners (postgraduate students) for professional life and their professional tasks. They already have some basic knowledge in public health and experiences from practice, they also have their own training needs related to workplace and position. Therefore, the training programme for this target group should be based on their existing knowledge, their expectations and their competences (e.g. what they should possess/master).

2.3. Multiprofessional approach

In the present PH training in PH-SEE Network countries, most postgraduate students have a background in medicine. It is expected that PH-SEE Curriculum will follow the worldwide approach to multiprofessional education, based on learning objectives related to competences of professionals in public health practice with different undergraduate backgrounds.

Tip 3: LEARNING OBJECTIVES

3.1. Well-defined learning objectives – a prerequisite for quality training

Definitions of learning (training, educational) are numerous, for example:

- intended change brought about in a learner,
- a statement of what students ought to be able to do as a consequence of instruction,
- explicit formulations of ways in which students are expected to be changed by the educative process,
- what the students should be able to do at the end of a learning period, etc.

It is important to remember that a learning objective is what the students/participants are able to achieve, not what the lecturer intends to teach them.

Five criteria have been suggested for the design and specification of high quality objectives, the so-called SMART criteria:

- S Specific
- M Measurable
- A Agreed upon by all concerned
- R Realistic
- T Timebound (achievable within a time-scale)

3.2. Types of training objectives

General objectives (institutional objectives, professional functions) correspond to the functions of type(s) of health personnel trained in an establishment. They do not define what teachers do but rather what the institution's "end-product" is. They are also known as institutional objectives. General educational objectives provide a useful basis for preparation of a relevant programme.

Intermediate objectives (professional activities) are obtained by breaking down each function (or general objective) into smaller components. These components are professional activities, which in their turn can be broken down into more specific acts that are called professional tasks.

Specific educational objectives (professional tasks) define each of the specific professional tasks corresponding to each activity.

3.3. Recommended verbs (words) to be used in writing the learning objectives (Mager, 1962):

Words often used but open to many interpretations:

To know, to be aware of, to recognise, to understand, to really understand, to appreciate, to fully appreciate, to believe, to have faith in, etc.

Words open to fewer interpretations:

To write, to identify, to differentiate, to solve, to discriminate, to select, to relate, to construct, to list, to compare, to contrast, etc.

Tip 4: TEACHING METHODS

Basic educational methods (lecture, exercise, seminar, group work, practical work and reading) have their specificities. What method (or methods) to choose belongs to learning objectives.

	Content	Characteristics	Carrying out
Lecture	Knowledge, important information, connection to the theory	Brief transfer of information, limited effect	At the first look easy to carry out
Exercise	Showing and practicing, skills and procedure training	"Artificial" circumstances, "out of common sense", often too simple	Organizational difficulties, equipment
Seminar	Description and analysis of case, setting down and solving the problems	Interesting, very often too much abstract, carried out as lectures	Well prepared students and very restrained teachers
Group work	Analysis of case, solving the problems, "difficult" situations	Learning from and supported by peers, close interaction with teachers	Well prepared cases and problems as an impulse, clearly defined tasks, expensive
Practical work	Real professional life	Very useful learning but slow and not systematic, can easily be superficial	Teachers as a "role model" and leader, learning from experience
Reading	"Active" reading or content overview	Need for "critical" reading	First impulse and evaluation are important

Modules based on **active learning approaches** are appreciated. Do not forget – postgraduate students have previous knowledge and experience, and it is important to investigate that by suggesting, connecting, discussing, activating, elaborating and appraising what they already know that is relevant.

In active learning, recommended educational methods are case studies, practical exercise, field visits, project work, «snow ball» exercise, role playing, and especially – Problem-based and Problem-solving methods.

Problem-based learning aims to enable students to acquire and structure knowledge in an efficient, accessible and integrated way. The method involves learning in small groups, in a «tutorial» system. The tutor facilitates the group's self-directed generation of learning objectives from triggers in successive case scenarios that set the context. These objectives guide self-directed learning between sessions, and then in subsequent sessions students reapply, synthesize and appraise their learning.

Tip 5. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

All recommended methods in assessment of students (written examination of short answer questions, MCQ, questions based on seen publications, structured essay etc.) should be prepared in details.

Tip 6. STANDARD FORM CONTRIBUTION: HEADINGS

After acceptance, the Standard Form will be available for all PH-SEE Internet Curriculum visitors.

