PLANNING

♦ Create a Dream List
♦ Analyze Your Dream List
♦ Diagram Your Course
♦ Work Out the Timing

PLANNING

You have now finished the important first steps in gathering information about your course. You’ve described and defended your course against criticism from colleagues, and presumably received valuable comments and suggestions in the process. These suggestions may have led you to revise your course description. The students as learners are now salient to you, and you have considered them in your conception of your course. You’ve also considered the course content, listed the learning resources, and received sugges-
tions from colleagues which may have expanded your ideas for content, and perhaps provided ideas for the course itself.

Now it is time to begin the PLANNING process. This process begins with an ideal image of the course, and moves toward a more realistic one, which will include more of the ideal than you previously imagined. Your goal here is to develop as expansive and personal an image of your course as possible: expansive, because the more developed this image is, the better your course will ultimately be; personal, because you are the one teaching this course. The course should reflect your interests, skills, and you, not just the dictates of your discipline.

A. Create a Dream List

The first step in the PLANNING process is to develop a comprehensive, ideal picture of the course. You have begun this process already by writing a content list in the previous stage. We want you now, however, to expand it even further, by creating a dream list. We call this a dream list because we want you to imagine the best course you could teach on this topic and include everything you could possibly dream could be put into it.

Write Dream List I on the next worksheet, based on the following suggestions. Look again at your content and learning resource lists. Review the actual sources of content you listed and accumulate as many additional content areas or topics as possible which would be appropriate for this course. Consider also your goals or objectives for the course.

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Dream List

as outlined in your course description. Do they suggest content areas not found in the standard treatments of your subject? Think also about the skills, attitudes, or values you would like the students to acquire from your course. Add content areas that respond to these ideals. In total, double the length of your content list by transforming it into a dream list.

Fight the temptation to reject anything out of hand. Put down all ideas that come to you, no matter how outlandish; you can always throw out inappropriate items later. In the spirit of brainstorming, however, bad ideas often lead to good ones, so let the ideas flow and write them all down. We believe that this dreaming and expanding of content and of your conception of the course are some of the most important steps in course design. This is where the course you will teach distinguishes itself from the standard course offered by most others in your discipline.

We now want to help you expand your dream list even further. Let's engage in a fantasy or role play again, this time to write Dream List II, which is an extension of Dream List I.

Imagine now that the semester in which you taught the course has ended. The papers and exams have been graded. The course grades have been turned in to the registrar and you are ready for a well-deserved break. You are gathered informally with the students from the class at the local watering hole, student center, a party in your own home, or elsewhere. After a short time of
party chatter, you get up your nerve and ask the students what they thought of the course. To your delight, they begin to tell you they loved it! One student says, "This was the best course I ever took because ..."

Finish the sentence. Finish the sentences of all the students in the class. Write as many completions of the sentence as you can imagine on the next worksheet.

Try not to let too much reality interfere with your dreaming. Add to your Dream List, by creating Dream List II, as you write down anything you can imagine your students would say. Let yourself dream! If the structure of the room you usually teach in constrains you, imagine teaching in a dream room. If the time constraint of one semester limits your dreaming, imagine no time limits. If the quality of the students you normally teach frustrates you, imagine the best students. If a budget restricts you, imagine all the money and resources you need.

Work on Dream List II before going on.
Dream List

Now write Dream List III on the next worksheet, DOUBLING the length of the list, by thinking about the following variations from the students:

"This was the best course I ever took because:

* now I KNOW ..."
* now I THINK ..."
* now I FEEL ..."
* now I CAN DO ..."
* now I AM BECOMING ..."

Work on these variations before going on. Pay particular attention to what you imagine the students would tell you they know at this after-course session. This list should include as detailed a description as possible of all topics that students would know if you taught your ideal course. It is also important to pay attention to the more emotional or affective answers that you would like the students to have said. Surely, one of their statements would be something like, "I now LIKE this subject!" Others along this line may come readily to mind. Don't be afraid to dream about affecting their feelings, attitudes, values, and self-concepts, as well as their knowledge and thinking abilities.
**PLANNING**

**FEEL**

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**DO**

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**BECOME**

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**Dream List**

Expand your Dream List further on the next worksheet making Dream List IV, by imagining what these student would say if you met them five years later, at a reunion or commencement ceremony, for example.

