

# Climbing a Mountain

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## A Teacher's Insight into Developing a Yoga Teacher Training Course



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR -

**Katie Garnett** is the Vice President of Yoga Australia and owner of KatieYoga. Katie's vision is of building a community around the practice of yoga, and empowering individuals to take charge of their health and wellbeing. Katie is a yoga teacher, yoga therapist, qualified school teacher and workplace trainer with over a decade of experience in training and education. Katie also holds a Masters degree in Communications.

[katieyoga.com.au](http://katieyoga.com.au)

Why did you start on the journey to become a yoga teacher? Is it because you love yoga? Is it because yoga's dramatically changed you and your life for the better?

As teachers, we're also privileged to see how yoga dramatically changes our students' lives and as practitioners we know that when the practice affects you in this way, it leaves you with a burning desire to learn more and to help others. **This is an article about what you need to do to become a yoga teacher trainer who will empower students to take that next step to become a yoga teacher. So where do we start?**

Putting together a yoga teacher training course is a daunting prospect: how do we climb this mountain? Just as there are many rivers leading to the same ocean, there are many different pathways up the same hill. I come from a TAFE background, delivering and assessing the Certificate IV and Diploma in Training and Assessment, as well as teaching in universities and at schools. My husband and I have just put together a 500hr Teacher Training course. We've chosen a pathway up this mountain and in this article, we hope to give you insight into ways that you can climb it too.

## Curriculum

Curriculum is a good starting point. **What are we going to teach?** When developing any training course, it's preferable to **base it on standards** whether it's training packages or accredited courses (these are used in the Vocational Education/TAFE environment), **Standard Operating Procedure** (like what you might find in a workplace) OR **Yoga Australia standards**.

Why do all the work, when Yoga Australia has done it for you! **Our first step was to access Yoga Australia's standards.**

Yoga Australia has seven Curriculum Areas with Competencies outlined for each. The Curriculum Areas include:

- **Anatomy and Physiology**
- **Yoga Physiology**
- **Philosophy, Ethics and Lifestyle**
- **Techniques**
- **Teaching Methodology**
- **Integrative Practice and Teaching (Practicum)**
- **Remaining Hours/ Specialties**

For each of these Curriculum Areas, Yoga Australia outlines minimum hours for 200hr, 350hr, 500hr and 1000hr courses.

**Step One:** Get the Yoga Australia Standards

**Step Two:** Choose the Course Hours

**Step Three:** Work out your Topics and Remaining Hours/Specialties (if relevant)

Coming from a training background, I must

say, I've loved working with Yoga Australia standards. They are so flexible and leave it so open for the trainer to contextualise the course. In other words, you have the flexibility to design an incredible course based on what you and your trainers think is best for your lineage, your community, your students, and your trainer's skillsets.

Yoga Australia's Competency Profile, which is a detailed list of the Competencies for each Curriculum Area, will help inform your Topics. In a 350+ hr course you also have the freedom of allocating hours or including areas of speciality.

### Step Four: Delivery Schedule

How is the learning going to be structured? Is it all face-to-face delivery (e.g. in the classroom) or will the students need to complete a component of the work at home? Are you requiring that the student do a First Aid course through a registered training provider to make up part of their hours? When is the delivery going to take place (days and times)? Is it during school terms or is it an intensive? Grab a calendar, plan it out, every hour of it, where is it done?

### Step Five: Learning Program and Lesson Plans

**Write a plan** for the entire course then **detail** what you are going to be covering in each session. A Learning Program doesn't have to be too detailed, it **briefly outlines** what you plan to cover in each session over the duration of the course. It makes sure that every topic will be covered at some stage. From there you can **break down each session into a Lesson Plan**. Lesson Plans are detailed. They include all of your activities/teaching strategies over the duration of the session. Time management wise, it's helpful to **break a Lesson Plan down into allotted time slots**.

### Step Six: Assessment

Assessment is vital in gauging a student's competency as a yoga teacher. Assessment can take many forms. In the Vocational Education and Training environment common assessment methods are **Observation** and **Oral Questioning**, **Portfolio of Evidence** and/or **Knowledge Based Test**.

Assessments should **align with your Yoga Australia standards**. They should check that the student has the skills and knowledge listed in the standards. If you've chosen to include Speciality Areas, write your own competences against which to measure your student's ability.

Assessments don't just have to measure performance they can be valuable learning tools. As a student, I know I learn more from doing a task than I do from listening to someone talk.

### Step Seven: Developing Course Materials

Choosing the correct resources can save valuable time when putting together a teacher training course.

Developing course materials is time consuming,

ask any first-year teacher! Resources are invaluable. There is a wealth of information out there on yoga. Whether it's videos, books or websites, use it! Make sure you **reference it** and don't plagiarise.

To give you an idea, **we've chosen six comprehensive books** and have **developed the other resources** for our course (e.g. Powerpoints and workbooks). Of the resources we've developed, we've covered entire topics as well as developed resources to cover some of the gaps in the books we chosen. We've also included links to relevant websites in our resources, especially for Curriculum Areas that focus on small business management and yoga as a profession (e.g. Yoga Australia Membership details).

### Step Eight: Continuous Quality Improvement

Once you've designed and developed your course, it's time to **deliver it**. But keep in mind your course design and development doesn't finish there. It is an ongoing process of **reviewing what's working**, what's not working and **modifying** the course (either during the delivery or at the end of it) to improve it. Improvements made could be **based on feedback** from your students or based on your own reflections.

## What Keeps Me Sane

Keep in mind you don't need to know everything that ever was about yoga to develop a yoga teacher training course. All you need to know is **what the students need to know to successfully pass the course and teach yoga**.

## What I've Learnt

When planning your course, **work to your strengths**. Why do people come to your classes? I'm guessing they'll probably come to your teacher training for the same/similar reasons. This was a big lesson for me in developing our course. My advice is:

- **Trust in yourself** and what you bring to the classroom.
- **Break free** of the mould. You've been taught a certain way, it doesn't mean you have to teach in that same way.
- Teach in the way that **makes sense to you**, teach in the way you'd like to be taught.
- In the words of my husband, you're only a successful teacher **once you've taught someone how to surpass you**.