



JOB AID – LESSON PLANNING

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Purpose

This job aid explains lesson planning using the 4 A's approach: Activate, acquire, apply, and assess. There are also ideas on engaging strategies for each of the four stages.

Background

A lesson plan is a set of activities designed to present one management sized piece of a course. There is not set of time for a lesson, one 50 minute period may contain multiple lessons or a single lesson may stretch over more than one class session.

Creating a lesson plan is an important aspect of planning for instruction. In creating a lesson plan, instructors identify the outcome for the session, how they will assess students have made the outcome, and learning activities in order to get the students to the outcome(Farrell, 2002). Lesson planning also gives instructors the opportunity to envision or test-drive a lesson in their head before entering the classroom.

How To

As you are planning your lesson the following must be included. It is helpful to plan the approximate time for the activities you plan to ensure that your lesson goes smoothly.

Learning Objective

During this stage the instructors clarifies what the learner can plan to “get out of” the lesson and learners find out what the expectation of them will be. The learning objective is informed by the course learning outcomes but is usually more Identifying the objective of the lesson guides the selection of learning activities and assessments(Farrell, 2002). When the instructor explicitly states the learning outcome, instructor and students are focused towards working together to meet that outcome.

Ideas for Learning Objectives: Simply state “by the end of the lesson the participants will be able to ... “

Activate

The purpose of the activate stage is to prepare students to learn. This is usually done in two steps: the bridge-in and pre-assessment.

Motivation, Bridge in or Hook: The ‘hook’ in your lesson plan to interest the learner. How are you going to capture students’ attention and prepare them for learning? The purpose of the bridge is to gain learner attention. It establishes relevance for the students by either situating the topic in the greater discipline or sharing with students how a topic is used in the field. An effective bridge-in builds relevance for

students by answering questions such as: What is in it for me?; Why does this matter?; and Why should I learn this?.

Ideas for Bridge-in: a relevant story from the field, pose a provocative question, watch a short video, refer to a content map of the course or discipline.

Pre-Assessment: This is an information gathering stage. During this stage the instructor learns about previous knowledge and interest of students, while students recall prior knowledge and assess their own areas of strengths and areas for improvement. Pre-assessments can help to build student confidence by reviewing what they already know. These strategies also help to focus students and prepare students for the learning experience.

Ideas for Activation or Pre-Assessment: Pre-quizzes, polls (either raise a hand or digital), group discussion, have students write two or three questions, create a mind map of previous knowledge (either as a group or one-on-one), ask students to list what they know, or a vocabulary exercises can also be used as activators/pre-assessments.

Acquire

In this stage, the learners are actively involved in achieving the outcomes of the lesson by improving understanding and deepening learning. In order to facilitate this, the instructor plans a learning activity that allows students to actively engage in meeting the learning outcomes. While planning, it is important that instructor's focus on what the learners will be doing during this portion of the lesson rather than what the instructor will be doing.

Ideas for Acquire: lectures (pause for discussion), model processes, demonstrations, watching and responding to a videos, group discussions, note making, case studies, problem solving, etc.

Apply

Students actively use what is learned and make it relevant to their own life. During this stage students are asked to make connections or solve applied problems related to the learning outcome.

Ideas for Apply: Group discussions, return-demonstrations, exit slips, mind maps, online forum posts, quizzes, tests, minute papers, etc

Assessment

How will the instructor know what the students have learned, and what may need further development and learning. Note this does not need to be an end of lesson activity, the instructor can assess students during the entire lesson but the instructor has to plan to assess the learners at some point during the lesson. The assessment outlined for a given lesson is often formative (giving the instructor information but does not contribute to the student's grade.

Ideas for Assessment: Authentic tasks, presentations, Observation of group discussion, clicker questions, exit slips, discussion board posts, etc.

Other Information

Beyond the 4 A's the following information is helpful to think about as you plan your lessons

- **Materials:** What physical things does the instructor have to take to class. This could include class notes, PowerPoint files, demonstration materials flipchart paper, markers, whatever needs to be in the class to ensure the lesson goes smoothly should be listed.
- **Administrative Tasks:** Take a moment to note any reminders for the instructor or students. Examples include assignments which are due, tests which are coming up, marking to return, upcoming field trips or guest speakers, anything that the instructor or students must know about that may not be directly related to the day's lesson.
- **Relate to Summative Evaluation** How will this lesson be assessed for marks? Perhaps today's lesson builds towards a final exam, paper, or demonstration. But it is important think about how a student's understanding of today's topic will be assessed overall.

References

Farrell, T. S. (2002). Lesson Planning. In J. C. Richards & W. A. Renandya (Eds.), *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge University Press.

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