Imagine that one of them comes up to you and says "Do you remember that course I took with you five years ago? Now that I have graduated and entered the 'real world,' I realize that it was one of the most important courses I ever took because ..." What does this student say to you?
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Dream List

Again, expand the list on the next worksheet, making Dream List V, by thinking about your responses to the students seated before you at the end of the course.

"You know, this was the best course I ever taught because ..."

Finish your own sentence. Then expand it by considering the following variations:

"It was the best course I ever taught because:

* now I KNOW ...
* now I THINK ...
* now I FEEL ...
* now I CAN DO ...
* now I AM BECOMING ..."
Dream List

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Dream List V

This was the best course I ever taught because

 KNOW

 THINK
Dream List

The more you work on these lists, the richer, more diverse, and better your course will become. Let your colleagues dream with you. Have them help you in expanding your Dream Lists. Reread your course description and content list. See if they give you any further ideas for your Dream Lists.

Carry the Dream Lists around with you for several days. Post copies on your refrigerator, next to your desk, in your car, any place where you will see them. Continue to add points as you think of them. Let the ideas on the lists expand and enrich your future course. Some professors have persisted with their Dream Lists over the course of an entire year, jotting down new ideas as they came to them.

Sometimes, college teachers have difficulty with the dream list exercise. Their courses may not seem amenable to this kind of dreaming; disciplinary accreditation requirements may prescribe certain content; they personally find it difficult to carry out. If one of these, or a similar situation, applies to you, do the following on the next worksheet.

1. Write a list of substantive topics, content, or subject matter that should go into your course.
2. Describe the topics, content, and subject matter your students must have, as distinct from what they could do without.
3. State the goals or objectives of your course.
4. State the skills you expect the students to have when they leave the course.
5. State the tasks you would like the students to perform in satisfying the requirements of your course.

6. State the attitudes you would like the students to have during the course and when they have completed it.

7. What is there in the learning environment that students will need in order to learn in your course? Equipment, facilities, atmosphere, resources?

8. What pedagogical issues do you need to consider in teaching your course? Lecture, discussion, laboratories, computers, homework, exams, quizzes, papers, role plays, debates, etc?

9. Is there sufficient attention in your course to the contributions and perspectives of minority students and women to motivate them and involve them in your course?

As you write the answers to these questions on the worksheet, include also those points coming to you now for the first time as you think and write.
Analyzing Your Dream List

B. Analyze Your Dream List

You now have a mostly completed Dream List. It is just mostly completed, since Dream Lists should never really be considered finished. A new idea, which may enrich your course and take it in new directions, may come to you at any time. Keep your list handy so you can write down your ideas as they come to you.

Your mostly completed Dream List now becomes a conscience. It should be a tough master for you. Remember, this is the result of YOUR dream for a course. You may change your mind, but at one point you did indicate that the things on this list were ideal. Do not dismiss them or water them down too easily.

It is now time to take your Dream List and develop a course from it, by analyzing it with certain concepts or priorities in mind. Although your Dream List in its totality is important and should be treated as a conscience against which to judge your developing course, clearly some items on it are more important than others; some seem to be more optional than others. Actually there are five categories into which we want you to place the items on your Dream List: Core, Pervasive, and three types of Options — Remediation, Enrichment, and Choice. They are discussed in more detail after a brief definition of the categories.

1) Core

These are the major components of your course. They are absolutely crucial; the integrity of the course would be threatened without them.
2) Pervasive

These are themes, points, issues, or values that are so important they should show up in every unit of the course. The distinction between Pervasive and Core is that a Core item would probably have a specific lesson or week devoted to it, while a Pervasive probably would not. (Although it is possible for a Core item at one point in the semester to become a Pervasive for the remainder of the semester.)

Options

These are also important, but not really Core or Pervasive components of your course. There are three categories of options: Remediation, Enrichment, and Choice.

3) Remediation

For students who do not have the necessary background for any particular unit of the course.

