



5701 Normandale Boulevard
 Edina, MN 55424
 952-848-3952
 comedu@edinaschools.org

Instructor Tip Sheet #1

Writing Effective Course Descriptions

Thank you for your interest in sharing your passion, enthusiasm and love of lifelong learning with Edina Community Education! Our vibrant program wouldn't be complete without you. We look forward to partnering with you to enrich lives and strengthen our community.

This series of Instructor Tip Sheets is designed to keep you engaged with current best practices in lifelong learning. We've assembled some of the best hints and strategies to help us deliver our program mission coherently. We hope that they also help you learn and grow as a lifelong learner and instructor.

Please try to incorporate as many of these ideas as possible in your course description. Feel free to contact us to brainstorm ideas for your specific class. We always welcome conversation.

Title	Your title is critical. It's your main opportunity to attract your reader's attention and generate interest in reading further.	
	Good Ideas	Examples
	Make it interactive	Everything You Always Wanted to Ask Your Dentist (<i>better than "Dental Facts"</i>)
	Make It Personal (Use the Word "You")	YouTube and Your Business: What You Need to Know Developing Your Business Plan
	Use Humor	Your Genes Do Fit Just for the Halibut
	Keep Titles Simple and Positive	Simple Winter Soups Rain Barrels Made Easy You Can Save A Life with CPR (<i>better than "Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation: Level B"</i>)

Title, cont'd	Use Numbers in Titles	Ten Ways to Turn Out Terrific Kids Using Twitter to Increase Your Business Tenfold
	Emphasize Curiosity, Fun, Discovery, Unique Ideas	Lasagna Gardening No Bones About It: Discover the Skeletons in Your Closet
Opening Sentence		
	Your reader's reaction to the first 5-7 words of your description determine whether he/she continues reading or not. Focus on the course content or the learner (not the course itself or the teacher).	
	Good Ideas	Examples
	Use a Definition	Batik is an age-old art of fabric coloring using wax and dye.
	Ask a Question	Confused about social media marketing?
	Share an Impressive Fact	Lighting is the key to all photography.
	Emphasize End Result	Fred Astair, Ginger Rogers...and you!
		Less Effective Opening Sentences: "The aim of this course... "This class will... "Topics covered are... "Participants will... "Joe Smith will show you...
Course Description		
	Good Ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep descriptions between 45-120 words • Use "You" language. Write as if you are talking to the reader • Use active, dynamic verbs (see list at the end of this tip sheet) • Emphasize the benefit to the learner. Will they achieve a personal goal? Solve a problem? Relieve some anxiety? Gain specific knowledge? Develop a skill? 	

<p>One Sentence Bio</p>	<p>As an instructor, you are our greatest resource! A specific instructor is often the main reason students sign up for a class. Finish your class description with a specific reason for participants to learn from you. Even if you have advanced degrees and lots of training, most participants are most interested in your practical experience, your passion for your subject, and your ability to make connections with lifelong learners.</p> <p><i>Note: This is a short, one sentence highlight. Your more complete bio can appear on our website.</i></p>	
	<p>Examples</p>	<p>Nathan Reiley is a general contractor and mason with more than 40 years of experience.</p>
		<p>Instructor Jane Smith is an experienced graphic designer who is eager to share her creative workouts with you.</p>

Some Example Course Descriptions

Oh No! Dinnertime Again?
 Conquer mealtime madness! Half the battle of putting a meal on the table is having a plan. You will learn how to plan and prepare nutritious dinner entrees that you can freeze now and serve later. Instructor Jane Smith is a chef and mother of six busy children.

It’s Magic!
 Be the life of the party. When you adopt magic as a hobby, you develop performance skills, self-confidence, and improve your math, logic and problem-solving skills. You will walk away knowing how to perform 5 different magic tricks. Plus, you’ll be able to think out of the box! Instructor Mary Hanson has performed and taught magic throughout the United States for over 20 years.

Explore Black Paris: African-American Experience in 20th Century France
 Paris was not only the City of Lights, but also the city of freedom of expression for many African American artists and intellectuals in the early part of the 20th century. Lose yourself in the amazing lives of Josephine Baker, James Baldwin, and Richard Wright, who developed their talents in Paris and then lit up the world. Instructor Bill Willson is a passionate cultural historian and eager to lead you down this memory lane.

NASCAR Explained—For Women Only
 Women comprise nearly 50% of the fan base in the sport of NASCAR. Whether you are a new, casual, or seasoned fan, you will gain a better understanding of everything NASCAR, from the race shop to the track, pit stops and

winning strategies, technology and safety. Instructor Debra Hope attended her first NASCAR race with her aunt almost 40 years ago, and hasn’t missed a season yet.

Wake Up Excited About Work
 Dread Monday mornings? Feeling trapped in your cubicle? Join us to get a jump-start on your new career. You will begin working on a practical and creative process toward a more fulfilling work life. Instructor Leonard Workerbee is a career coach with more than 10 years of experience, and is author of “Guide to Work.”

What’s Your Home Longing to Tell You?

Homes can help us live the examined life, mirroring our consciousness and offering us insight on beauty, relationships, our gifts and our challenges. Find out what your home is saying and what you might want to do about that. Instructor Margaret Lulic, author of “Home Inspired by Love and Beauty,” will lead you through a meaningful evening of exercises and discussion.

Composting for Everyone

Garbage is everywhere! Do something good for the environment and reduce your garbage going to the landfill by 50%. Between hot

composters and worm bins, you will have beautiful dirt and worm castings to make your gardens the envy of the neighborhood, and be all set to grow amazing produce. Instructor Joanna Work is an avid gardener and member of the city’s Go Green Initiative.

Clean Up Your Man Cave

The garage is no longer just a place to park the car. But for many, it’s so full of stuff that the car won’t even fit. If that is true for you, it’s time to learn how best to de-clutter and organize the available space in your garage. Learn about upgrades that can make this space more like the new family room or man cave of your dreams.

Instructor Louise Kurzeka has been helping people make the most of their time and space since 1992.

Live Better On Less

Difficult economic times require changes in habits. Learn how to live a richer, more meaningful life while reducing consumption, debt and stress. Discover how simple living principles will help you reduce your monthly expenditures, freeing you to work less, volunteer more, change careers, go back to school, or retire well. Retired teacher Jane Green has put these principles in practice for the past 5 years and is eager to share her insights with you.

Powerful Verbs for Course Descriptions

- | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Explore | Raise | Anticipate | Refresh |
| Enrich | Supplement | Boost | Deliver |
| Discover | Enjoy | Build | Design |
| Accomplish | Dream | Choose | Establish |
| Change | Transform | Connect | Focus |
| Create | Resist | Decide | Gather |
| Succeed | Accelerate | Ensure | Generate |
| Master | Maximize | Intensify | Innovate |
| Lead | Unleash | Plan | Manage |
| Achieve | Reduce | Prepare | Measure |
| Conquer | Start | Retain | Persuade |
| Become | Stop | Win | Overcome |
| Exceed | Simplify | Maximize | Position |
| Enhance | Experiment | Mobilize | Replace |
| Develop | Understand | Execute | Shatter |
| Solve | Engage | Motivate | Stretch |
| Energize | Find | Anticipate | |
| Ignite | Transform | Capture | |
| Act | Define | Conquer | |
| Improve | Target | Grasp | |
| Inspire | Excite | Aspire | |
| Stimulate | Reinforce | Assess | |
| Increase | Solidify | Convert | |
| Gain | Identify | Survive | |