

Creating and Using Effective Lesson Plans

Vicki Fruge'
Lamar Institute of Technology
Beaumont, Texas

Why have a lesson plan?

Maximize your time-Why recreate the wheel each time you teach the same topic or activity?

Organize your lessons-Use your lesson plan templates to create a library of all your lessons.

Revitalize your content- A well planned lesson will ensure that you can quickly revise the content, objectives and relevance of the lesson for future use.

Minimize student learning interruption-In the event you are unable to make it to class, you have a superb teaching aid for a substitute teacher.

Why have a lesson plan?

Ask any teacher, trainer or instructor what it feels like to be caught unprepared in front of a group of eager students keen to learn.

- In a one to one situation you feel exposed.
- In a full classroom it can end in chaos.

You may be an expert on your subject or be able to take your sport or activity to a professional level. However, knowledge alone does not make a great teacher.

A motivating personality combined with knowledge, patience and carefully designed lessons, will make a teacher that students trust and respect.

If you visualize your students as “paying customers”, it will ensure that they return for more, helping to make your “business” a success.

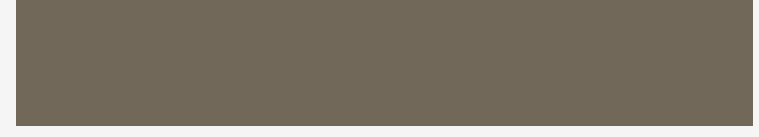
Who should lesson plan?

Lesson planning is not reserve solely for academic purposes. Anyone who delivers training or instruction should plan if they are to deliver quality lessons.

- Would a personal trainer plan the same exercise regime for a class of pregnant women as they would those training for a personal record in a half marathon?
- Would a driving instructor plan a similar route for the first lesson of a complete beginner as an experienced driver learning to drive a school bus?
- Would a corporate IT trainer prepare examples of complex VB script for a class of secretaries interested in mail merge?
- Would an instructor prepare the same lesson for an Introduction to Process Operations class as incumbent refresher training?

What is an effective lesson plan?

An effective lesson plan is a general outline of your teaching goals, learning objectives and the ways which you will accomplish them. It is not an exhaustive document that describes each and every possible classroom scenario, nor does it have to anticipate every student question or response. Remember, a productive lesson is not one where everything goes as rigidly planned, but where there is a measurable takeaway.



An effective lesson plan can be summed up in two questions:

- **What** do I want to do?

- **How** am I going to do it?

Lesson Plan Template

- Lesson Purpose Statement
- Learning Objectives/Outcomes
- Teaching Aids
- Introduction
- Activities
- Sequence
- Conclusion

● Lesson Purpose Statement

For a lecture only setting, this tells what you want students to learn about; what you want them to **know** at the end of the session. It is not put in behavioral terms because learning in a classroom setting happens inside our heads, and cannot be observed.

In a laboratory setting, this can include behavioral terms, with specific observable actions. What are the tasks you want the student to be able to **do** by the end of the session.

For some applications, it can be a **know and do** statement.

Sample Purpose Statements:

Students will learn the basics of constructing an effective lesson plan.

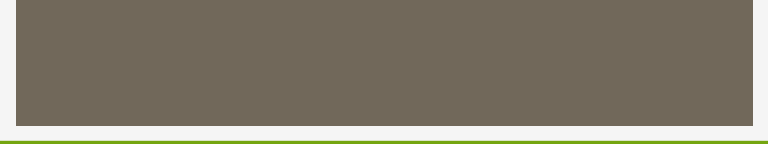
Students will learn what a balanced chemical equation is and be able to take an unbalanced equation and convert it to a balanced equation.

Students will learn what torque is, how to calculate torque and how to balance multiple torques acting on a system, resulting in equilibrium.

- **Outline Learning Objectives**

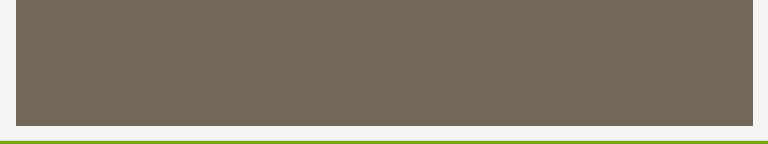
Determine what you want your students to learn and/or be able to do at the end of the class session.

