



PNI Practicum Level Two: PNI Essentials

Course Syllabus

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Course Ground Rules

1. Before each training meeting, please skim the course readings (in *Working with Stories Simplified*).
2. Invest time and energy in your project! You will learn about PNI in this course, but only if you actually do a PNI project. **You will need to find 6+ participants and schedule four meetings (two for story-sharing and two for sensemaking).** The sooner you can get those meetings set up the better.
3. You should *try* to do each course assignment during the two weeks of each lesson, but if you fall behind, don't worry. In our support meetings we will talk about every project, whether it's on schedule or not.
4. During our meetings, please respect everyone's time and attention. Don't dominate the discussion. Give everyone time to speak.
5. Be respectfully curious about other people's projects. Ask useful questions. Don't insult or make fun of people, their projects, or their mistakes.

Lesson 1: Fundamentals and Planning

Readings

Before the training meeting, read or skim chapters 1-3 of *Working with Stories Simplified*.

If you want to – for all of the readings in this course – you can instead read the longer corresponding chapters of *Working with Stories*.

Training meeting

Check in: 30 minutes

We will start our first meeting by introducing ourselves to each other with these questions:

1. Where are you, geographically speaking? Where do you live?
2. Why are you here? What brought you to this moment? What interested you in this course?
3. What do you want to get out of this course? What would you like to have at the end of it that you don't have now?
4. How much do you already know about PNI? What about story work in general? Research? Facilitation? Anything else you'd like to mention?

After that we will quickly go over the structure of the course (its meetings and assignments). Then we'll go around the circle again answering these questions:

1. Is there a particular project you plan to do in this course? Can you briefly describe it?
2. If you don't have a particular project in mind, what sort of project are you interested in doing? What are some topics you'd like to explore?
3. How do you feel about collaborating on shared projects with other students? Does that seem appealing to you? Or would you rather work on your own project?

Readings discussion: 25 minutes

We will discuss the readings for the first lesson.

Break: 5 minutes

We will take a short break.

Sandbox: 50 minutes

We will go through an exercise on observing and supporting conversational storytelling.

Check out: 10 minutes

We will end the meeting by reflecting on what just happened and what is coming up next.

Support meeting

Our first support meeting will have more structure to it than the subsequent support meetings. It will also (uniquely) have some pre-meeting readings. (This is to get your projects started quickly so you have plenty of time to schedule your story-sharing and sensemaking sessions.)

Readings

Before our first support meeting, read or skim the Project Planning chapter of *Working with Stories Simplified (or Working with Stories)*, plus the first part of the Story Collection chapter, up to "Gathering your stories."

Check in: 10 minutes

We will start the meeting with a quick check-in to see how everyone is doing.

Answering questions about participants: 20 minutes

Each student (or collaborating group) will answer the questions in the Course Log about their project participants (right there in the meeting). Together we will discuss any difficulties or dilemmas that arise.

Answering the PNI Planning Questions and writing a project synopsis: 25 minutes

Each student (or collaborating group) will answer the PNI Planning Questions (in the Course Log) about their project. They will also write a brief project synopsis they can use to tell their participants about their project.

Break: 5 minutes

We will take a short break.

Writing a question set: 40 minutes

Each student (or collaborating group) will use *The Working with Stories Sourcebook* to choose and adapt some questions to use in their project (story-eliciting questions, follow-up questions, and questions about participants).

Writing a privacy policy: 10 minutes

Each student (or collaborating group) will write a privacy policy to use in their interview(s) and story-sharing session(s).

Check out: 10 minutes

We will end the meeting by reflecting on what just happened and what is coming up next.

Assignments

Observe a story-sharing conversation **among 2-4 people who are not taking the course**. Finish planning your project and writing your question set.

Lesson 2: Collection Part One

Readings

Before the training meeting, read or skim the parts of the Story Collection chapter (in *Working with Stories Simplified* or *Working with Stories*) on individual and group interviews.

Training meeting

At this point I will stop writing the redundant portions of the training meeting descriptions (check-in, readings discussion, break, check-out), since they will always be the same.

We will practice conducting group interviews.

Support meeting

We will talk about each student's (or collaborating group's) progress in their project, working through any difficulties or dilemmas people are facing. The meeting will begin with a 10-minute check-in and end with a 10-minute check-out. (Because all of the remaining support meetings will follow the same structure, I will not repeat this whole paragraph each time.)

Assignments

Gather some stories in a 60-minute group interview **with 2-4 people who are not taking the course**. Transcribe your collected stories. Prepare at least one story card.

Lesson 3: Collection Part Two

Readings

Before the training meeting, read or skim the part of the Story Collection chapter (in *Working with Stories Simplified* or *Working with Stories*) on story-sharing sessions. Also read or skim the chapter called “Group Exercises for Story Collection.”

Training meeting

We will go through a story-sharing exercise.

Support meeting

We will talk about project progress and work to get past obstacles.

Assignments

Facilitate a 60-minute group story-sharing session **with 3-12 people who are not taking the course**. Transcribe your collected stories. Finish preparing your 24+ story cards.

Lesson 4: Sensemaking Part One

Readings

Before the training meeting, read or skim the first part of the Sensemaking chapter (in *Working with Stories Simplified* or *Working with Stories*), up to “Planning and facilitating the churning phase.” Also read or skim the part of the “Group Exercises for Narrative Sensemaking” chapter on contact tasks.

Training meeting

We will go through a sensemaking contact task (a pairing exercise).

Support meeting

We will talk about project progress and work to get past obstacles.

Assignments

Facilitate a 60-minute sensemaking session (with a contact task, wrap-up, and after-party) **with 2-12 people who are not taking the course**.

Lesson 5: Sensemaking Part Two

Readings

Before the training meeting, read or skim the second part of the Sensemaking chapter (in *Working with Stories Simplified* or *Working with Stories*), starting with “Planning and facilitating the churning phase.” Also read or skim the part of the “Group Exercises for Narrative Sensemaking” chapter on sensemaking exercises. (Skip the sections on using catalytic material in sensemaking.)

Training meeting

We will go through a full (though very short) sensemaking workshop, with a contact task, a story exercise, and a wrap-up task.

Support meeting

We will talk about project progress and work to get past obstacles.

Assignments

Facilitate a 90-minute sensemaking workshop (with a contact task, story exercise, wrap-up task, and after-party) **with 2-12 people who are not taking the course.**

Lesson 6: Intervention and Return

Readings

Before the training meeting, read or skim the chapters (in *Working with Stories Simplified* or *Working with Stories*) on Intervention and Return.

Training meeting

Together we will build a narrative simulation (as an example of a narrative intervention).

Support meeting

In our final support meeting, each student (or collaborating group) that has finished their project will give an oral project report. Students or groups who have not finished their projects will get some parting support as the course comes to an end.

We will end our last meeting by wrapping up the entire course, discussing what we learned and would like to do in the future.

Assignments

Prepare an oral project report. Return the stories you collected to your project participants.