



Writing Works Lesson Plan

Train Your Brain with NBCU: Think Like An Elite Athlete

Wednesday, March 9, 2022, 4:30 - 6 PM ET

Goals

By the end of this workshop, employees/mentors will have:

- Participated in an intergenerational exchange
- Shared their professional journeys and/or answered questions related to their career
- Understood how youth are feeling and thinking
- Had an opportunity to make a positive impact on youth from underserved communities during these challenging times
- Experienced how Girls Write Now uses writing and community in pursuit of Wellness
- Learned about using brain training techniques to achieve their goals
- De-stressed with colleagues and GWN mentees through developing, writing and discussing my training plan

By the end of this workshop, mentees will have:

- Participated in an intergenerational exchange
- Gained exposure to a range of jobs in the media industry
- Had an opportunity to ask question about careers in media
- Contributed to media professionals having a greater understanding of what is important to youth
- Had an opportunity to make a positive impact on employees during these challenging times
- Learned about using brain training techniques to achieve their goals
- Gained an important tool for processing thoughts and feelings
- De-stressed with NBCU employees and GWN mentees through developing, writing and discussing my training plan

Event Description

Most of us aren't elite athletes, but everyone has the ability to adapt the elite athlete mindset techniques to settle, refocus and ultimately harness our power to succeed. Find out how to train your brain to stay in the present and move past negative thoughts on your way to achieving your goals. Participants will learn about top brain trainer Cindra Kamphoff's [Six Ways to Train Your Brain Like an Elite Athlete](#): Stay Process Focused; Let Go Quickly; Expect Adversity; Dominate the Controllables; Believe in Your Purpose; Own the Moment, and apply these actions to their own goals. Working in small, multi-generational groups, NBCU employees (Mentors for the Day) and Girls Write Now Mentees will coach each other in achieving their own objectives—small or large. Share what holds you back and get the support you need to move forward.

I. WELCOME

4:30 - 4:35 (5 min)

Today, though some of us may have never played a single sport in our life, we're going to begin training our brains to think like elite athletes!

II. OPENING LINES

4:35 - 4:45 (10 min)

- If your life today were a sport what would it be called and how do you win?
 - E.g.: Writer's Block: You win by throwing words on a page—extra points if your writing makes sense and sounds good.

III. NBCU EMPLOYEE INSIDER

4:45 - 4:53 (8 min)

4 NBCU employees will briefly speak about their career/professional journeys. The chat is open for questions from mentees. NBCU employees who are not speaking can answer questions in the chat and offer career tips.

Speaker Order:

1. Emily Gerard - Writer, Today Show
2. Jennifer Hackett - VP, Ad Sales Finance
3. Emily Horton - Post Production Assistant, DreamWorks
4. Rajani Sethi - Director of Merchandising

IV. WRITING EXERCISE LESSON

4:53 - 5:04 (11 min)

What does being an elite athlete mean to you? Who can be an elite athlete? Would you consider yourself an athlete? Don't worry about being correct.

Merriam-Webster describes an athlete as: "a person who is trained or skilled in exercises, sports, or games requiring physical strength, agility, or stamina."

If you really think about it, most tasks and activities involve physical (and arguably more, importantly mental!) strength, agility and stamina, making you all... athletes! Today we are going to think about ourselves as athletes, daily activities as sports, obstacles as opponents and our plan to overcome them as training plans.

What does it mean to think like an elite athlete?

Top brain trainer, Dr. Cindra Kamphoff's, [Six Ways to Train Your Brain Like An Elite Athlete](#). Kamphoff is certified mental performance coach and consultant with the Association for Applied Sport Psychology.

1. Stay Process Focused:

- a. It can be easy to focus solely on the goal, but staying focused on the process is more important than the actual outcomes of the process! The 'process' refers to all of the little things that you need to do in order to reach your goals, or become the best at your craft. To think like an elite athlete, you should employ the 95/5 rule. This rule refers to spending 95% of your attention focused on the process and the present and using the other 5% to focus on the outcome and the future *only* to stay motivated and excited. Focusing on the outcome or the results of the process leads to unnecessary stress, anxiety and pressure.
 - i. Girls Write Now recommends that if you are feeling overwhelmed or out of focus, try doing a mindful exercise, or take a hot shower and wash your anxiety down the drain! When we stay focused on the present and on the process, we are able to achieve anything we desire.

2. Let Go Quickly:

- a. "The best athletes have a short-term memory of their mistakes and a long-term memory of their successes" (Kamphoff). Elite athletes intentionally savor great moments to fully experience them, and they let go of their mistakes quickly. One way to do this is to use the Learn and Burn strategy. We want and need to learn from our mistakes, but then quickly burn or let go of the mistake.
 - i. Girls Write Now recommends that you can implement the Learn and Burn strategy by writing your wins and losses down on separate sheets of paper and then tearing up the sheet with your losses and putting your successes somewhere visible, such as on a refrigerator door, bathroom mirror or bedside table, in order to stay motivated and protect your confidence.

3. Expect Adversity:

- a. The most elite athletes know that adversity helps them grow and learn. Adversity isn't something to be afraid of; it should be thought of as something that happens *for* you, not *to* you. Shifting your perspective about adversity from being helpless against it to something you are in control of will help you train your brain to think like an elite athlete! In fact, elite athletes expect difficulties to arise and even plan for things to go wrong so that they can remain cool, collected and in control of their performance under pressure. We grow the most when we are challenged, so it's important to shift your mindset to welcoming adversity because it shapes us into our best self and strongest contender.