Remember: These objectives will be stated differently for a lecture setting or a lab setting.



To help you specify your learning objective(s), ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the topic of the lesson?
- What do I want students to learn?
- Is there a skill they should be able to demonstrate at the end of this lesson?



After outlining the basic learning objectives, rank them in terms of importance. Time management in the classroom is critical.

Ask yourself-

- Which are the most important concepts, ideas or skills that I want students to be able to grasp and/or apply?
- If I am running out of time, which CANNOT be omitted?
- Which ones could I briefly mention or skip if I become pressed for time?

● Teaching Aids

List any materials, equipment or audio/visual display items you want to remember to bring to class. Also list online resources.

Books

Music

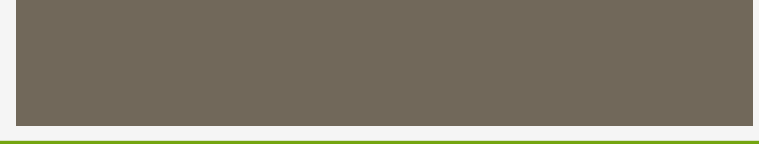
Software

Models

Lab equipment/cutaways

Flipcharts

Wearing specific clothes



Walking into class with more than just the book and attendance sheet will accomplish several things:

You look more prepared.

The students will have their interest peaked. It will also divert their attention from any conversations they may be having with their fellow classmates and focus it on you, the instructor. Remember, audio/visual aids will appeal to different learning styles and help to maintain focus during the session.

NOTE: If you choose to use online resources, have them readily accessible. Create a bookmark folder for the class and the subject so that you are not having to search through your entire bookmark list.

◉ **Develop an introduction**

A creative introduction to the topic will encourage students to engage and will stimulate interest in the topic. You can use a variety of approaches:

- Ask a probing question
- Relate a personal anecdote
- Give a real world example
- Use an historical event
- Show a short video clip
- Present a thought provoking dilemma

○ Plan specific learning activities

What will I do to explain the topic?

- Definitions
- Formulas
- Drawings/pictures
- List relevant real life examples, analogies or situations- Be careful here! Too many “war stories”, while entertaining, can lead to wasting precious class time. Make sure that the stories are applicable specifically to the lesson objective.
- Have a list of questions, problems or illustrations from the book to refer to (include the page number)
- Handouts



◉ Lesson Sequence

Create a realistic timeline

As you plan your examples and activities, estimate the amount of time you will spend on each. Make sure to build in time for extended explanation or discussion, but also be prepared to move on quickly to different applications or problems. You and I both know how easy it is to run out of time or have extra time left over.

Be Flexible!

Always be ready to adjust your lesson plan to student's needs and focus on what is being more productive rather than sticking to your original plan.

Bring a copy of the lesson plan with you that you don't mind writing on, then use colored pens to code comments to yourself.

◉ Develop a conclusion

Make sure you review the material covered during the session by summarizing the main points.

- State the main points yourself
- Ask a student to summarize the class
- Ask all the students to write down the main points and have several of them share.
- Don't forget to **preview the next class time**. How does this topic relate to the one that is coming?

◉ Reflect on your lesson plan

Just because the class session is over, your lesson plan is not a piece of trash to wad up and throw away as you walk out of the classroom door. Now is the time to tweak your plan for the next time you cover this topic. Keep those colored pens handy!

If you really know your subject it's always possible to get through a class with some quick thinking improvising but review your lesson afterwards and ask yourself the following.

- *Did you feel comfortable?*
- *Did your students notice your lack of preparation?*
- *Did you keep to your planned course or curriculum?*
- *If your students were paying customers, would they recommend you to other potential paying customers?*
- *Did your students leave feeling motivated?*
- *How would you feel if you were one of your students?*



Thank you!

Vicki Fruge'
vjfruge@lit.edu