UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Developing a Graduate Level Introductory Food Systems Course

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BACKGROUND

The UW Master of Public Health (MPH) Common Core Curriculum was recently revised, which led to changes in course requirements for MPH and MS graduate students in the Nutritional Sciences Program for the upcoming 2020-2021 academic year. This created a new need for an introductory food systems course that fulfilled Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) competencies, which would be offered to MS students within the Nutritional Sciences Program and other disciplines within the School of Public Health.

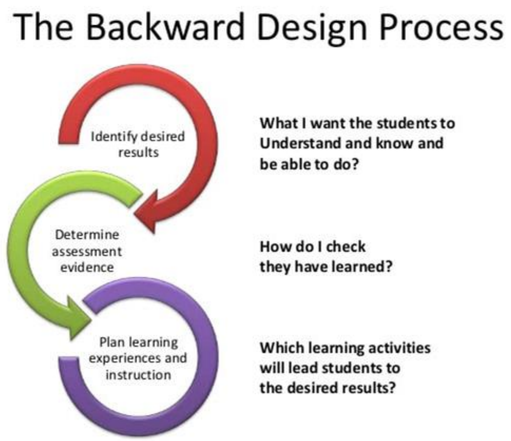
OBJECTIVES

> Co-develop NUTR 514, an introductory food systems course, for MS students in the UW School of Public Health

> Co-prepare a complete draft of the NUTR 514 course syllabus to be circulated for additional feedback among Nutritional Sciences faculty and finalized for prospective students

> Learn about and participate in the backward course design process

METHOD



[Backward Design Process]. (n.d). Retrieved June 26, 2020, from https://www.mostkreativeklassroom.org/backwards-design.html

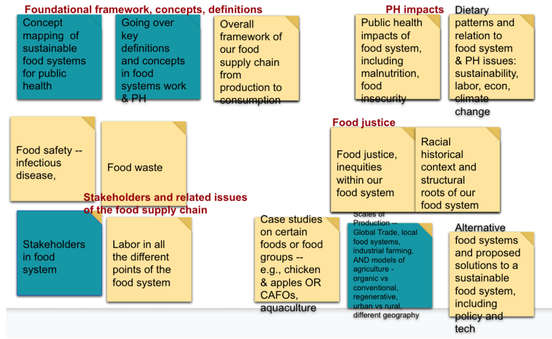
1. COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Group brainstorm of learning objectives and major topic areas via the affinity mapping process

2. Review of relevant materials: past syllabi, writing course objectives, methods of active learning

3. Student-led writing of 3-5 course objectives with revision based on preceptor feedback

> Preceptor-led development of the overall course structure:
I. thematic grouping of topic areas into "Modules"
II. sequential grouping of modules across the quarter time frame



Affinity mapping process between my preceptor and I via Google Slides. We first individually brainstormed potential food systems-related topics that we wanted to cover in the course on sticky notes, then came together to group our sticky notes into thematic categories.

2. LESSON PLANS

For each main topic area, we developed a lesson plan accordingly:

1. Student-led brainstorm and drafting of learning outcomes per lesson plan with revision based on preceptor feedback

2. Student-led development of a running list of specific topics and resources per lesson plan to be used as a future resource when developing the course slide deck

3. ASSESSMENTS

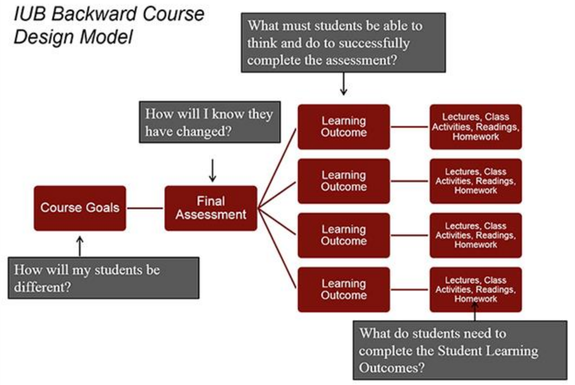
Background research on different types of assessment methods was first conducted. An "Assessment Library" document was created, which outlined and categorized various active learning assessment tools.

1. Interactive working sessions to: brainstorm number and types of assessments for the course, overall grading structure, potential topics for main assessments

2. Finalizing assessment and grading structures for the course

3. Student-led drafting of the instructions, learning outcomes, grading rubric, and template worksheets for each assessment with revisions based on preceptor feedback

4. Student-led development of a running list of potential resources for each assessment



Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning. (n.d). IUB Backward Course Design Model. Retrieved June 26, 2020, from https://citl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources/course-design/backward-course-design/index.html

LESSONS LEARNED

> A framework or model is not only useful but vital when planning a course or even a single lesson plan, as it provides structure and prompts intentionality in the process of planning.

> Backward course design is one of many models used in course development. The instructor starts by outlining the learning goals and outcomes of the course. Assessments, activities, and didactic materials are then designed to achieve those goals. This intentional design means that each student *and* instructor input have value and prioritize the student's learning experience.

> Course development is not a specific skill that is necessarily taught to PhD candidates that later go into academic teaching. However, many great teaching resources are easily accessible online. Many teaching centers of universities openly share resources.

> This practicum experience provided me with valuable insight into the process of course development, different ways to engage with students and assess learning at the graduate-level, and a structure for both learning and teaching about food systems and public health.

> Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, my practicum was completely virtual. This experience encouraged me to practice work from home, more effective work-life balance and time management, and to better advocate for my learning needs.