4. Dominate the controllables:

- a. As an elite athlete, it is important to focus on controlling the controllables. Things you can control include everything inside of you such as: attitude, attention, actions, passion, preparation, purpose, emotions and effort. Your attention should not be on outside factors beyond your control, including: refs, coaches, deadlines and haters. It is not only important to focus on controlling the controllables, it is crucial that you dominate them. When elite athletes find their attention on things that they cannot control, they quickly shift their attention to things that they can control. Kamphoff believes that: "For every minute elite athletes focus on what they cannot control, they are in the league for one less minute. Focusing on the uncontrollables leads to frustration, blame and low performance. Dominating the controllables leads to high performance" (Kamphoff).
 - i. Girls Write Now recommends that when you notice yourself focusing on uncontrollables, remind yourself of what is and isn't out of your hands, and shift focus to what is within your control. You can do this by making a list of controllables and another list of uncontrollables.

5. Believe in Your Purpose:

- a. The best elite athletes know and understand their purpose. They realize that they are a part of something bigger and they live out that purpose on the field or court. As an elite athlete, you should allow your purpose to serve as inspiration and motivation. Creating and believing in your own sense of purpose is key to thinking like an elite athlete.
 - i. Girls Write Now believes that you can find your purpose by identifying what is meaningful to you and discovering and nurturing your natural talents.

6. Own the Moment:

- a. Live in the moment! Your best can only happen in the present, therefore do not dwell on the past or over-focus on the future. One way elite athletes ensure they are focused on the present is by practicing intentional strategies.
 - i. Girls Write Now recommends using daily practices like meditation, breathing and mindfulness to shift your focus on the present.

According to Dr. Cindra Kamphoff, Certified Mental Performance Consultant, Speaker and Author, our focus determines our reality. In this video, Dr. Cindra Kamphoff talks about how to focus on the things that help us succeed:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVxdfkj28NU&t=160s>

She challenges us to make a deliberate intention this week to pay attention to our focus and ends with a powerful phrase: "I determine where I shine my focus. I focus on the good and what gives me energy!"

In a moment, you'll create your own training plan for the sport you created. We'll then go into breakout rooms to share our competitors' goals and how we coached them to success. The most important rules for this are to relax, have fun and be as creative as possible.

Use our template with questions to guide your thinking as you create: [My Training Plan Template](#)

V. WRITING TIME

5:04 - 5:19 (15 min)

- Think of your Opening Lines. Use the six ways to train your brain to create a training plan to help you train to achieve your goals

Answer all questions:

- What is the name of your sport?
- Who/What are your opponents?
- What is a goal you are trying to achieve?
- What derails you when you are trying to achieve that goal?
- What does that obstacle/challenge look like, sound like, feel like?
 - Can you give that obstacle a name?
 - Is it an animal, plant or android?
- How will you go about achieving your goal? Hint: Use Kamphoff's, Six Ways to Train Your Brain Like An Elite Athlete!
- How will you celebrate achieving your goal?
- How will you handle a setback?
- What will you do if you don't achieve your goal?

Make a copy of this document by going to **File** → **Make a copy**: [My Training Plan Template](#)

Fill it out, and make it shareable (click share on top right corner, change your settings within "Get Link" so that everyone can view, then select copy link), or copy and paste what you worked on into the survey at the end of the workshop.

VI. BREAKOUT ROOM INSTRUCTIONS

5:19 – 5:21 (2 min)

If you can, turn on your video. If you can't, we understand.

Three parts:

1. **Introductions: Each person shares** their name, pronouns, grade or job title and Opening Lines
2. **Share: Take turns** sharing your work, and use the zoom chat to comment on what resonates with you, what's amusing, clever or sparks joy. Share the details of your training plan and why you created it.
3. **Coach:** Coach each other on applying Dr. Kamphoff's six actions to the goals you set.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACTIVE LISTENING BREAKOUT ROOMS

Take turns sharing your work—Mentors, ask for a mentee to volunteer to go first, or go first if a mentee doesn't want to go first.

Use the zoom chat to comment on:

- What resonates with you
- What's amusing, clever or brings you joy
- What you want to hear more of

If there is time after the share outs, all participants in the breakout room can further engage in conversation about:

- What it would be like to actually participate in the sport they created.
- Mentors ask Mentees what they think they want to do as a career.
- Mentees ask Mentors about their professional journeys. Ex.: How did you decide to go into your profession/choose your field major? When did you discover your natural talents? What type of adversity do you anticipate and how do you manage your challenges?
- Mentees ask Mentors about their college major(s) and if it is relevant to their current work.
- Ask each other what you are reading, watching or listening to.

VII. SMALL GROUP BREAKOUT ROOMS: SHARE OUT

5:21 – 5:46 (25 min)

Mentors and Mentees share “popcorn style”. First participant will share their idea, then pass to another participant by saying, “I popcorn it to...” Next participant shares their idea and then “popcorns it to...” So on.

VIII. MAIN ROOM SHARE & REFLECTION

5:46 - 5:50 (4 min)

Mentors and Mentees

- Share your training plan aloud or a training plan that someone in your breakout room created that resonates with you.
- What is the goal of your sport and what is an obstacle that stands in the way of you achieving it?
- What did you find valuable from your breakout room session?
- What do you appreciate about the activity?

XI. TAKEAWAYS

5:50 - 5:51 (1 min)

- Continue working on your training plan and tailor it, depending on your goals.
- Use Cindra Kamphoff's, Six Ways to Train Your Brain Like An Elite Athlete in your daily life!
- When you get stressed out, think about your life as a game!
- Mentees, apply the athlete's mindset to the process of creating your piece for Submission #2 Due on May 23!

IX. SURVEY & SUBMIT

5:51 - 5:56 (5 min)

X. GROUP PHOTO

5:56 - 5:58 (2 min)

XII. ANNOUNCEMENTS & THANK YOU

5:58 - 6:00 (2 min)