Systems Approach to Program Planning
What are characteristics of a system?

System = set of interacting or interdependent components acting as a whole (Merriam Webster’s Dictionary)

Characteristics:

• Interactive
• Several components that connect
• Has input, output, and feedback
• Has several functional parts that communicate
• Provides a template for visibility
Applying the Systems Approach to Program Planning

- Provides a logical framework
- Emphasizes outcomes
- In health education this model provides:
  - Combination of skills in cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains
- Integrates evaluation while the program is being carried out (formative) and at its conclusion (summative)
Systems Approach to Health Education and Program Planning

Figure 1-1   A systems approach to health education and program planning.

Source: © Mary E. Watson. Illustration by Zachary M. Hayes.
Why this approach?

- Programs have a clearly defined intent and focus
- Instructors/health educators know what to teach
- Expectations for learning are clear
- Skills of students/participants are documented
- Problems in the system can be identified
Where is this approach used?

• Useful in a variety of settings:
  – Community-based health education
  – Patient Education
  – Work-based health and wellness promotion
  – Clinical education
  – Developing programs at the local, statewide or national level
  – Developing courses or curricula
Systems Approach in Practice

• Developing a curriculum for a public health course
• Creating a health promotion campaign to increase physical activity in the workplace
• Creating a statewide health education campaign to increase folic acid consumption
• Educating patients about infant safety prior to discharge from the hospital
• Creating a health education campaign for clinicians and hospital staff regarding proper hand washing to reduce nosocomial infections
Where to begin?

- Consider the audience
  - Who will learn from/participate in your program?
    - Individual
    - Group
    - Community
    - The nation
    - The world
Component 1: Starting the Planning Process: Who should you involve?

- Engage the learners/participants, stakeholders, other members of the target population
- What does this involve?
  - Collaboration
  - Empowering participants
  - Creating choices when possible
  - Making participants integral to the planning process
- Enhances “ownership” and increases odds for sustainability
Component 2: Needs Assessment

- Important opportunity to engage learners/participants
- Data/information to guide plan of action
- Identify key levers for change, modifiable factors
- Identify potential barriers
- Many levels of needs
  - Education
  - Resources
  - Access
Mission Statement

- Statement of overall direction, articulates the vision for the program
- Answers the questions:
  - Who are we?
  - Who are we here to serve?
  - Why does the program exist?
- Can serve many purposes across the lifespan of the program
Mission Statement Example: Institute on Urban Health Research

An institute devoted to knowledge discovery and its practical application to improve personal and public health within urban communities. The IUHR is particularly focused on understanding the social and environmental conditions of urban living in order to inform public health intervention strategies, policies and professional training.
Mission Statement Example:
Center for Community Health, Education, Research, and Service

To promote the development of “academic community health centers” that integrate service, education and research.

To influence and change health professions education, improve health care delivery, and promote health systems change.

To eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in health.
Mission Statement Example:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

To promote health and quality of life by preventing and controlling disease, injury and disability.
Component 3: Goals

• Broad statements of direction

• Provide guidance for developing the program

• Is not measurable in exact terms

• Examples:
  – To provide a program to prevent falls in the elderly
  – To increase the number of students going on to graduate programs in public health
Component 4: Objectives

- Written in behavioral terms
- Identify specifically what the “learner” will be able to do
- Three types: process, impact, outcome
  - **Process**: What are you going to do? How will you do it?
    - Describes activities or interactions
  - **Impact**: How will you change knowledge, attitudes or behavior?
    - Describes the degree of change
  - **Outcome**: What are the long-term implications of the program?
    - Describes the expected outcome for the target population
Objectives

SMART GOALS

– **S** = Specific: clear and focused to avoid misinterpretation. Should include measure assumptions and definitions and be easily interpreted.

– **M** = Measurable: can be quantified and compared to other data. It should allow for meaningful statistical analysis. Avoid "yes/no" measures except in limited cases, such as start-up or systems-in-place situations.

– **A** = Attainable: achievable, reasonable, and credible under conditions expected.

– **R** = Realistic: fits into the organization's constraints and is cost-effective.

– **T** = Timely: doable within the time frame given
Standards (Performance Metrics)

• Criteria for acceptable performance
• Can have short, intermediate and long-term measures
• Determine if the program was successful
Examples of Goals and Standards

**Goal:** To eliminate preventable falls among elderly residents

**Objective:** To educate all residents about safety in the home

**Standard:** The number of falls reported by the group participants will be decreased by 20% in a twelve month follow-up.
Examples

Goal: To increase the number of students going to graduate programs in public health

Objective: Provide information seminars on public health programs twice a year

Standard: The number of graduates going into public health programs will represent 30% of the class by 2015.
Component 5: Strategies

• Activities designed to achieve the objectives
• Consider different learning styles
• Consider the level of objectives in program
• Provide alternatives when existing strategies are not working
• Consider behavioral change models
Component 6: Evaluation

• Ways to determine if goals, standards and objectives have been achieved
  • Formative
  • Summative
  • Long term follow-up
  • Using results to make changes
Constraints and Barriers

• Can occur anywhere in the system
• Can be anticipated
• Take steps to decrease for improved success