4) Enrichment

For students who have the background, and also have mastered the content of a particular unit of the course. You exempt these students from the regular assignments and give them Enrichment assignments, perhaps something more challenging, more in-depth, requiring more sophisticated analysis, etc. Alternatively, after students have finished any particular Core, some of them might choose to follow some Enrichment on their own, for extra credit, or to fulfill some further course requirement.

5) Choice

For all students, allowing them to choose among optional items, each related to the same major theme or point. Choices are important, since all students do not have the same strengths, abilities, or interests. Choices allow you to accomplish much more in a course than you ever thought possible. They provide the structure which allows, for example, all students to learn the same basic points, and then follow through on examples of their own choosing.

These categories can be used to analyze your Dream List by providing some structure to the variety of items on it. Therefore, they help you create a real course out of the ideal you created through your dreaming. The way you go about this is to review your Dream List with these concepts in mind.

Core. First look for Core items. These appeared on your list when you initially listed the content in the previous stage. They also probably appeared on your Dream List in response to the phrase, "This was the best class I ever took because now I KNOW ..." On the other hand, if your course is more of a practical one, with clear behavioral objectives, these items may have appeared in response to the prompt, "This was the best class I ever took because now I CAN
DO..." Regardless of which question prompted the Core items on your Dream List, these will be the basic concepts, learning objectives, units, or topics around which your course will be organized.

Make a separate list of Core items on the next worksheet, or simply designate them as Core on your Dream List. Many faculty find it convenient to use a different color pen and write a capital "C" next to their Core items. Remember that Core items are absolutely essential. The course could not be called "Finite Mathematics," "Organic Chemistry," "Mass Political Behavior," or whatever, without including these topics. Be hard on yourself, though, in making this decision. To be sure, everything on your Dream List is important. But some things really are more important than others. When you get the weight of your discipline, graduate training, graduate professors, or accreditation bodies off your back, what do YOU consider the most important topics to be covered in your course? One mathematics professor we worked with in designing her Calculus course reached a major breakthrough when she realized that she had only three Core content items on her list: the derivative, the integral, and the limit. She realized that everything else was remedial to, an example of, or based on, these three Cores. This realization helped her escape the tyranny of the thousand-page textbook.

Sometimes, faculty look over their Dream List at this point and do not find the kinds of items that would be considered Core at all. In their dreaming, they tend to focus almost exclusively on affective results, broad conceptualizations, or terms like "critical thinking," "enjoying,"
or "competence." That is fine if you are in this situation. Simply ask yourself more specifically now, "How will I get these affective results?" or "About what should the students be critical thinkers?" or "At what skill will the students be competent?" Answer these questions and place the answers on your Dream List. Once more, we can emphasize that course design is not a linear process. You must go back and forth as you work through it.

Pervasives. As we indicated above, Pervasive items are those themes, points, issues, or values that are so central that they should show up in virtually every unit of the course. Pervasives are very important in making courses our own, but they are the most likely to be lost in the "busyness" of the course. Here is where values, attitudes, and affective objectives often emerge. They likely appeared on your Dream List when you considered what the students might say to you five years later.

For example, perhaps the idea that you want students to love the ballet as an art form showed up on your Dream List for "Ballet I" or "Contemporary Forms of Art." Clearly, Loving Ballet will not appear in your syllabus, nor can it be taught as a Core. You are hoping for a change in attitude among your students. This would be an appropriate Pervasive item. In your dreaming, you felt it was important that students come away from the course with this appreciation. You must now find a way to put it into the course somehow. Since you cannot teach appreciation specifically, it will have to show up in every unit of the
course, probably letting your own enthusiasm or love for ballet show itself throughout the course.

Alternatively, sometimes you can teach a Pervasive first as a Core; it then becomes a Pervasive for the remainder of the course. For example, you might teach a method for critical thinking, and then emphasize it throughout the course; similarly for the statistical analysis of data, the matching concept in accounting, or the scientific method in a natural or social science course.

*Find the Pervasive items on your Dream List. Label them as "P" or make a separate list for them on the next worksheet.* Again, do not be afraid to change your mind on the labeling of certain items. What you thought was a Core may turn out to be a Pervasive, or even a Choice. Be flexible as you work through your Dream List, adding to it, analyzing it, and developing an expanded view of what is possible in your course.