Tips for author(s):

- Download the Standard Form, complete all required items and send by e-mail to Unit Coordinators.
- Try to be short (approx. one standard page) but specific and concrete as much as possible.
- Motivate and stimulate other teachers to look for your full text.
- Learning objectives (expected outcomes and skills) should be written in the same ways as in the full texts.
- Synopsis (abstract) should be short (300 words or 1500 characters), to outline the content is appreciated.
- Teaching methods, specific recommendations for teachers and assessment of students should be described briefly.
- ECTS (credit points) should be suggested.

Standard Form

CURRICULUM FOR THE HEALTH SCIENCES IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE		
Number (unit, topic):	Prior review – Status:	ECTS (suggested):
Title		
Author(s), degrees, institution(s)		
Address for correspondence (incl. phone, fax and e-mail)		
Keywords		
Learning objectives		
Synopsis (Abstract)		
Teaching methods		
Specific recommendations for teacher		
Assessment of students		

Tip 7: FULL TEXT: "STYLE-SHEET"

Full text has no limited number of pages, but it is recommended to prepare between 5 and 15 standard pages. Full text must be prepared in electronic form and sent to the Unit Coordinators together with the Standard Form.

Recommended structure of the full text is as follows:

Title

(repeated from the Standard Form)

Name(s) of author(s)

(repeated from the Standard Form)

Institution(s)

(repeated from the Standard Form)

Content

This is the main body (text) of the training module. Structure of the text depends on outline contents and learning objectives. It should have different parts:

- theoretical background, usually for lecturing,
- triggers for small group work,
- case studies,
- examples for exercises, etc.

The text should be interesting and stimulating, illustrations are welcome but always make sure the illustrations are related closely to the text. They should be inserted in the text (photographs, graphs, diagrams, tables etc.).

Teaching methods

In full text, teaching methods should be described in detail, including examples for exercises, scenarios, game, case study etc. It is also important to give a short hologram of the whole module, if there is more than one training session (lecture or workshop).

Specific recommendations for teachers

It is important to mark all the important notes for those who will use the module in his/her own lecturing practice. These include practical advices for teachers in module implementation, e.g.:

- Timing of different parts of the module,
- Facilities, equipment and training materials to be ensured,
- Proposals for target audience (in case of a module to be used also for continuing training),
- Necessary prerequisites and previous students' knowledge
- Experiences from previous uses of this module in practice, etc.

Assessment of participants/students

All recommended methods in assessment of students (written examination of short answer questions, MCQ, questions based on readings, structured essay etc.) should be prepared in details.

Recommended readings

This is a list of recommended readings for students. It is important to select and recommend the readings, which are:

- Available/accessible for students
- Relevant for the topic (key, essential and evidence-based literature)
- Possible to be read during the training.

References

This is a list of references used by author in content description. This list should be longer than the previous one (recommended readings for students) and will be mostly used as an additional source for the teacher.

It is strongly recommended to use the literature written and published in English.

PH-SEE Curriculum uses the Vancouver style for references, with sequential numbering in the text, and respective ordering within the list. The Vancouver style is available at URL: <http://www.icmje.org>

Note:

Because very often it is not reasonable to separate *Recommended readings* and *References* both lists could be matched, numbered and referenced in text (*Recommended readings* for students may be denoted in text as "see", "recommend to students to read", etc.).

Tip 8: LANGUAGE AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS

All texts must be written in English, prepared in electronic format, checked with Spell Checker (UK English) and sent to the Unit Coordinators.

Tip 9: REVIEW

All materials will pass a review process. There are four different levels or stages of material development:

- Status (mark) D is the first (formal) check;
- Status (mark) C means that at least two competent reviewers (independent or unit coordinators) have reviewed the materials and required changes were implemented by authors/coordinators;
- Status (mark) B is for those materials which have passed didactic refinement and English language revision;
- Status (mark) A is the mark for the text tested under training conditions, including students' evaluation and feedback.

Tip 10: MODULE EVALUTION AND FEED-BACK

Editorial Board of the PH-SEE Curriculum will prepare a uniformed form of Module Formative and Summarized Evaluation. This evaluation will include quantitative and qualitative methods for teachers and students, which will be used during and after module implementation.

All authors wishing to contribute with their proposals for module evaluation are welcome.