*Remediation.* Once you have identified the Core and Pervasive items, you need to review your Dream List for Options. As we indicated above, there are several types of Options. Perhaps the easiest ones to consider are the Remediation items.

Review your Dream List for items that fit the Remediation concept, i.e., background material students need in order to master some Core. For many teachers, their lists do not include any Remediation items, since Dream Lists were developed with an ideal conception of the students and the course. Nevertheless, it may be appropriate to consider
Analyzing Your Dream List

Remediation. The most obvious example is in some science courses, where remedial work in math may be appropriate for some students who are deficient. However, it is not unusual with the increased emphasis on writing-to-learn in college courses to find remediation needed for writing. Upper-level courses in all disciplines may also need a remediation unit or two to assure that all students can master the more advanced material. Again, do not be too concerned right now with questions of how you will accomplish the remediation.

Review your Dream List for Remediation items. Consider your Cores with your students in mind. Ask yourself what assumptions are being made that might require Remediation items added to your list. Make a separate Remediation list on the next worksheet or note the items on your expanding Dream List as "R."

Enrichment. Surely, there are some things on your Dream List you have always wanted to be able to teach, but have never really been able to. Look for items on your list that might be considered "advanced" for most of your students, but which nevertheless are more challenging or exciting assignments or topics that you have always wanted to be able to assign to the better prepared students. As one colleague once told me, "I can teach the average students, but I thrive on the better ones!"

Enrichments can replace class time for students who have already mastered some basic concept, and therefore can be released or challenged to do more. We call this approach an Exemption and Enrichment. On the other hand, all
students can be assigned to complete an enrichment project, such as in the standard term paper assignment. Enrichments may also be seen as the old "Extra Credit" idea, but when all students have to complete it, rather than just the ones looking for a higher grade. In this way, you can include more interesting, exciting, and enriching topics and assignments into your courses, which have the effect of stimulating the students and enlivening your own teaching. Again, if your present Dream List does not have any Enrichment items on it, consider adding some.

Look for Enrichment items on your Dream List and designate them as such, either on the next worksheet or with a different color "E" on your original Dream List.

Choice. Here is where you provide great flexibility to your course, and some individualization for the students. Students like choices, because they allow a course to be tailored according to their specific goals or interests.

Most often, choices come about in a course when the instructor determines that a basic concept must be learned, but all students do not need to learn that concept through the same specific content. Students can learn the basic concept as a Core item, and can work out examples or applications from among a list of choices. For example, a political scientist teaching International Politics realized that he could teach the basic concepts of a particular core area by allowing students to choose from a set number of options, such as writing a script and producing a videotape, completing a memoir study, synthesizing historical readings, conducting secondary data analysis, or completing a scholarly
Analyzing Your Dream List

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Analyzing Your Dream List

literature review. Similarly, an urban sociologist allowed students the choice of studying the literature on the effect of urban crowding on psychological stress, personality changes, or lifestyle changes. Music and art historians have allowed students to choose for more detailed study of a particular period from among a number of composers or artists.

This process is not as dramatically different as it may seem at first. Many college courses require students to write term papers, with the students developing their own topic for the paper. That is simply one variant of the Choice concept. We are suggesting that you might want to broaden that concept to include choices in other areas of the course where they might be appropriate.

In this vein, look over the items you identified as Core and Pervasive. Ask yourself if there are any that are really different examples of the same basic concept. Could students be assigned to choose one or two from among a longer list? Also look over the items on your Dream List that were not identified as Core or Pervasive. Are any of them candidates for Choices? Finally, if you do not have any Choice items on your list, ask yourself if choices might be appropriate at some point in your course. Add them to your Dream List and indicate them as Choices. As we suggested before, make a separate list of Choice items on the next worksheet, or use a different color pen to identify them on your Dream List as Choices, perhaps with a "CH." Do not get inhibited by the concern about how you will specifically organize your classes to accommodate these choices. We will help you with that later; trust us.
## Analyzing Your Dream List

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### Analyzing the Dream List

Choice Items

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